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Dr. LICY.A.D
Associate Professor, Head,
Dept.of Sociology, Carmel
College, Mala-680732, Thrissur
(Dt), Kerala, India.

The support system of single women

LICY.A.D

Abstract

The Singleton has emerged as a distinct social category in the rapidly changing Kerala society. The present study attempts to show the change from Spinster to Singleton and the generation differentials of single women in Kerala, India. The study also made an attempt to find out the support systems of the single women of Kerala.

The focus of the study is single women of two generations, 225 spinsters and 225 singletons. Single women from three districts- Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikode constituted the sample for the study. The different aspects of the singlehood were collected with the help of Interview schedule and the scale developed was used for measuring support systems of the single women. The economic theory of Marx, Women's economic empowerment theory of Blumberg, Dramaturgical model of role theorists, Becker's labelling theory of deviance, Michalo's Multiple-discrepancy theory are the theoretical framework of the study.

The analysis of the study reveals that there is difference between spinsters and singletons in all background variables and dependent variables. The findings of the study shows that the major support systems considered in this study are family, employment, friends, social participation, and leisure. There is significant difference between spinsters and singletons on each sub-section of support system and in each sub-section of support system, singletons have better score showing that they have better support system than the spinsters. The study shows that single women of Kerala have good support system from their family. Majority single women consider friendship as a strong support system to them and in the case of singletons this rate is very high.

Keywords: Single Women, Spinsters, Singletons, Generation Differentials

Introduction

Family and marriage are considered to be the oldest and the most basic and fundamental institutions in the sub-systems of the society. Both are important for the existence and functioning not only of society, but also for the sustenance and continuation of human being. The concept of marriage varies in degree from community to community and nation to nation. According to Horton and Hunt (1964: 206) ^[13], "Marriage is the approved social pattern, whereby two or more persons establish a family". Marriage as a socially sanctioned union of male and female, is an institution devised by society to sanction the union and mating of male and female for purposes of (a) establishing a household (b) entering into sex relations, (c) procreating and (d) providing care for the offspring.

Singlehood

In ancient time, the unmarried women were severely condemned and had no place in society. Under Roman law, an unmarried woman was considered a burden. That is, 'unmarried status' was not positively accepted by society. Single women were never free from the dominance of male people. In America spinsterhood came to be seen as a sexually as well as socially deviant state. The legacy of single blessedness fostered emphasis on marriage or singlehood as a choice for women in the middle and upper classes (Adams 1976) ^[1]. Recent years have brought about a great change in the life of women all over the world. This increase in single Americans can be attributed to a number of social and economic trends: the postponement of marriage, the rise in the divorce rate, career break-through for women and the easing of credit discrimination against them and the growing independence of young people from their parents.

Correspondence
Dr. LICY.A.D
Associate Professor, Head,
Dept.of Sociology, Carmel
College, Mala-680732, Thrissur
(Dt), Kerala, India.

Singlehood in India

Unlike West, in India, an analysis of the position and status of single women during the Vedic times reveals that they enjoyed a high status. A girl in Vedic India waited until she could find the right partner for marriage, failing which she could even decide to remain unmarried. During the post Vedic age the position of single women slowly began to decline. As marriage came to be considered as a goal for women, the chastity of single women was doubted and hence she came to be looked down upon. Manus supported the male's domination and compelled women who stayed in the solitude of temple, to demonstrate their art in public, by dancing before the God and they were converted as 'Devadasis' and Nagarwadhus. One of the most striking changes is the increasing number of people who live on their own. The women of new generation are growing up with a belief that whatever their fate be i.e., be it remaining single, they must be partly or fully self-supporting. The emancipation changed their life style, their roles, their status and life patterns

Singlehood in Kerala

In Kerala society, Singlehood is not a new phenomenon. From ancient times, many girls from Namboothiri families remained single. They were restricted by endogamy. That is, they were allowed to marry only from their own caste. Among the Christians, especially in the catholic families existed a peculiar custom, one daughter remain single for taking the care of old parents and younger ones. These single women helped the head of the family to manage the family administration and financial matters.

Today singleness is not at all incompatible with the ideal of womanhood. The new singletons'- carefree city singles bring in a more positive picture than the old maid spinster. They believe that singlehood will provide more freedom, independence and more life satisfaction than married life. Today a new and positive stereotype is applied for modern single women. A modern singleton is seen as urban, highly educated, relatively young, ambitious, single minded, determined, active and a career woman. By rejecting marriage and children she has made a conscious choice to be single. This study presents the support system of this new global sociological phenomenon of the Twenty first century and traces the generation differentials of single women in two generations – the Spinsters and Singletons.

Review of Literature

Ahuja says that the self-image, self-esteem and adjustment of single women in life depend upon the emotional support they get from different sources. A 'support' is defined as "any object or action that the receiver and / or the giver define as necessary or helpful in maintaining a life-style" (Ahuja 1996:6) [2]. The relationships between individuals are seldom static and essentially dynamic in nature (Hinde 1979) [12]. Communication is the backbone in assessing family relationships and dynamics. Effective and right types of communication bring family members together emotionally and make family functioning more meaningful and sound (Khasgiwala 1993) [20].

Kraisonswasdi (1986) [21] says that the standard of living of a particular family is conditioned by a number of variables, like value system, occupational background, education, income, locality etc. However, the economic factors play very pertinent role in determining the standard of living of the family. Family has monopolized caring, security, sharing,

trust and intimacy. The varied situations generate a different atmosphere and create a varied family picture. These structural aspects have an important bearing on the quality and kind of relationships existing between parents and children; the distribution of rights and duties. How single women should behave towards the family members and society is determined by the conventions and formal definitions of the organization in which she is working/ where she is staying (Hinde 1979) [12].

Rani (1976) [30] states that in past, the family became largely responsible for attending to the mental health and emotional adjustment of single women. But now, the practice of single women living and working in the family is declining. That is, the social structure has completely changed. The importance of relatives for companionship and support has diminished.

Each Individual's life is blossomed with the help of many support systems. In the case of single women also, their life is blossomed with support system like parents, relatives and friends. Ratra (2006) [31] reveals that single women, usually develop a sense of family that differs from others. Friendships are very important to singles. Many of them acquire a social network that provides the kind of emotional and psychological support found among other family types. Singles participate in a variety of groups that provide social support and recreation. Academic activities and free choice activities are the main hobbies of the single women. They are not isolated especially the modern singletons. Thornton (1989) [37], opined that singles had a lot of connections with others.

In the view of Stain (1976) [36], the lack of support for single life-styles undercuts the personal and social identity of the never-married contributing to the feelings of guilt and embarrassment, fear of loneliness and psychological weariness from initiating and sustaining a life-style which lacks a supportive ideology in the larger culture.

Kanter's (1978) [19] study of fifty young (24-34 years of age) and of medium socio-economic level never-married women living alone in an urban area found that they were "not relatively isolated." They had networks of individuals who had 'a deep and genuine concern for their well-being' and they "were involved in intimate relations with others". They had created homes for themselves with a comfortable and nurturing atmosphere which pleased them. It gave them a sense of ownership. Even with the change in the social fabric, single women have not given up their culture and values, and still believe and participate in many religious activities, which gives greater emotional support to them and it determines their life satisfaction.

Objective

- (1) To identify the support system of single women

Hypothesis

- (1) There is generation differential among single women of Kerala with regard to the support system

Clarification of the Concepts

Single women: Single women are those who have crossed the marriageable age (35) and are yet not married. In the present study single women belonging to two generations are studied, that is, 65 to 80 and 35 to 50.

Generation Differentials: According to Developmental theory, the generation differentials are considered as 'generation gap.' In this study, generation differentials mean

a relative difference in the ideas of single women belonging to two generations, that is, single women of the age group of 65 to 80 and 35 to 50.

Spinster: Single women who are not married and do not belong to any religious organizations, and who belong to the age group of 65 to 80 are referred as spinsters.

Singleton: Single women who are not married and do not belong to any religious organizations, and who belong to the age group of 35 to 50, are referred as singletons.

Support System: Support system is a multidimensional construct that consists of all types of supports enjoyed by single women in two generations from other sources.

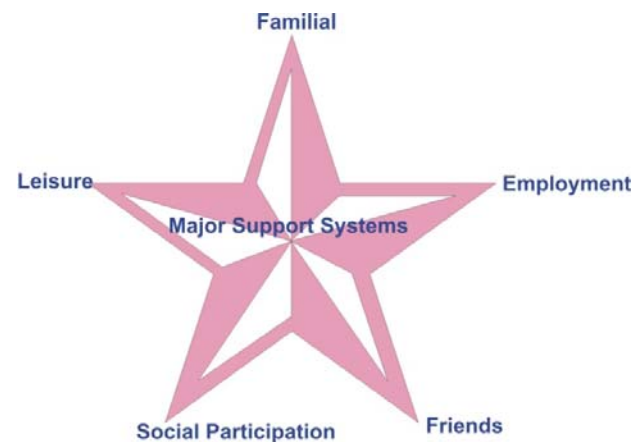
Age, education, occupation, religion, region and place of living are considered as independent variables. Support system is the dependent variables. The present research work is designed to study the life of single women. So an analytical cum comparative design is adopted. The Universe of the study comprises of unmarried single women. The total sample of the study consists of 450 women selected from the unmarried single women in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Calicut districts for getting the socio-cultural and geographical representation of the north, south and central parts of the Kerala, with 225 spinsters and 225 singletons. From each district 75 spinsters and 75 singletons, and thus 150 samples are collected from one district. Because of lack of statistical documents/reports about the single women in Kerala, researcher used snow ball sampling. The Pilot study was conducted in Ernakulam district, as it was easy to get both urban and rural single women. The data collection was mainly based on primary and secondary data. In this present study secondary data was collected from census reports, seminar reports, pamphlets, journals, periodicals, books, newspapers, reports and publications of various associations, and various publications of the central, state and local governments. Primary data is collected from younger and older generation of single women. For collecting the primary data, the researcher developed Interview schedule and three scales as tools. Interview schedule was used to collect all relevant information. One scale was developed for measuring the Support System of single women. A total of 100 single women fifty spinsters and fifty singletons were interviewed for Pre-test. Regarding the interviews, initially it was very difficult to convince the respondents about the purpose of the study. A qualitative cum quantitative approach on data analysis has been adopted. The statistical analysis has been done with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). The major limitation of the study is the inadequacy of the availability of recorded material, which forced the researcher to use, the Snow ball sampling, which has its own limitation.

Support System

Support system is a multidimensional construct that consists of different types of supports including emotional support, integration, tangible help, and information support (Krausu and Markides 1990) [23]. The human existence depends upon support systems which one begets through inheritance, employment, family, friendship, religion, formal institutional support from outside family and kin network. Informal contacts and frequent interactions help for the development of intimate and close relationships. The degree of closeness

of the relationship depends upon the quantity and the quality of the interactions. These interactions lead them to maintain strong support systems. Pearlin and Johnson (1981) [29] have observed that supportive and helping relations between people are not limited to marriage. Unmarried people often establish interpersonal ties that serve as a partial functional alternative to marriage. Cockrum and White (1985) [7] advocate the similar idea. They suggest that supportive family, friends, co-workers and others play an important part in the life and happiness of single adults by validating singlehood as an acceptable adult status. At the same time, a negative concept exists in our society. Schaefer (2001) [33] in his book, 'Sociology' explains that to remain single represents a clear departure from societal expectations. A single adult must confront the inaccurate view that she is always lonely and isolated. He adds that to overcome these societal expectations, singles have formed numerous support groups.

One of the objectives of the present study is to explore the content and quality of support systems of the single women. Relationships are considered the backbone of the support system. Life-long deprivation arising out of singlehood necessitates support system at several levels of existence. To measure the level of support system, a 'Support System scale for Single Women' was developed. The scale dealt with five aspects of single women's life. The major support systems of single women considered in this study are pictured with the help of a diagram, that is, family, friendship, employment, social participation and leisure.



In a society that values individuality and self-fulfillment, the modern single life style can offer certain freedom that older single women may not enjoy. So with regard to support system also generation differentials are studied. The variables in the support system scale for single women are given below:

Familial support is an important variable for measuring the support system of singlehood. It is related to ties with family members, level of support from the family etc. The low score means that 'not so good relationship' with the familial atmosphere. The high score means 'good relationship' with familial atmosphere. In the 'Support System scale for Single Women,' the variable employment support is related to co-operation with co-workers, happiness in the working conditions, social status, mental relaxation, economic freedom etc. The low score indicates employment is not a high support system for single women. High score indicates single women consider employment as a support system. In the 'Support System scale for Single Women' an attempt is

made to measure the relationship tie with friends, financial and mental support from them, their encouragement and level of sharing capacity with friends. The low score indicates the support from friends is not high. Whereas, high score indicates friends are a strong support system. Social Participation is also considered as a support system and it measures the ability to talk with others, the readiness to participate in social activities, social commitment, social relationship, how far they forget their sorrows because of social relation, social awareness etc. Low score indicates low social participation; high score indicates high social

participation. Leisure, the sub-scale, measures how far the single women are interested in leisure activities/games. Indirectly it measures the mental happiness of the individuals. Low score indicates individuals' are not involved in recreational activities where as high score indicates individuals have good participation in leisure activities. The total support system score is divided into three groups equally; high, moderate and low groups. Here high means a score between 220-162, moderate between 161-103 and low between 102-44.

Table 1: Frequency and Mean of the Support system scores of Single women

Spinsters								
	High		Moderate		Low		Total	Mean
Total	38	16.9	80	35.6	107	47.6	225	114.3
Familial	44	19.6	103	45.8	78	34.7	225	24.4
Employment	70	31.1	15	6.7	4	1.8	225	40.9
Friends	92	40.9	82	36.4	51	22.7	225	29.2
Social Participation	59	26.2	44	19.6	122	54.2	225	23.4
Leisure	24	10.7	164	72.9	37	16.4	225	8.2
Singletons								
Total	104	46.2	83	36.9	38	16.9	225	151.2
Familial	131	58.2	75	33.3	19	8.4	225	33.2
Employment	119	52.9	36	16.0	11	4.9	225	38.9
Friends	148	65.8	58	25.8	19	8.4	225	35.4
Social Participation	114	50.7	60	26.7	51	22.7	225	30.8
Leisure	56	24.9	145	64.4	24	10.7	225	7.4

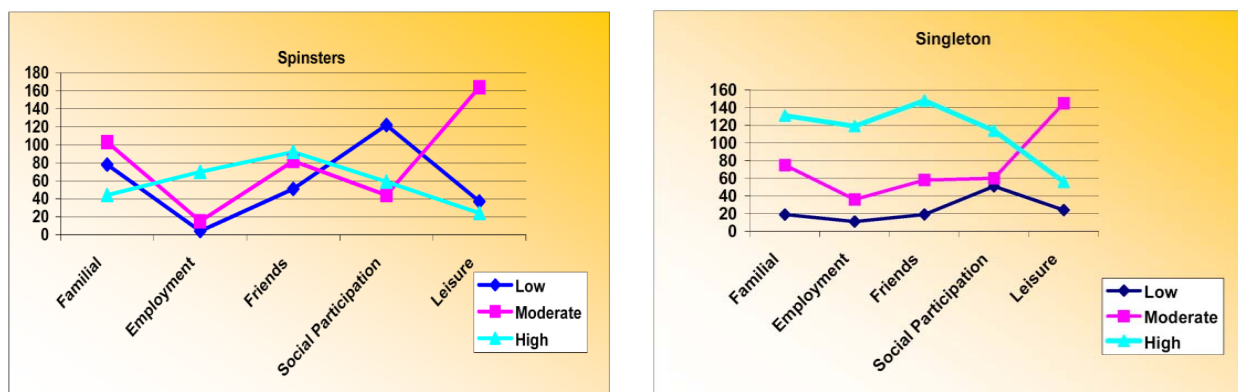


Fig 1: Support system scores of Single Women

The above table shows that spinsters and singletons differ on the basis of their support system. Out of 225 spinsters, only 16.9 per cent of them have good support system. But 46.2 per cent of singletons enjoy good support system in their life. Obviously it indicates that modern life situations of majority of singletons allow them to establish a close relationship with others, which is not the case with spinsters. To get a further insight into the relationship and its action as the support system each sub system of the support system scale is analysed. Kachru (2006) [18] says that in India the family system does provide some support and so it becomes natural for single women to make use of this support system from family. Many single women live within their family and its barriers, because there are hardly any emotional and economic support structure available outside for them. At the same time, Bhatnagar (1989) [4] indicates single women, as an ideal sister, wants nothing from her brother but she showers her love and kindness to her brother. These studies inspired to make an attempt to find out how far is the family, a support system to the single women of Kerala.

From the table 1 it can be observed that out of 450 respondents, only 21.6 per cent of them belong to low familial support group. Majority of them belong to high and moderate groups. It shows that single women of Kerala have good support system from their family. Findings of the present study are supported by Gordon (1994) [10]. In young age, more emotional support was provided by parents, siblings and friends. This variation may be because of singleton's economic security. Among the high familial support group, majority (74.9 per cent) belongs to singletons group and out of total singletons, 58.2 per cent of them came under high familial support group and only 8.4 per cent singletons belong to low familial support group That is, this percentage difference indicates that there is a significant difference between spinsters and singletons on their familial support. Roy (2004) [32] in her study indicates that many singles prefer to live with their families. Here, the percentage analysis proved that even now, single women consider family as a great support system in their life and it influenced their total

support systems; especially for singleton. In their case, the parents are alive and they like to live with them but spinster's case is not the same. Compared to spinsters, singletons are more economically independent. That is, if they are economically secure, family members are interested in supporting and caring them. As a part of our culture, even now these single women are enjoying the protection and care of family members.

To Marx (1844), work - the production of goods and services - holds the key to human happiness and fulfillment. Work is the most important primary human activity. He believed that work provided the most important and vital means for man to fulfill his basic needs, his individuality and his humanity. Single women work both for contributing to her family's economy and supporting herself (Tilly and Scott 1978). They also had a feeling that economic independence gives them personal esteem (Darrington *et al.* 2005) ^[8]. Earlier studies have shown that employment is a strong support system to women as well as single women.

Here, the discussion will be focused on the employment support network consisting of all those people and groups who provide support to the single women. Out of the total single women, 238 (52.88 per cent) of them were found engaged in jobs while among them 8 (3.36 per cent) were self - employed. Study shows that out of these respondents, majority (75.2 per cent) consider employment as a great support system to them. Only 4.2 per cent of them do not consider employment as a support system in their life. It can be generalised that in both generations, majority consider employment as a high support system in their life. Employed singletons number is high compared to spinsters. The favourable familial atmosphere and attitudes of family members allow single women to enjoy their employment and led them to it compared to spinsters. Analysing the motivation to work, the study revealed that in majority of cases single women work or seeks employment because of the need for money but some of the single women do work for non-economic reasons too. Ranjan (1993) supports this opinion and says that most of the unmarried women had strong attachment to their occupation. The main income of the modern singletons is from employment. So, they have certain type of social status and social contacts in the society. This employment gives them certain type of secure feeling in their life and it allows them to look to the future without fear. A general concept existing in our society in connection with single women is that they are isolated and silent personalities of the society. Many social taboos also exist in our society. Smith says, "Single woman is isolated and frustrated and therefore forever incomplete" (Smith 1951:127). But many studies indicate that it is not true. Ball *et al.* (2004) ^[3] reveals that friends are more supportive and less discriminating of women. A woman generally has a stronger sense of the need for a personal bond than man. Friends play a positive role in the development of single women's support system. Friends are more supportive than parents and relatives. Some feelings cannot be shared with everyone, many a times not even with parents or close relatives. Such feelings can be precisely described as "secrets" of life. Single women have more of such problems, as they have to live an isolated life. Even if they live with their parents or in a joint family, many times they find a big gap in their closeness with the family members. Darrington *et al.* (2005) ^[8] says that friendships helped to ease the burden of the mental struggles and created a supportive network of individual's who were experiencing

virtually the same thing at the same time. Bott (1971) ^[6] claims that each individual before marriage has a social network- a number of women with whom they interacts with on a fairly regular basis. But after marriage, these connections will lose its importance. Here, we know, singles can continue these connections life long and their friendship relationships score is always high. Sousa and Lyubomirsky (2001) explain women tend to provide greater and more meaningful support as friend than men. That is, both men and women say their friendships with women are intimate, nurturing and supportive than their friendships with men. Friendship is considered as a strong support system in the life of single women. In modern times their life situations are favourable to establish relationships with friends.

The table (1) shows that out of total single women, 53.3 per cent of them belong to high friendship support group and among them 61.7 per cent of them come under singleton group. Compared to spinsters (22.7 per cent), very few of singletons (8.4 per cent) belong to low friendship support group. From the analysis it can be generalised that majority single women consider friendship as a strong support system and in the case of singletons this rate is very high. The reason is that majority singletons are employed and their job situations led them to high friendship relationship score. The present study is supported by Jethani (1994) ^[16]. In her study, she found that professionals had more friends and more singletons are employed. She also pointed out in her study that the friendship ties are strong when women are single, marriage weakens such ties. A person likes the company of other persons who are like herself, and with whom secrets and feelings can be shared. Darrington *et al.* (2005) ^[8] found that most of the single friends were supportive of their friend's single status. Again, she adds that the support from friends often helped singles to counterbalance the pressure they felt from their family and work place. For Shostak (1987) ^[34] a supportive group of friends are necessary to deal with issues of loneliness among single adults. He note that socialisation with other singles play a critical role in the development of a positive single experience because it allows single adults to share experience; offer emotional support; provide a listening ear for single life discouragement and delights; and share common perceptions of life, love and being single.

Interest in social field is not a new sphere for women, though the magnitude might have increased or decreased with time. Woman manifests desirable and favourable social attitudes which facilitate her acceptance into the group. An assumption existing in our society is that unmarried women are more involved in voluntary organizations than the married ones. Smith (2005) ^[35] points out that single people actually show more evidence of being socially active than married people. It is these studies that made the researcher to study the social participation support system in the life of single women. The percentage analysis shows that most of the single women consider social participation as a support system in their life. That is, present study reveals that single women have relations with others and they are not isolated and frustrated in the society.

Out of total respondents (450), 38.4 per cent of them consider social participation as highly supportive of them while the same percentage (38.4 per cent) considers it as a low level support. Among the spinsters group, only 26.2 per cent of them belong to high support group but the singleton's (50.7 per cent) rate is very high. Contradictory to this, among

the low supportive group, 54.2 per cent of them are spinsters and only 22.7 per cent are singletons. It can be inferred that there is significant difference between spinsters and singletons on their support system level. That is, spinsters do not consider social participation as a strong supportive element in their life. This idea is supported by Anjali Roy. According to Roy (2004) [32] in traditional countries, like India, where social arrangements are less gender-integrated, traditional female ties seem to provide professional elite women with a support system that they lack in more modernized societies.

Leisure is a must in everyone's life to regain the energy lost in work and to maintain a healthy life by avoiding overstrain of self. Havighurst (1970) [11] defines leisure activities as those in which a person may indulge on his own free will either to rest, to amuse himself, to add to his knowledge, to improve his skills without increasing his earning power, or to maintain his voluntary participation in the life of the community. Leisure is a support system to human beings. Haralambos (2004) reveals that family has lost a number of its functions in modern industrial society. In the earlier joint families, each member can recreate within the family atmosphere, which is impossible in the present nuclear families. If they recreate within the family, single women will get a lot of chance to communicate with other family members and can establish close relationship with family members. It will produce more mental satisfaction to them. But in the modern industrialised society, the importance of family ties are decreasing and leisure facilities are not available inside the family. Single women, too, should have leisure activities to relax and to overcome their strains (Jethani 1994) [16]. Leisure is very essential in the life of single women especially for working single women. Now different types of leisure facilities are available outside the family. So singles always participate in these leisure facilities with their close friends. Automatically, these friendship relations become more intimate and closer.

The earlier studies show that leisure activities are an essential support system for single women in their life. So here, an attempt is made to identify how far single women consider this variable in their life as a support system and whether there is any difference between single women of two generations. Out of the total (450) respondents majority consider leisure as only a moderate role to play as support system.

The above percentage analysis shows that there is difference between two generations in the support system. To prove the hypothesis that there is difference in the support system of single women in two generations, the total support system levels of the single women belonging to the two generations were classified and then the Mean and S.D were calculated. The difference between total relationships levels of two generations were tested for significance by finding the Critical Ratio (C.R). The results are shown in the table 7.2 given below. Here the standard deviation is high, so we use Mann-Whitney test for testing the equality of means of Total support system.

Table 2: Mann-Whitney Test on Support System of Single Women

	Generations	
	Spinsters	Singletons
Mean	114.25	151.15
SD	41.79	40.29
Critical Ratio	8.76	
'p' value	P<0.001	

The statistical calculations proved that the difference between the spinsters and singletons in the case of their support system is significant. Thus it can be concluded that the two groups differ significantly with respect to the level of support system. So the hypothesis there is generation differentials among single women of Kerala, with regard to their support system is accepted. The finding of the present study is supported by the study of Glan and Weaver (1988). According to them, young people no longer view that they are isolated persons, they have strong support system in their life and they are very happy in their new life style. It can be concluded that compared to spinsters, singleton's support system is too strong and the level of support system is high.

7.1 Factors that Influences the Support system

Above analysis proved that life of single women are enriched by various support systems. The role of these support systems varies depending on their education, employment, income, place of living and religion. That is, the level of support system can vary according to the independent variables. So, a further analysis is made to find out the difference in the role of support systems between the different groups based on these variables.

Education is a great instrument for establishing good relationship with others. It helps to understand others more clearly and builds strong bonds with others. One way ANOVA is used to see whether the spinsters and singletons of different educational standards vary in their support system.

Table 3: One Way ANOVA on Education and Support System of Single Women

Spinsters					
Education	N*	Mean	SD	F value	P value
P.G and other higher studies	90	140.33	40.69	39.625	0.0001**
College education	55	99.91	31.39		
School education	80	94.76	33.33		
Total	225	114.25	41.79		
Singletons					
P.G and other higher studies	190	138.80	38.58	6.467	0.002**
College education	25	126.20	38.88		
School education	10	155.08	39.44		
Total	225	151.15	40.29		

* Indicates number, ** statistically significant

The analysis of the support system Mean Score indicates that there is significant variation in the support system on the basis of their educational background. In the case of spinsters, those single women who have higher education have greatest support as it can be seen from the Mean score (140.33). But in the case of singletons, school educated has high support system compared to higher educated singletons. Miller and Form (1980) present this idea and they have labeled the top professionals as a highly self-conscious group. The top working single women are not only self-conscious but conscious of their 'self-importance'. Their ethno centrim leads them to believe that they have special gifts and attributes not generally shared by the commoners. This makes educated singletons keep a distance from the outsiders.

Employment is a means for livelihood as well as a means to communicate with others. The level of support system can vary according to the employment or unemployment especially with regard to the single women. To find this variation a One Way ANOVA is done.

Table 4: One Way ANOVA on Employment and Support System of Single Women

Spinsters					
Employment level	N*	Mean	SD	F value	P value
Employed/ retired	90	146.73	36.95	151.52	0.0001**
Unemployed	135	92.59	28.84		
Total	225	114.25	41.79		
Singletons					
Employed/ retired	148	166.97	32.42	94.611	0.0001**
Unemployed	77	120.73	36.42		
Total	225	151.15	40.29		

* Indicates Number, ** statistically significant

The support system of both spinsters and singletons of different employed status groups are significantly varying. The observations of the support system Mean score indicate that employed and retired groups have high support system than the unemployed groups.

Income is an important element for establishing good relationship with others. It is considered by all, as a strong variable for varying the level of support system. That is, income also influences the relationship ties of the single women in both generations. The statistical tool, One Way ANOVA is used to see whether the spinsters and singletons of different income group's show variation in their support system.

Table 5: One Way ANOVA on Income level and Support System of Single Women

Spinsters					
Income level	N*	Mean	SD	F value	P value
Very high	9	159.56	45.80	1.905	0.136
High	32	155.50	31.57		
Moderate	34	148.32	35.07		
Low	8	123.88	37.48		
Total	83	147.78	35.82		
Singletons					
Very high	62	177.50	27.14	5.01	0.002**
High	48	163.60	30.83		
Moderate	30	153.67	39.32		
Low	8	151.25	30.24		
Total	148	166.74	32.53		

* Indicates the Number, ** statistically significant

To both single women group, their support system Mean score is increasing according to their income level. As their economical condition increases, their support system also increases. In the case of spinsters, test is not significant at 0.136 levels and income has not made any variation on support system. Blumberg (1984) [5] argues that as economic independence increases single women's support system level is also increasing.

The natures of community we belong decide the level of support system in the life of single women. Here an attempt is made to find out the variation in the support system level on the basis of place of residence of single women in two generation, with the help of One Way ANOVA.

Table 6: One Way ANOVA on Place of Residence and Support System

Spinsters					
Place of residence	N*	Mean	SD	F value	P value
Rural	87	98.66	35.68	21.561	0.0001**
Urban	138	124.08	42.48		
Total	225	114.25	41.79		
Singletons					
Rural	88	132.68	39.55	34.955	0.0001**
Urban	137	163.01	36.21		
Total	225	151.15	40.29		

* Indicate Number, ** statistically significant

The above One Way ANOVA result shows a significant variation on support system level by the place of residence in both generations. Urban single women have high support system Mean score than the rural single women. The high Mean score of urban single women of both generations shows that urban single women have better support system compared to ruralites.

Religion is an influential element for shaping the behaviour of the individuals. Its rules and regulations mould the structure of the society. Religion gives instructions to establish good relationship with others. It advises people in each and every aspect of their life. So religion is considered as a great instrument in their support system. An attempt is made to find out whether support system level of single women varies according to their religious groups.

Table 7: One Way ANOVA on Religion and Support System of Single Women

Spinsters					
Religions	N	Mean	SD	F value	P value
Hindus	118	110.56	41.32	1.824	0.164
Christians	98	119.91	41.21		
Muslims	9	101.00	50.58		
Total	225	114.25	41.79		
Singletons					
Hindus	105	153.85	38.65	1.036	0.357
Christians	86	151.30	41.26		
Muslims	34	142.41	42.73		
Total	225	151.15	40.29		

There is no significant variation in their support system level on the basis of their religion. It can be concluded that religion is not a strong variable in influencing the level of support system in the life of single women. Even then, the observation of the support system Means score indicate that among the spinsters, Christians have better support system than the other two religious groups. Among singletons, Hindus have better support system compared to Christians and Muslims.

Summary

The human existence depends upon different support systems such as employment, family, friendship, religion etc. The major support systems considered in this study are family, employment, friends, social participation, and leisure. With the help of 'Support System scale for Single Women', it is found that only 16.9 per cent of the spinsters have good support system, while 46.2 per cent of singletons enjoy good support system in their life. There is significant difference between spinsters and singletons on each sub-section of support system and in each sub-section of support system,

singletons have better score showing that they have better support system than the spinsters.

The study shows that single women of Kerala have good support system from their family. The traditional structure of the family system in Kerala is the reason for this fact. Majority (75.2 per cent) single women consider employment as a great support system to them. Only 4.2 per cent of them do not consider employment as a support system in their life. That is, in both generations, majority consider employment as a great support system in their life. Majority single women consider friendship as a strong support system to them and in the case of singletons this rate is very high. Since majority singletons are employed and their job situations lead them to high level of friendship relationships. The analysis of the study shows that most of the single women consider social participation as a support system in their life. Single women have relations with others and they are not isolated and frustrated in the society. Among the spinsters group, only 26.2 per cent of them have high social participation score but in the case of singleton's it is 50.7 per cent. Out of the total respondents, majority consider leisure has only a moderate role to play as support system. Here the rate of singletons is higher than the spinsters. Singletons, who enjoyed high status employment, are interested in leisure activities for relieving their job tensions. One important hypothesis of the study is tested and proved in this chapter. With the help of Mann-Whitney test, which revealed that the level of support system is different in two generations.

With the help of statistical test ANOVA, it is found that the support system varies according to the independent variables, education, employment, place of residence and income. The spinster's income level does not create any variation on their support system.

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