

A STUDY ON THE SELF-ESTEEM OF SINGLE WOMEN IN KASHMIR

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to study the self-esteem of single women in Kashmir as per their singlehood and dwelling. . The universe comprised single women in all districts of Kashmir region in the 40 years and above age group. The sample for the present study comprised 1300 single women in 40 years and above age group, selected through proportional stratified sampling technique. The tool used for the study comprised of self-esteem scale for women constructed by Kapadia and Verma (2000). The study shows that self-esteem is found high among never-married women, average among divorced women, half-widows and widows but low among separated women. The single women self-esteem can be significantly improved by transactional behavioral analysis therapy. The transactional behavioral analysis therapy can be used to improve the quality of life and self-esteem of single women by focusing on person's sensual moods, understanding different sorts of relationships and managing the person's time and planning for it.

Keywords: *Self-esteem, Single, Women, Kashmir*

Introduction

Women who are not in a marriage or marriage like connection with another person are "Single women." Women whose husband has died, women who were previously in marriage like relationship, but are currently single and women whose husband are missing are included in this conception (National Forum for Single Women Rights, 2015). Single women struggle a lot in her life to provide even the basic necessities like food, shelter and education to her kids and in a dispute over property and succession, they are refused by their families and evicted from their homes. They faced lot of difficulties in living especially financially (Singh et.al, 2018). The loss of the other half is one of the most depressing event (Bennett et.al, 2005). The loss of a woman's spouse marks her transition from a wife to a widow. In the Hindu society of India, widow is bodily alive but socially dead and is physically and emotionally depressed (Devi and Rotti, 2012). Single women face a bundle of problems and are not given a high place in society which makes them feel in secure and experience diverse mental conflicts and the torture of a lonely life, finding it difficult to live in a society conquered by men (Kumari, 1987). Single women are constantly resolving traditional society's inequitable, seek to introduce just one image on all women, to that married women with a male guardian and provider, and carving out liberty territory for oneself in which they can live with decency and respect. This move to independence has been possible thanks to the unbridled bravery of women who have decided to negotiate together in unions where they

experienced a lack of dignity, equality, and inconsistency, as well as the determination of those who have faced difficulties and never-ending struggles while moving out of oppressive unions, or who, after becoming rejected by husbands, have managed with a multitude of hurdles (Mukhopadhyay, 2016). Single women's lives are difficult. Nevertheless, several common themes pass through the stories that allow us to understand how single women define themselves in the context of a cultural and social system that categorizes and victimizes them (Ang et.al, 2020). Individuals in a bond are likely to identify with each other. As a result, when the relationship ends, their sense of worth suffers (Sappington, 1989). Women, being single were associated with lower self-esteem and were the only association between self-esteem and relationship status in women of all ages. This association for single women in this cohort might be related to the expectations that exist for the thirties, how many get married and having families, and to singles these events may seem pretty distant compared to those who live together (Grundstrom et.al, 2021).

Review of Literature

Self-esteem drops throughout widowhood as a consequence of lowered emotional efficiency (Lund et.al, 1993). Women's affinity for feeling lonely was greater than men's, and older widows showed significantly lower levels of self-esteem on all measures than men (Pinquart and Sorensen, 2001). Divorce lowers women's self-esteem and divorced women experience a lot of stress (Sharma, 2011). Separated and divorced women were having less self-control, less supportive relationship with others and less self- recognition. Women who experience marital termination reported considerably more rise in depression, more aggression, more decline in self-esteem and less self-recognition (Marks and Lambert, 1998). Divorced women with higher level of qualification have a high level of self-esteem (Buehler et.al, 1985). Highly educated and working divorced women had high level of self-esteem (Demo and Acock, 1996). Sense of deprivation during divorce was observed amongst the women. They lost much of their self-assurance and sense of self-esteem. In various cases, they have assumed their self-identity as a loser. Though, while humiliation of the self was general, an increase of self-concept after divorce was also noted. In some cases, self fault was replaced by self- approval when they recognized themselves as survivors (Hung et.al, 2003).

Sheikh et.al (2013) compared self-differentiation and self-concept in divorced and non divorced women who experienced domestic violence in a study. According to the study, divorced women have higher self-esteem than separated women. Self- discrimination and self-esteem differ significantly between divorced and separated women who have been victims of violence. Women with low self-esteem may identify themselves more in terms of their interpersonal connections and, as a result, are less likely to end those relationships, even if they contain interpersonal violence. Women with strong self-esteem, on the other hand, are not only less prone to question their worth in interpersonal relationships. They may, however, see any offence as irreconcilable with their sense of self-worth, making it a more serious insult. Women with a high sense of self-worth may have strong feelings of self-worth and self- respect.

Mburugu et.al (2015) conducted a study on self-esteem as a social effect of widowhood in Meru country, Kenya. The study revealed that widowhood inclined the widowed men and

women self-esteem. Widowhood can lead to a loss of self-esteem in a variety of ways. Low self-esteem has been connected to the loss of a meaningful spouse role, the loss of significant relationships with the departed associates, and greater physical and social isolation during widowhood. Widows may also be subject to low self-esteem as a result of limited financial means and reliance and diminished emotional efficacy.

Aziz and Krishnatuti (2017) conducted a study on elderly widows and widowers 'cognitive function, social interaction and self-concept. The study revealed that widowhood has an effect on self-esteem and social interaction has an influence on the enhancement of self-concept. Elderly and the widower had the highest mean on self-identity dimension, but the lowest on the self-role and self-image dimensions. Although there are no differences in cognitive function or social contact between elderly widows and widowers, the concept of elderly widowers is more prevalent. The status of a widow has a link and an effect on the decrease of self-esteem, and social interaction has a link and an influence on the improvement of self-esteem. Widows have a lower self-esteem than elderly widowers and the greater the social interaction, the higher the self-esteem.

Objectives

The present study is based on the following objectives

- To study the various dimensions of self-esteem among:
 - Widows
 - Half-widows
 - Divorced women
 - Separated women
 - Never-married women
- To compare self-esteem among rural and urban single women.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in Kashmir region of the Jammu and Kashmir territory. The study was conducted in all ten districts of Kashmir region namely Srinagar, Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama, Budgam, Baramulla, Kupwara, Ganderbal and Bandipora. The sample for the present study comprised 1300 single women in 40 years and above age group, selected through proportional stratified sampling technique. The sample group for the study consists of 860 widows, 110 half-widows, 110 divorced women, 110 separated women and 110 never-married women from rural and urban areas. In the present study, primary as well as secondary sources of data were used to obtain the information. The tools and techniques used for the study comprised detailed self constructed questionnaire and self-esteem scale for women constructed by Kapadia and Verma (2000). Appropriate statistical methods were employed to comprehend the issue and draw conclusion from it. This was accomplished through the use of appropriate software packages:

- ✓ Frequencies and percentage
- ✓ Chi-square analysis
- ✓ ANOVA

Table 4.1 Self-Esteem among Single Women as per their Singlehood

	High self-esteem		Average self-esteem		Low self-esteem		All single women (n=1300)
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Self-esteem among Single women in their personal life							
Widows	168	19.5	531	61.7	161	18.8	$\chi^2= 221.034$ df= 8 p-value= .000*
Half-widows	35	31.8	64	58.2	11	10.0	
Divorced women	24	21.8	59	53.6	27	24.6	
Separated women	6	5.5	42	38.2	62	56.3	
Never married women	70	63.6	40	36.4	0	0.0	
Self-esteem among Single women in their family life							
Widows	238	27.7	332	38.6	290	33.7	$\chi^2= 158.516$ df= 8 p-value= .000*
Half-widows	33	30.0	52	47.3	25	22.7	
Divorced women	36	32.7	24	21.8	50	45.5	
Separated women	17	15.5	24	21.8	69	62.7	
Never married women	81	73.6	15	13.6	14	12.8	
Self-esteem among Single women in their social life							
Widows	222	25.8	440	51.2	198	23.0	$\chi^2= 117.129$ df= 8 p-value= .000*
Half-widows	52	47.3	40	36.4	18	16.4	
Divorced women	14	12.7	61	55.5	35	31.8	
Separated women	4	3.6	59	53.7	47	42.7	
Never married women	59	53.6	40	36.4	11	10.0	
Self-esteem among Single women in their career life							
Widows	207	24.1	399	46.4	254	29.5	$\chi^2= 184.527$ df= 8 p-value= .000*
Half-widows	50	45.5	38	34.5	22	20.0	
Divorced women	20	18.2	53	48.2	37	33.6	
Separated women	8	7.3	36	32.7	66	60.0	
Never married women	78	70.9	14	12.7	18	16.4	
Overall Self-esteem among Single women							
Widows	148	17.2	559	65.0	153	17.8	$\chi^2= 230.614$ df= 8 p-value= .000*
Half-widows	37	33.6	57	51.8	16	14.6	
Divorced women	14	12.7	81	73.6	15	13.6	
Separated women	4	3.6	50	45.5	56	50.9	
Never married women	69	62.7	40	36.4	1	0.9	

Based on field survey

n= 1300

Row percentage

χ^2 stands for chi-square

df stands for degree of freedom

p-value denotes level of significance

Table 4.2 Self-Esteem among Single Women as per their Dwelling

		Dwelling					
		Rural single women (n=830)		Urban single women (470)		All single women (n=1300)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Self-esteem in their Personal Life	High self-esteem	190	22.9	113	24.0	303	23.3
	Average self-esteem	482	58.1	254	54.0	736	56.6
	Low self-esteem	158	19.0	103	21.9	261	20.1
	$\chi^2= 2.270$, df= 2, p-value= .321						
Self-esteem in their Family life	High self-esteem	256	30.8	149	31.7	405	31.2
	Average self-esteem	294	35.4	153	32.6	447	34.4
	Low self-esteem	280	33.7	168	35.7	448	34.5
	$\chi^2= 1.141$, df= 2, p-value= .565						
Self-esteem in their Social life	High self-esteem	233	28.1	118	25.1	351	27.0
	Average self-esteem	395	47.6	245	52.1	640	49.2
	Low self-esteem	202	24.3	107	22.8	309	23.8
	$\chi^2= 2.544$, df= 2, p-value= .280						
Self-esteem in their career life	High self-esteem	223	26.9	140	29.8	363	27.9
	Average self-esteem	366	44.1	174	37.0	540	41.5
	Low self-esteem	241	29.0	156	33.2	397	30.5
	$\chi^2= 6.229$, df= 2, p-value= .044*						
Overall Self Esteem	High self-esteem	172	20.7	100	21.3	272	20.9
	Average self-esteem	514	61.9	273	58.1	787	60.5
	Low self-esteem	144	17.3	97	20.6	241	18.5
	$\chi^2= 2.527$, df= 2, p-value= .283						

Based on field survey

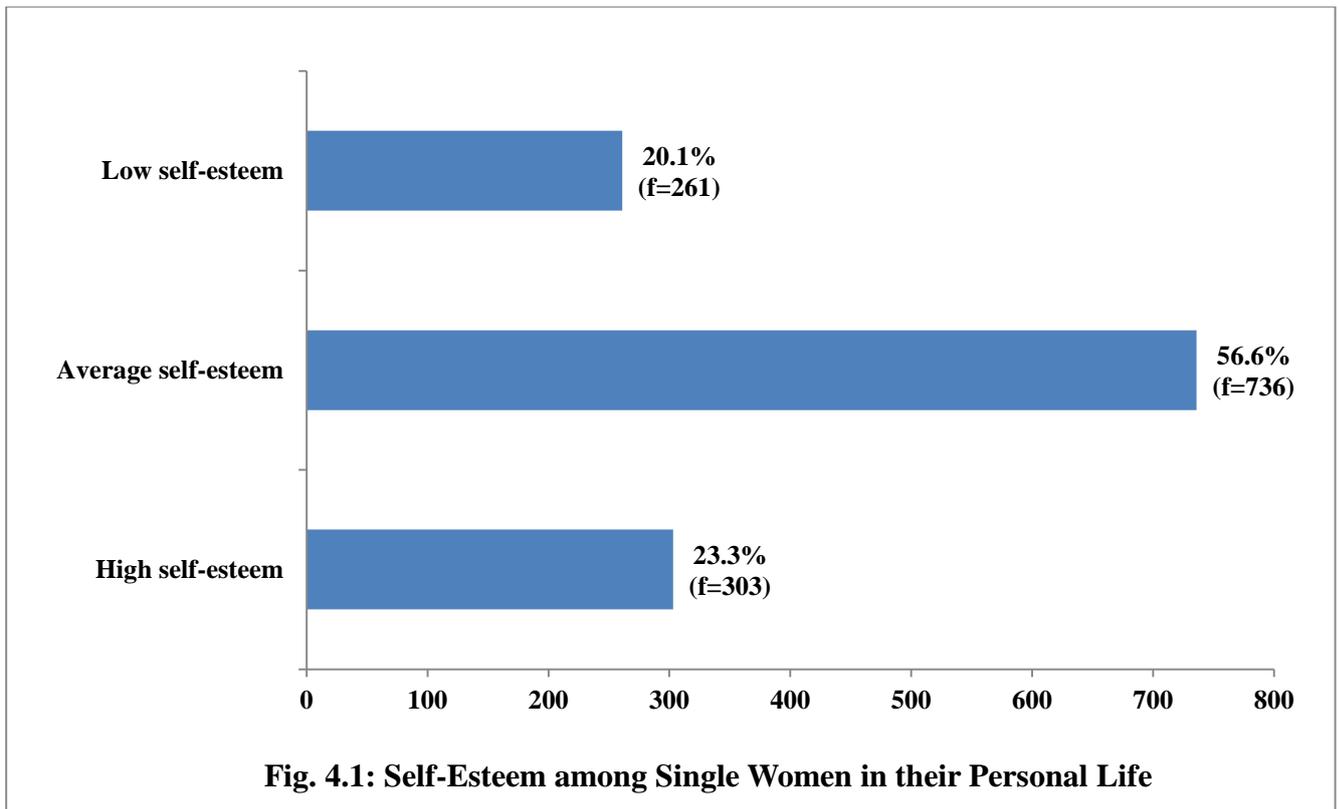
n= 1300

Column percentage

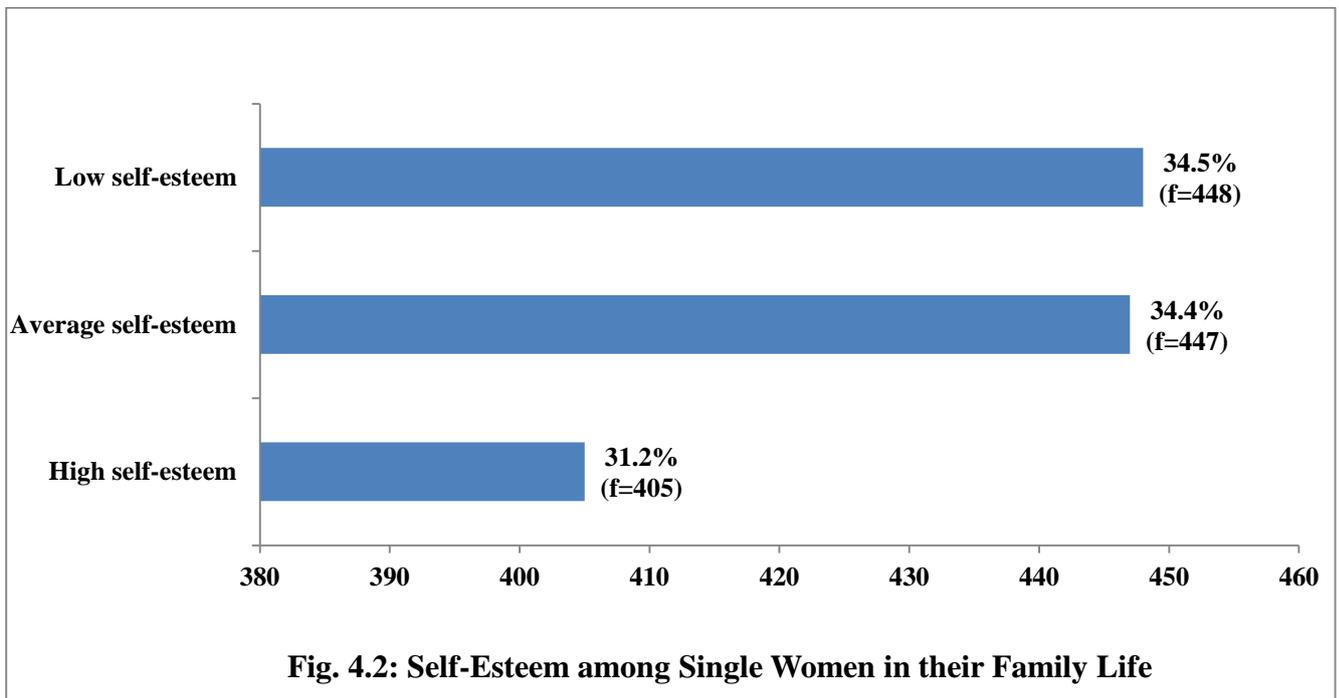
 χ^2 stands for chi-square

df stands for degree of freedom

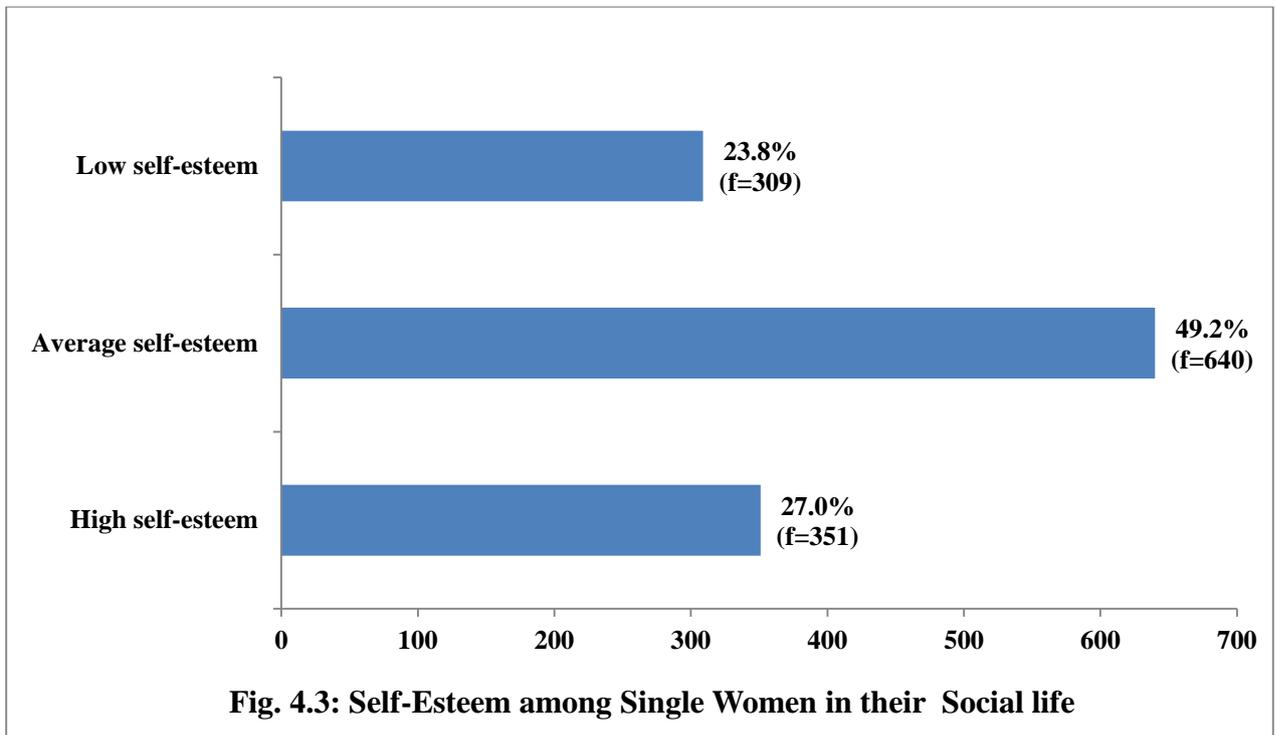
p-value denotes level of significance



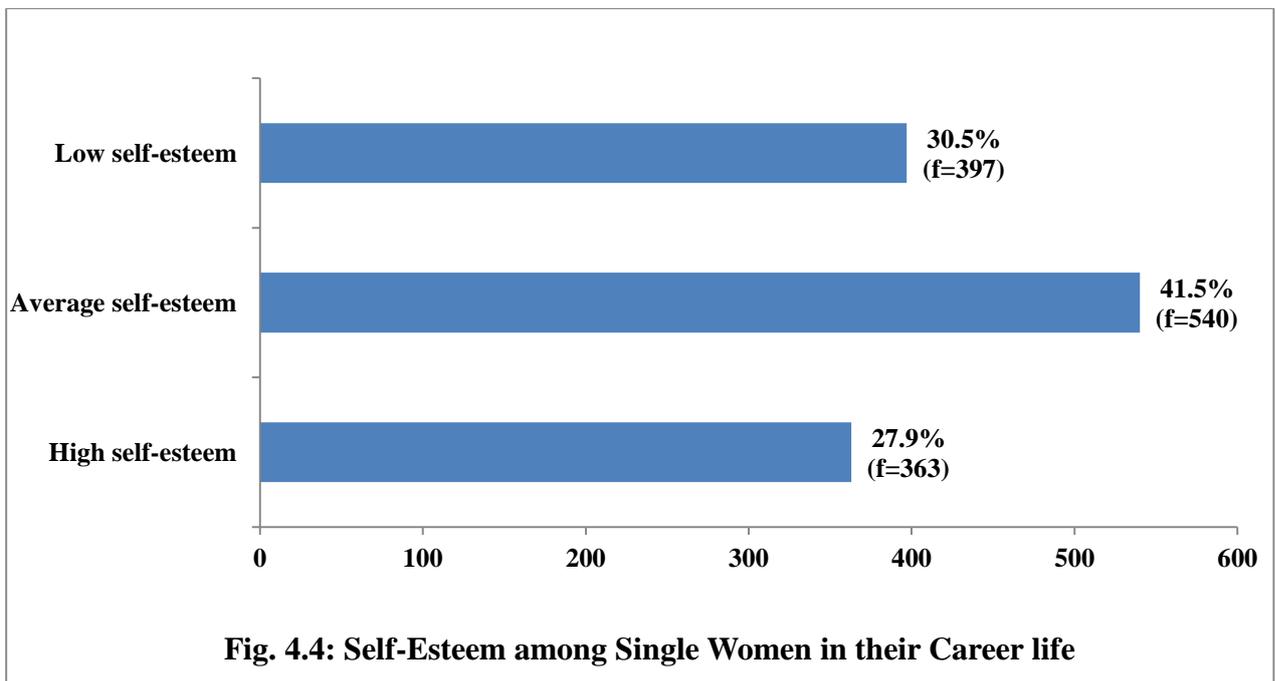
Based on field survey
n= 1300



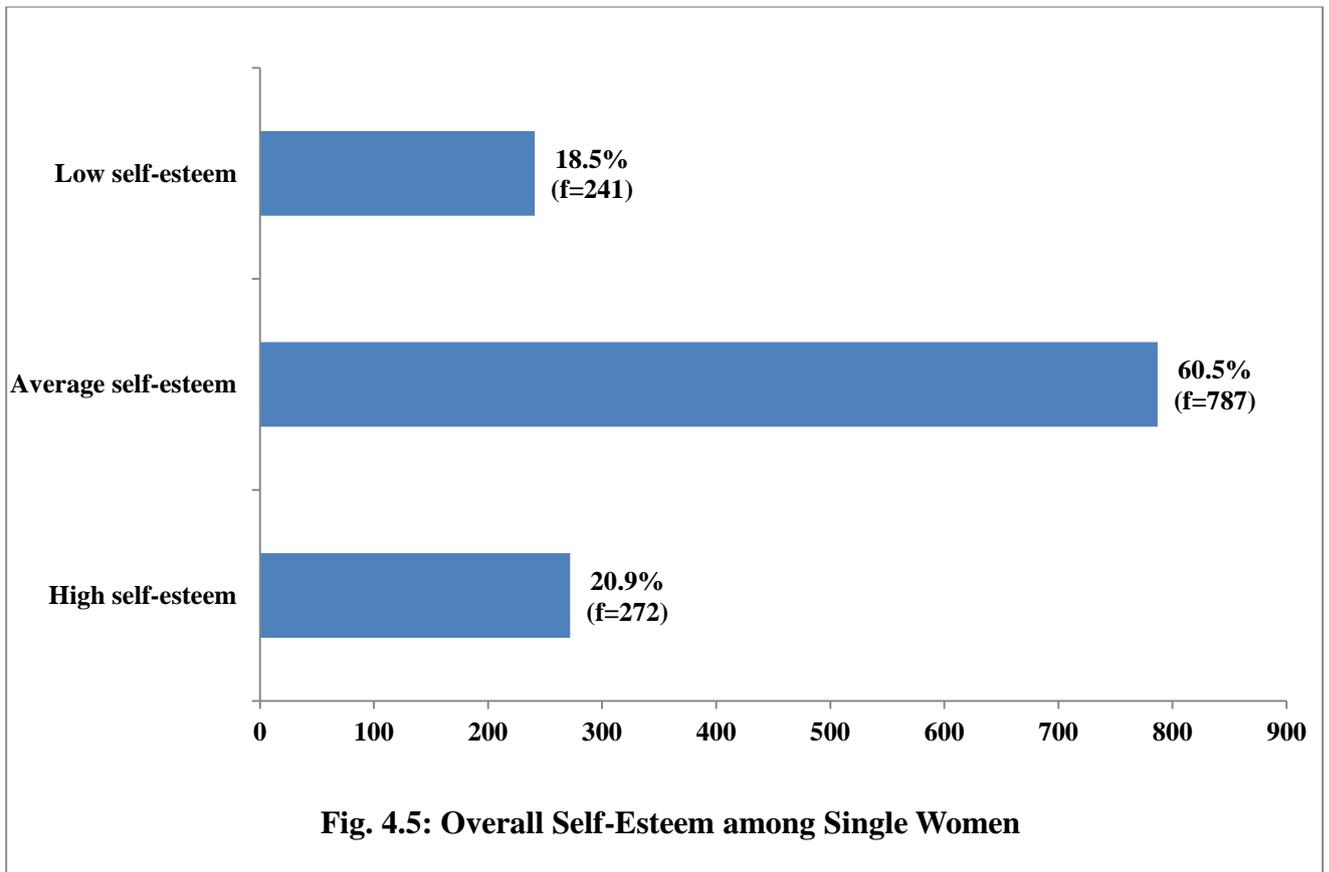
Based on field survey
n= 1300



Based on field survey
n= 1300



Based on field survey
n= 1300



Based on field survey
n= 1300

Table 4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Self- Esteem among Single Women

		N	Mean	S.D
Self-esteem in their personal life	Widows	860	32.54	4.421
	Half-widows	110	34.18	4.200
	Divorced women	110	31.81	4.563
	Separated women	110	28.44	3.570
	Never-married women	110	37.07	3.388
	All single women	1300	32.65	4.649
Self-esteem in their family life	Widows	860	11.33	1.727
	Half-widows	110	11.59	1.528
	Divorced women	110	11.26	1.618
	Separated women	110	10.35	1.700
	Never-married women	110	13.15	1.818
	All single women	1300	11.42	1.808

Self-esteem in their social life	Widows	860	22.54	3.512
	Half-widows	110	24.00	3.287
	Divorced women	110	21.43	3.638
	Separated women	110	20.15	2.780
	Never-married women	110	25.26	3.838
	All single women	1300	22.60	3.668
Self-esteem in their career life	Widows	860	13.28	2.445
	Half-widows	110	14.38	2.530
	Divorced women	110	13.23	2.888
	Separated women	110	11.82	2.303
	Never-married women	110	16.40	3.406
	All single women	1300	13.51	2.768
Overall Self Esteem	Widows	860	79.69	10.959
	Half-widows	110	84.15	10.518
	Divorced women	110	77.73	10.888
	Separated women	110	70.76	8.567
	Never-married women	110	91.89	11.281
	All single women	1300	80.18	11.688

Based on field survey

n= 1300

SD denotes standard deviation

Table 4.4 Analysis of Self-Esteem among Single Women (ANOVA)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Self-esteem in their personal life	Between Groups	4450.828	4	1112.707	61.002	.000
	Within Groups	23621.403	1295	18.240		
	Total	28072.231	1299			
Self-esteem in their family life	Between Groups	469.185	4	117.296	40.199	.000
	Within Groups	3778.676	1295	2.918		
	Total	4247.861	1299			
Self-esteem in their social life	Between Groups	1808.526	4	452.132	37.378	.000
	Within Groups	15664.455	1295	12.096		
	Total	17472.981	1299			
Self-esteem in their career life	Between Groups	1370.465	4	342.616	51.686	.000
	Within Groups	8584.384	1295	6.629		
	Total	9954.849	1299			
Overall Self Esteem	Between Groups	27447.712	4	6861.928	59.236	.000
	Within Groups	150013.596	1295	115.841		
	Total	177461.308	1299			

Based on field survey

n= 1300

df stands for degree of freedom

p-value denotes level of significance

Table 4.5 Impact of Singlehood on Self-Esteem of Women

		Self-esteem in their personal life	Self-esteem in their family life	Self-esteem in their social life	Self-esteem in their career life
Self-esteem in their personal life	Pearson Correlation	-	.704**	.806**	.809**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000	.000	.000
	N	-	1300	1300	1300
Self-esteem in their family life	Pearson Correlation	.704**	-	.629**	.681**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-	.000	.000
	N	1300	-	1300	1300
Self-esteem in their social life	Pearson Correlation	.806**	.629**	-	.753**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	-	.000
	N	1300	1300	-	1300
Self-esteem in their career life	Pearson Correlation	.809**	.681**	.753**	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	-
	N	1300	1300	1300	-

Table 4.1 illustrates self-esteem among single women as per their singlehood. It is found that more than half i.e. 63.6 per cent (f=70) never-married women, while a lower percentage i.e. 5.5 per cent (f= 6) separated women have higher self-esteem in their personal life. More than half i.e. 61.7 per cent (f=531) widows and less than half i.e. 36.4 per cent (f= 40) never-married women have shown an average self-esteem in their personal life. More than half of the separated women i.e. 56.3 per cent (f=62) have shown a low self-esteem in their personal life. The results proved to be highly significant $\chi^2(8, 1300) = 221.034$, p-value = .000*. The table also shows that almost three-quarters i.e. 73.6 per cent (f=81) never-married women, while less percentage i.e. 15.5 per cent (f= 17) separated women have demonstrated a high self-esteem in family life. More than half i.e. 62.7 per cent (f=69) separated women, while only a few i.e. 12.8 (f= 14) never-married women have shown low self-esteem in family relationships. Less than half i.e. 47.3 per cent (f=52) half-widows, while a low percentage i.e. 13.6 per cent (f= 15) never-married women have shown an average level of self esteem in family relationships. Self-esteem in family life are found to be very significant $\chi^2(8, 1300) = 158.516$, p-value = .000*. The table further reveals that more than half i.e. 55.5 per cent (f=61) divorced women, while less than half i.e. 36.4 per cent (f= 40) never-married women shows an average self-esteem in social relationships. More than half i.e. 53.6 per cent (f=59) never-married women, while a smaller percentage i.e. 3.6 per cent (f= 4) separated women have shown great self-esteem in social relationships. Low self-esteem in social relationships is found in 42.7 per cent (f=47) separated women and few i.e. 10.0 per cent (f= 11) never-married women. These differences in self-esteem in social relations are found to be highly significant $\chi^2(8, 1300) = 117.129$, p-value = .000*. High self-esteem in career life is found in 70.9 per cent (f=78) never-married women and low percentage i.e. 7.3 per cent (f= 8) separated women. More than half i.e. 60.0 (f=66) separated women, while less percentage i.e. 16.4 per cent (f= 18) never-married women have low self-esteem in career life. Less than half i.e. 48.2 per cent (f=53) divorced women, while 12.7 per cent (f= 14) never-married women

have an average self-esteem in their career life. Self-esteem in career life is found to be highly significant $\chi^2(8, 1300) = 184.527$, $p\text{-value} = .000^*$. Almost three-quarters i.e. 73.6 per cent ($f=81$) divorced women, while less than half i.e. 36.4 per cent ($f= 40$) never-married women have shown an average level of overall self-esteem. More than half i.e. 62.7 per cent ($f=69$) never-married women, while few i.e. 3.6 per cent ($f= 4$) separated women have a high overall self-esteem. More than half i.e. 50.9 per cent ($f=56$) separated women while very few i.e. 0.9 per cent ($f= 1$) never-married women have shown an overall low level of self-esteem. These differences between self-esteem are found to be highly significant $\chi^2(8, 1300) = 230.614$, $p\text{-value} = .000^*$. The results coincide with the findings of Baum et.al (2005) who found that in terms of self esteem, divorced women perceive themselves to have changed and improved. They were more self-assured and more accountable for themselves. They stated that they had higher self-esteem, felt more competent and were more likely to view the tasks they were given as challenges. According to Ubaidi (2017) women who are separated have low self-esteem, feelings of dissatisfaction, negative self-image, anxiety, helplessness, depressed mood and distrustful attitude. Baarsen (2002) undertook a study on “theories on coping with loss: The impact of social support and self esteem on adjustment to emotional and social loneliness following a partner’s death in later life.” According to research, losing a partner can lead to a loss of identity (i.e. lower self-esteem). After the death of a partner, a drop in self-esteem was related to a rise in emotional and social aloneness.

Table 4.2 shows self-esteem among single women as per their dwelling. It is observed that more than half i.e. 58.1 per cent ($f=482$) rural and 54.0 per cent ($f=254$) urban single women have an average self-esteem in personal life, while 21.9 per cent ($f=103$) in urban and 19.0 per cent ($f=158$) single women in rural areas have low self-esteem in their personal life. The table also shows that less than half i.e. 35.4 per cent ($f=294$) single women in rural areas and 32.6 per cent (153) urban have an average self-esteem in family life, while 35.7 per cent ($f=168$) single women in urban areas and 33.7 per cent (280) in rural have a low self-esteem in family life. The table further shows that more than half i.e. 52.1 per cent ($f=245$) urban and less than half i.e. 47.6 per cent ($f=395$) single women in rural areas have an average self-esteem in social life, while 24.3 per cent ($f=202$) rural and 22.8 per cent ($f= 107$) urban single women have a low self-esteem in social life. Less than half i.e. 44.1 per cent ($f=366$) rural and 37.0 per cent ($f=174$) urban single women have an average self-esteem in their career life, while 29.8 per cent ($f=140$) urban and 26.9 per cent ($f=223$) single women in rural areas have a high self-esteem in their career life. It is also observed that more than half i.e. 61.9 per cent ($f= 514$) rural and 58.1 per cent ($f= 273$) urban single women have an average level of overall self-esteem, while 20.6 per cent ($f= 97$) in the urban and 17.3 per cent ($f= 144$) single women in rural areas have a low level of overall self-esteem. The findings line up with the study of Shoukry and Ali (2017) who found that low self-esteem was prevalent among single women. The community’s societal pressure on single women could be responsible for their low self-esteem. Depression, discouragement, embarrassment, hopelessness, and anxiety are some of the negative emotions that emerge. These negative emotions drive a self-destructive cycle of withdrawing behavior that only serves to erode self-esteem.

Fig. 4.1 shows that more than half of single women i.e. 56.6 per cent ($f=736$) have an average level of self esteem in personal life, 23.3 per cent ($f=303$) have a high level of self-esteem in

their personal life, and 20.1 per cent (f=261) have a low level of self esteem in personal life. Fig. 4.2 depicts that 34.5 per cent (f=448) of single women have a low level of self esteem in family life, 34.4 per cent (f=447) have an average level of self esteem in family life and 31.2 per cent (f=405) have a high level of self esteem in family life. Fig. 4.3 illustrates that less than half i.e. 49.2 per cent (f=640) of single women have an average level of self esteem in social life, 27.0 per cent (f=351) have more self esteem in social life, and 23.8 per cent (f=309) have a low self esteem in social life. Fig. 4.4 represents that less than half i.e. 41.5 per cent (f=540) of single women have an average level of self esteem in their career life, 30.5 per cent (f=397) have a low level of self esteem in their career life and 27.9 per cent (f=363) have a high level of self esteem in their career. Fig. 4.5 reveals that more than half of single women i.e. 60.5 per cent (f= 787) have shown an average level of overall self-esteem, 20.9 per cent (f=272) have shown a high level of overall self esteem while as 18.5 per cent (f=241) have shown a low level of overall self esteem. Women's mental health is heavily influenced by their self-esteem. Self-esteem encompasses self-worth and self-image, and it affects women's transition throughout their lives (Jan and Ashraf, 2008).

Table 4.3 presents descriptive analysis of self-esteem among single women. It reveals that never-married women have a higher mean score for self-esteem in personal life (M= 37.07, SD= 3.388), while separated women have a low mean score for self-esteem in personal life. (M= 28.44, SD= 3.570). Moreover, it is also observed that never-married women have a higher mean score for self-esteem in family life (M= 13.15, SD= 1.818), while separated women have a low mean score for self-esteem in family life (M= 10.35, SD= 1.700). The table also shows that never-married women have a higher mean score for self-esteem in social life (M= 25.26, SD= 3.838), while separated women have a low mean score for self-esteem in social life (M= 20.15, SD= 2.780). Furthermore, the table shows that never-married women have a greater mean score in career life (M= 16.40, SD= 3.406), while separated women have a low mean score for self-esteem in career life (M= 11.82, SD = 2.303). In addition, the table indicates that never-married women have a higher mean score for overall self-esteem (M= 91.89, SD= 11.281), while separated women have a low mean score for overall self-esteem (M= 70.76, SD= 8.567).

Table 4.4 illustrates analysis of self-esteem among single women. Highly significant differences in the mean scores of self-esteem of single women in their personal life $F(4, 1295) = 61.002$, $p\text{-value} = .000^*$. Similarly, highly significant differences are observed among single women in self-esteem in their family life $F(4, 1295) = 40.199$, $p\text{-value} = .000^*$. The differences in self-esteem in social life among single women is found to be highly significant $F(4, 1295) = 37.378$, $p\text{-value} = .000^*$. Highly significant differences are also observed in self-esteem of single women in their career life $F(4, 1295) = 51.686$, $p\text{-value} = .000^*$. Moreover, highly significant differences are found in the mean scores of overall self-esteem among single women $F(4, 1295) = 59.236$, $p\text{-value} = .000^*$.

Table 4.5 shows impact of singlehood on self-esteem of women. Self-esteem in personal life has shown highly positive correlation with self-esteem in family life, $r(1300) = .704^{**}$, $p = .000$; self-esteem in social life, $r(1300) = .806^{**}$, $p = .000$ and self-esteem in career life, $r(1300) = .809^{**}$, $p = .000$. Self-esteem in family life has shown highly positive correlation with self-esteem in social life, $r(1300) = .629^{**}$, $p = .000$ and self-esteem in career life, r

(1300) = .681**, $p = .000$. Self-esteem in social life has shown highly positive correlation with self-esteem in career life, $r(1300) = .753^{**}$, $p = .000$.

Summary and Conclusion

The results found that self-esteem in personal life has been observed high among never-married women, average among widows, half-widows, divorced women and low among separated women. Self-esteem in family life has been depicted high among never-married women, average among half-widows, widows and low among separated and divorced women. Self-esteem in social life has been found high among never-married women, moderate among widows, divorced women and low among separated women. Self-esteem in career life has been observed high among never-married women and half-widows, average among divorced women and widows and low among separated women. Overall self-esteem has been found high among never-married women, average among divorced women, half-widows, widows and low among separated women. The study concludes that losing a partner can lead to a loss of identity (i.e. lower self-esteem). After the death of a partner, a drop in self-esteem was related to a rise in emotional and social aloneness.

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