

## A Qualitative Study To Explore The Lived Experiences Of Single Mother Residing At Sangli Miraj Kupwad Corporation Area

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of single mother residing at Sangli Miraj Kupwad corporation area.

**Method:** Qualitative , phenomenological research approach was used. Saturation of data was achieved with 12 samples. Non probability purposive sampling method was used. The setting was Sangli Miraj Kupwad corporation area. The data was collected through one to one in-depth guided interview.

**Results:** A thematic analysis was utilized based on the Collaizis method to assess the collected data. Based on commonalities within the data, themes and categories were formulated.

**Theme no.1:** Physical experiences of single mother with sub themes as fatigue and inadequate food intake.

**Theme no.2:** Psychological experiences of single mother with sub themes as stress, psychological comfort and managing loneliness.

**Theme no.3:** Social experiences of single mother with sub themes as Cooperation, Participation in Social function, decrease interaction in social functions, social blaming.

**Theme no.4:** Financial experiences of single mother with sub themes as financial hardships, managing financial matters.

**Theme no.5:** Spiritual practices of single mother with sub themes as faith.

**Conclusion:** The results will assist in providing single mothers with counselling services and in identifying and resolving the issues that these mothers were faced.

**Keywords:** Lived experiences, Single mother, Home, Workplace and Social place.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The role of single parent is challenging one especially when the family is headed by a women. Problem of single mother are linked with the upbringing of children, their future and settling down in life. Till the time children get married and or get jobs they are dependent on the single parent. After that the problems are considerably reduced. The motive behind present study was to, study the problems faced by single mothers i.e. social, emotional and economic.<sup>1</sup>In addition to the life changes involved in becoming a single parent there are high physical demands which are imposed by the dual responsibilities of running a home and managing a job and even the most resilient woman has to perform a very delicate balancing act to avoid becoming the victim of stress-related illness.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, higher rates of depression among single mothers are due, in part, to a greater likelihood of early childhood adversities which then increase the risk for early onset of depression. Interestingly, women whose childhood have been relatively free of adversities are more likely either to report no depressive episodes or to have a later onset of depression. These latter trajectories are more common among married than among single mothers.<sup>3</sup> *Lives on the Edge* offers a penetrating, deeply disturbing look into the other America inhabited by single mothers and their children. Its powerful and moving portraits force us to confront the poverty, destitution, and struggle for survival that await single mothers in one of the richest nations in the world. One in five children and one in two single mothers live in destitution today.<sup>4</sup> Welfare mothers must work covertly to avoid losing benefits, while working mothers are forced to sacrifice even more time with their children.<sup>5</sup> Families play a significant role in the development of their children. Nearly 16% of children in the industrialized world live in single-parent households, which are mostly comprised of single mothers. Although motherhood is the most beautiful feeling a woman cherishes, this experience can be challenging when the woman has to raise their special-needs child on her own, without the support of her spouse or partner.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A qualitative research approach with phenomenological research was used to explore the lived experiences of single mother residing at Sangli Miraj Kupwad corporation area. The eligibility criteria were the single mothers those who are willing to participate in the study and who will give Written Informed Consent. The exclusion criterion was the Mother who is divorced, or widow for less than 1 year, Unmarried mother. The study included 12 single mothers. Data saturation was reached at the designated sample count. Samples from Sangli Miraj Kupwad corporation area were chosen using the non-probability purposive sampling method. After an extensive review of literature, referring the books and journals, abstracts, research articles, discussion with guide and through expert opinions the tool was developed for the data collection. The data collection tool was divided into two sections.

**SECTION I:** Demographic variables which include age (in years), education, and monthly income in rupees including all sources.

**SECTION II:** Open-ended questions for each point related to the lived experiences of single mother's emotional wellbeing, parenting care, social Support, financial management, spiritual practices. To ensure the content validity of the tool, the tool was submitted to experts. With suggested corrections needed changes were done after the discussion with guide and final tool was prepared. Institutional ethics committee of Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed to be University, College of Nursing, Sangli approved the research proposal. Informed written consent was obtained from each participant prior to conducting the study.<sup>6</sup>

The collected data was encrypted, organized, analyzed using descriptive statistics for demographic variables and thematic analysis using Collazis method of analysis to generate themes and sub-themes.

## 3. RESULTS

Based on the objectives of the study, Analysis and explanation of the results are arranged under the following headings:

Section I - Frequency and percentage of demographic variables

Section II - Analysis and interpretation of the themes and sub-themes

### SECTION I: FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

The data provided in demographic variables that, out of 12 participants, It was noted that 10 participants (83.33%) were in the 30-40yrs. and 2 participants (16.66%) were in the 41-50 yrs. age groups, respectively. It was noted that 6 participants (50%) were taken secondary education, 3 participants (25%) had taken higher education, and 3 participants (25%) were graduated. It was noted that 7 participants (58.33%) were earning Rs.5000 – 15000 per month, 2 participants (16.66%) were earning rs.15001 – 25000 per month, 3 participants (25%) were earning Rs.25001 – 35000 per month.

**Table No.1: Analysis And Interpretation Of The Themes And Sub-Themes N=12**

Experiences of single mother	Physical Experience
	Psychological Experience
	Social Experience
	Financial Experience
	Spiritual Experiences

Single mothers interpret the circumstances surrounding their role as single parents, considering factors such as family dynamics, personal challenges, and available support systems. Single mothers deal with the psychological, physical, and financial demands of their roles with a mixture of love and irritation. They place a strong emphasis on the importance of finding happiness in the face of hardship and highlight coping mechanisms including self-care and social support. Understanding these stories highlights the difficulties women encounter and the tenacity with which they dispense with childrearing. Each theme is grouped into sub themes so that it can be better understood. Fatigue, inadequate food intake were categorized as a sub theme to clarify the burden of single mothers. Likewise concern related to excessive physical exertion also clarified. The physical effects were identified as tiredness, fatigue, health problems and inadequate food intake, inadequate sleep.

Psychological consequences were further categorized in to sub themes such as tension, psychological comfort, managing loneliness, mental distress.

Social experiences were explained with the sub themes of cooperation, participation in social function, decreased social interaction and social blaming.

Financial experiences related to financial hardships and spiritual experiences were categorized in to sub theme such as faith.

**Table No.2 Themes And Sub Themes Emerged Related To Physical Experiences Of Single Mother**

**N = 12**

Sr. no.	Theme	Sub theme	Code
1.	Physical experiences	Fatigue  Inadequate food intake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health complains due to extra work</li> <li>• Inadequate sleep</li> <li>• Tiredness</li> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Nutritional deficiency</li> </ul>

#### **SUB THEME: FATIGUE**

**Health complains due to extra work** “Although I am sitting and working, they give so much work that my back hurts a lot. “My back hurts from working so much.”

**Inadequate sleep** “Due to the stress of work, I can't get a peaceful sleep at night. “I wake up in between because of the worries about home.”

**Tiredness** “I get very bored.” “I feel tired.”

#### **SUB THEME: INADEQUATE FOOD INTAKE**

**Loss of appetite** “I don't feel very hungry due to worry.” “I somehow force food down, but I'm not hungry.”

**Table No.3 Themes And Sub Themes Emerged Related To Psychological Experiences Of Single Mother**

N = 12

Sr. No.	Theme	Sub theme	Code
2.	Psychological experiences	Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over thinking about future</li> <li>• Self-pity</li> <li>• Self-blaming about present situation</li> <li>• Irritation due to work load and present family situation</li> </ul>
		Psychological comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassurance by relatives and friends</li> <li>• Self-reassurance for betterment</li> </ul>
		Managing loneliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging in work And recreational activities</li> <li>• Positive thinking for today and futurr</li> <li>• Run away from situation</li> </ul>

#### SUB THEME: STRESS

**Over thinking about future** “Thinking about how my children will turn out creates a lot of tension. I need to stop worrying about the past.” “Sometimes it feels like I’m losing my mind, wondering how much and what I should worry about... but it seems like it just happens somewhere in the background.”

**Self-pity** “Is this my destiny? It feels that way.” “It seems like my own time never comes; it feels like no one else’s timing arrives.” “I don’t know what kind of test God is putting me through now.”

**Self-blaming about present situation** “I don’t know if I did something to deserve this.”

“I haven’t really thought about others in my mind, but still, this has happened to me.”

**Irritation due to work load and present family situation** “Sometimes I get very irritated... but later it feels like its just part of the process.” “Everything needs to be managed all at once; it adds a lot of stress.”

#### SUB THEME: PSYCHOLOGICAL COMFORT

**Reassurance by relatives and friends** “Don’t worry too much... we are here for you.” “If something bothers you, let us know.” “Don’t underestimate yourself.”

**Self-reassurance for betterment** “This day will pass; I’m working hard... I’ll manage.”

“Better days will come; I won’t fall short anywhere.”

#### SUB THEME: MANAGING LONELINESS WITH SELF-ENGAGING

**Engaging in work and recreational activities** “Engaging in work keeps me occupied and prevents loneliness.” “I enjoy listening to the radio... there are great songs.”

**Positive thinking for today and future** “I keep positive thoughts in my mind; I will be fine.” “I keep my mind calm.”

**Running away from situation** “Life feels sometimes like it’s dragging on... it feels like I should escape... but where can I go because of my circumstances?” “It feels like I should go somewhere, but where?”

**Table No.4 Themes And Sub Themes Emerged Related To Social Experiences Of Single Mother**

N = 12

Sr. no	Theme	Sub theme	Code
3.	Social experience	Cooperation  Participation in Social function Decrease interaction in social functions Social blaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support by neighbors</li> <li>• Support by relatives</li> <li>• Embarrassment of back biting and awkward questioning</li> <li>• Avoiding social functions</li> <li>• Insulted talk in front of me and my children</li> </ul>

#### **SUB THEME: COOPERATION**

**Support by neighbours** "Neighbors are available to help." "Neighbors are looking after towards my children" "keeping children with neighbors."

**Support by relatives:** "Some relatives keep questioning. It feels a bit too much."..."Guests sometimes stretch things out by questioning."

#### **SUB-THEME: PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL FUNCTION**

**Embarrassment of backbiting and awkward questioning:** "People talk wrongly behind my back... It feels really bad."..."Often they ask about husband... It feels awkward."

#### **SUB THEME: DECREASE INTERACTION IN SOCIAL FUNCTIONS**

**Avoiding Functions:** "If invited to an event, I avoid going... I make up some false excuse."..."I don't like going anymore."..."People's looks and words are too much... It bothers me a lot."

**SUB-THEME: SOCIAL BLAMING** - "She must be at fault."..."She wasn't ready to go to her in-laws' house."

**Table No.5 Themes And Sub Themes Emerged Related To Financial Experiences Of Single Mother**

Sr. no.	Theme	Sub theme	Code
4.	Financial experience	Financial hardships  Managing financial matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate income</li> <li>• More expenditure on special occasions</li> <li>• Borrowing from friends and relatives</li> <li>• Taking Bank Loan</li> <li>• Educational challenges due to less income</li> </ul>

#### **SUB-THEME: FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS**

**Inadequate Income:** "The salary is very low... How can I manage everything?"..."My needs aren't covered by my salary..."

How can I manage everything?"

#### SUB-THEME: FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS

**More Expenditure on Special Occasions:** "Sometimes the expenses are high during festivals."...."If there's an event, it requires a lot of money."

#### SUB-THEME: MANAGING FINANCIAL MATTERS

**Borrowing from Friends and Relatives:** "When I run out of money, I borrow from others... It feels bad, but what can I do?"..."When I ask for money on credit, sometimes they don't even answer the phone... Helplessly, I keep trying to ask again and again... I get responses like 'I'll give it today, I'll give it tomorrow'... but I need to manage the household, right?"

#### SUB-THEME: MANAGING FINANCIAL MATTERS

**Taking Bank Loan:** "I take a loan from the bank... but they give a lot of trouble... A lot of effort is required to get a guarantor."..."They even ask for some money... You have to pay to get the paperwork done... Taking a loan from a moneylender is worse."

**SUB-THEME: EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES DUE TO LESS INCOME:** "I get delayed in paying my children's fees."..."I make my children walk or go by bicycle to school... It feels bad, but what else can I do?"

Table No.6 Themes And Sub Themes Emerged Related To Spiritual Experiences Of Single Mother

Sr. no.	Theme	Sub theme	Code
5.	Spiritual experiences	Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trust on god</li><li>• Seeking strength</li></ul>

#### SUB-THEME: FAITH

**Trust in God:** "I have complete faith in God."..."God will not do me any harm."...."God will definitely show me better days."

**Seeking Strength:** "I go to church on Sundays, and I feel very good there."..."I feel great after praying."

#### 4. DISCUSSION

This qualitative phenomenological study by aimed to examine the viewpoints of single mothers by investigating their real-life encounters and filling a gap in professional literature. Using an exploratory approach, the researcher analysed the lived experiences of single mothers through in-depth interviews, identifying five key themes: physical, psychological, social, financial, and spiritual experiences. Physical experiences included health complaints and inadequate food intake. Psychological experiences involved stress, psychological comfort, managing loneliness, and mental distress. Social experiences encompassed cooperation, participation in social functions, decreased social interaction, and social blaming. Financial experiences highlighted financial hardships, while spiritual experiences involved faith. The study revealed that many single mothers faced inadequate sleep, psychological distress, financial burdens, and health complaints due to dual responsibilities and overthinking.

Comparison with studies by Sands RG and Ahmada SY, Sabri MF, Abd Rahimc H, and Osmanc S showed that single mothers struggled with financial survival. Effective self-coping mechanisms and social support were essential for achieving financial security and reducing stress. Faith played a significant role in helping single mothers cope, with many maintaining hope for a better future for themselves and their children.<sup>7,8</sup>

**Conclusion:** This study examined single mothers' experiences, identifying responsibilities that impact their well-being, daily activities, and social relationships. Authorities should provide educational and infrastructural support to reduce stigma and discrimination. Ongoing research is needed to develop support models for low socioeconomic status and other special circumstances. The findings emphasize the need to reduce physical and psychological stress on single mothers.

**IMPLICATIONS:** The findings of the study have number implications in the field of nursing.

#### NURSING PRACTICE

- The findings of current research regarding perspectives of single mothers can be discussed by nursing professionals who are working in the community.
- These findings could help nurses better understand the life of single mothers based on that provide care.

- Nurses are able to understand problems of single mothers by talking to single mothers, they can share their experiences and can boost their morals towards positive life.

#### **NURSING EDUCATION**

- This topic must be included in nursing education syllabus.

#### **NURSING ADMINISTRATION**

- There should allocation of resources for counselling of personal problems experienced by single mothers.
- This research should guide various aspects of nursing administration, including staff training, financial support and, collaboration with social welfare agencies.

#### **NURSING RESEARCH**

- The results of the present research illustrate the significance of qualitative methods in bringing out the perspectives single mothers.

- **LIMITATIONS**

Limitations in the present study were identified as follows –

- The qualitative component of the study limits its generalisation due to the use of limited samples for generalisation.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the current study findings the following recommendations can be undertaken for further exploration:

A qualitative study can be conducted to investigate the lived experiences of single mothers those are unmarried, having children but not staying with mother, can be include all age group of children mother.

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