

Children with single parents face psychological distress - Analytical study in social work perspective

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Abstract

1. Abstract

Children in single parent family face innumerable problems. Children depend on their parents in school readiness, preparation and learning and care and support. Anthony et al., (2005)[1] in their study point out that children learn best when they are given adequate learning and development materials and psychological support.

There are 320 billion children worldwide between 0-17 years of age living with single parents mostly headed by single methods and near about 2-3 billion children are living in India. (Nasir Ahmed Bhat et al., 2019)[2]. Due to work pressure the time spent by the single parents being less leads to failure in meeting the psychological needs of the children. In case of both biological parents the responsibility of children education is shared but in case of single parent a negative impact on child's academic achievement will result due to change in family routines since the parent works for long hours and less time is spent in children education. Against this background a study on children psychological distress faced with single parents is studied.

KEYWORDS : Psychological distress, single parent, academic progress, group, weighted average, rearing.

2. Introduction:

The past studies in the area of children of single parent reveals that societal perception of single parent as a collective group and most literature focussed on the problems and defects of these parents and families (Gold schevider et al., 2006)[3], Wang and Nagi, 2011[4] Richards et al., 1993)[5]. Researchers like Amato (2000)[6]; Haire & McGeorge (2012)[7] stated that society continues to equate "healthy families" with the two parent families and view single parents negatively. (Haire and McGeorge (2012)[7], Richards et al., (1993)[5])

A child living life with single parenting loses childhood days and decency due to the parental, work force, commitment and societal relation (Nasir Ahmed Bhatt et al., 2019)[2]. Most of the single parent families in India are mother headed and hence mother never abandon children and family. Traditionally the head of the family being father is the primary supporter of the Indian family and his absence reflects a bad impression in the development of values, discipline etc.,

The psychological condition of the single parent children much depends upon the performance parent in fulfilling the needs of children. When the minimum basic needs are not fulfilled the children of single parent would like to compare with two parent children and a set back emerges in the mind.

3. Statement of the problem

There are some different problems faced by single parent that makes them difficult to rear their children. These different problems may be loneliness, poverty insecurity and raising children alone without a help (Ekpenyong Nkeriwem et al., 2016)[8] on account of enhanced socialising factors impacting children and in poor parental caring and guidance caused by divorce, separation or death of a partner, children are more exposed to potential damaging situations (Olaleye, YL et al., 2010)[9]. Increased domestic work of household leaves impact on the children with little or no time for their studies (Adelari, Ti Jam et al., 2008)[10].

The impact of single parenting is extensive and it not only affects parents but also children since single parenthood leaves deep scars on children. Many of the problems faced by single parent due similar two parent family but the problems are very difficult to manage in single parent family. As the children grew they try to be independent. All anger and rebellion attitude directed only towards single parent and worst is that only one person to share and not for the two to share.

4. Review of literature

Bruce & Meggits (2005)[11] explain that during early childhood development children depend on their parents in school readiness, preparation and learning and development provision care and support.

Anthony et al. (2005)[1] reported that children learn best which they are given adequate learning and development material and psychological support.

Nidhi Kotwal et al. (2009)[12] felt that in the social sphere majority of single mothers tried to avoid attending social gatherings and had changed their dressing style due to depression. Further, the researchers have stated that they had developed poor food and eating habits.

According to Patrik Fagon(2017)[13] and David Popene (2019)[14] living in a single parent family is strongly correlated with school failure and problems of delinquency, drug use, teenage pregnancies, poverty and welfare dependency in the United States.

Laveena Noronha, et al. (2019)[15] stated that life is hard for most single parent families in India but yet many people chose to divorce or separation rather than remain in an unhappy relationship even though they know the difficulty of adjustments.

Angjelkosha et al. (2013): Atimdasala & Winifred (2012);[17] Magano & Gouws (2012)[18] research shows that the individuals from divorced or single parent families have poor psychological picture or self concept about them.

The past studies undertaken by Meggiolaro et al (2012)[19] and Usakli (2013)[20] emphasised that the emotional competence of children from the married intact families is better than the children living in disrupted families.

5. Objectives

- (1) To study the psychological impact on children of single parent.
- (2) To analyse the challenges faced by children of single parent.
- (3) To analyse psychological problems faced by the children of single parent.

6. Hypotheses

Ho: There were no Psychological impacts and problems felt by the children of single parent.

H1: There are psychological impacts and problems felt by the children of single parent.

7. Research Methodology

The present study on children with single parent face psychological distress - analytical study in social work perspective is a descriptive survey research design. This method primarily focuses on describing the nature of a demographic segment without focusing why a particular phenomenon occurs. It focused the consequences of psychological distress creating the problem of impactness of single parent on children, problems faced and challenges met by the children living in single parenthood families. Single parenthood is challenging and a difficult task. 80 professional social workers working in various fields of social work were approached with a structured online questionnaire and questionnaire was administered as schedule in order to avoid non response and to save time.

7.1. Research Instrument

Questionnaire was administered as schedule. A listed prenotified questions were incorporated in the schedule. All social work 80 respondents were approached and requested to provide valid responses.

7.2. Tools used

Weighted average quantitative metric was performed to measure the highest psychological impact on single parent children. ANOVA metric was performed to measure the variability and significance of data. Likert 5 point scale technique was used to present the opinions ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and Garrett ranking technique was performed to rank the problems faced. Percent table provides calculated value which were referred to Garrett conversion table to derive Garrett values. These values are multiplied by f to get fx, where x being scale value.

8.Universe - The present study confines only to Urban Bengaluru. 80 sample social workers were approached to collect the opinions as per schedule.

9. Limitations of the study

- 1) The present study is only confined to Bengaluru Urban.
- 2) Practical difficulties in addition to transportation and physical distance norms.
- 3) Any generalization requires further in-depth study.

10. Survey findings

Table - 1 reveals data about psychological impact on single parent children. These psychological impactors varied from change on the family creating negative impact to lack of parental income leads to educational problems and sometimes/in some cases dropout.

Table - 2 reveals about weighted average analysis. Equal highest weighted average is awarded to statement lacks of vigilance leads to addiction, and absence of timely support leads to suicidal thoughts with 20 weighted average. Second weighted average rank awarded to the change on the family etc., Over protection leads to development of low esteem and lack of parental leads to educational problems and dropouts with 19 weighted average. Third highest was awarded to single parent families are worsening the situation. The remaining weighted averages are awarded ranks depending upon the strength of weighted average.

Table - 3 states about challenges faced by children of single parents. 35 sample represents out of 80 are strongly agree for the statements followed by 21 agree, 7 stood is neutral, 7 disagree and 10 strongly disagree. ANOVA statistical tool fails to accept H₀ and accepts H₁ and hence it is concluded that there exist significant relationship variation in the data.

Table - 4 expresses data about psychological problems faced by children of single parent. These problems are measured and presented on the table that varies from difficult to continue school to conflicting nature of parents. First rank was assigned to the highest mean score of 64.86 difficult to continue school due to non payment of school fee and purchase books followed by second rank as awarded to the basic needs not fulfilled with mean score of 64.18 and third rank was awarded to the mean score no supply of medicines with 63.11 mean score. The remaining characteristics were awarded ranks depending upon the strength of mean score.

Conclusion

The present study coincides with the research study undertaken by Patrik Fagan (2017)[13] and David Popene, (2009)[14] where in their findings reveals that single parent family is strongly correlated with school failure and problems of addiction and poverty. The study concludes that psychologically single parents children facing the problem of continue of school due to non payment of fee and books purchase. The basic needs of children in the single parent family is not met and psychologically they feel inferiority and this leads to the birth of many other problems. The problems of single parent is not only affecting them but also their children, children when psychologically becomes poor develops angerness, opposing nature, and becomes servants of many other diseases. The trend of allowing children without care should be treated by the concerned government, so that the troublesome children may behave with awareness. What is lost in

the single parental families should be created to tackle the psychological problem of children of single parent.

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Table 1 : Psychological impact of single parent on children

Impact	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	T
Change in the family system has negatively influenced children family	21	29	15	8	7	80
Single parent families are worsening the situation	9	39	13	11	8	80
Child reared by single parents has more chance on developing psychological distress	14	29	12	18	7	80
Over protection to supervision from parents develops low esteem among children	17	34	10	13	6	80
Lack of vigilence leads to addiction	18	40	15	5	2	80
Absence of timely support leads to suicidal thoughts	22	35	10	8	5	80
A financial constraint leads to deprivation in Consumption causing social exclusion and limited life	25	33	10	5	2	80
Lack of parent income leads to educational problems and dropout	22	27	8	20	3	80

Source : Authors compilation

Note : SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, DA- Disagree, SDA - Strongly Disagree

Table 2 : Weighted average analysis

Impact	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	T	WA
Change in the family system has negatively influenced children family	105	116	45	16	7	289	19
Single parent families are worsening the situation	45	156	39	22	8	270	18
Child reared by single parents has more chance on developing psychological distress	70	116	36	36	7	265	15
Over protection to supervision from parents develops low esteem among children	85	136	30	26	6	283	19
Lack of vigilance leads to addiction	90	160	45	10	2	307	20
Absence of timely support leads to suicidal thoughts	110	140	30	16	5	301	20
Financial constraints leads to depreviation in Consumption causing social exclusion and limited life	125	132	30	10	2	299	20
Lack of parent income leads to educational Problems and dropout	110	108	24	40	3	285	19

Source : Authors Compilation

Note : (i) Frequencies or observations are multiplied by corresponding weights of 5, 4, 3, 2 & 1.

(ii) Total score is divided by 15 (5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1) to get weighted average.

Table 3 : Challenges faced by children of single parents.

Single parents children facing the problems	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	T
No social or financial support in time	2	4	2	2	2	12
Less quantity of time spared by parents	3	4	-	1	-	8
Two much social pressure	5	3	-	1	1	10
Society looks negatively	10	2	2	2	1	17
There are no separate counseling centers	5	3	1	1	3	13
Lack of support from society and development	6	3	1	-	2	12
Total	35	21	7	7	10	80

Source : Authors compilation

Note : SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, DA- Disagree, SDA - Strongly Disagree

Hypotheses

H0	There exist no significant variation in the data	Reject
H1	There exist significant variation in the data	Accept

ANOVA Table

Source of Variation	SS	d.f.	ms	F-ratio	5% F-limit (from the F-table)
Between the sample	83.5324	(5-1)=4	83.5324/4 =20.8831	20.8831/2.0442 = 10.21	
Within the sample	61.3288	(35-5)=30	61.3288/30 =2.0442		(4,30) =2.69

Total 144.8652 (35-1)=34

Source : Field Survey

ANOVA Analysis

The calculated value being 10.21 higher than the TV = 2.69 @ 5% level of significance with df = V1 = 4, and V2 = 30 fails to accept H0 and accepts H1. Therefore it is concluded here that there exist significant variation in the data.

Table - 4 : Psychological problems faced by children of single parent - Garrette Ranking Technique.

Ranks	Scale & Score value of ranks										Total	Mean		
Problems	Scale value(x)	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	Score	Score	Rank
Difficult to continue school due to non-payment of fee & purchase books	f 30	12	9	8	7	4	3	2	2	2	3	80	518964.86	i
Basic needs not fulfilled	f 28	10	12	7	8	5	2	3	4	1	80	513564.18	ii	
No supply of medicines	f 25	12	8	9	9	7	4	3	1	2	80	504963.11	iii	
No supply of clothing during festivals	f 26	13	4	8	7	5	8	4	3	2	80	36495961.98	v	
Difficult to cope with changed living styles	f 27	12	8	6	4	3	5	6	7	2	80	493761.58	vi	
Lack of enforcement discipline & advise	f 20	14	9	8	6	5	8	3	5	2	80	36482360.28	ix	
Lack of minimum cash to buy essentials and practice of robbery & pick pocketing	f 22	10	8	9	5	4	6	7	5	4	80	470258.78	x	
Society looks always with negativity	f 28	8	7	6	8	7	4	5	3	4	80	489961.23	vii	
Parents spending less time	f 25	15	8	6	2	3	7	5	4	5	80	488061.00	viii	
Conflicting nature of parents	f 28	12	9	8	5	3	2	4	3	6	80	439062.37	iv	

Source : Authors compilation

Note : x - Scale value

f - Number of Consumers / respondents

fx - Scale value

x - scale value

R - Ranks

Table - 5 : Per cent Position and Garrett values

Sl.No.	$100(R_{ij} - 0.5)/N_j$	Calculated value	Garrett Value
1.	$100(1-0.5)/10$	5	82
2.	$100(2-0.5)/10$	15	70
3.	$100(3-0.5)/10$	25	63
4.	$100(4-0.5)/10$	35	57
5.	$100(5-0.5)/10$	45	52
6.	$100(6-0.5)/10$	55	47
7.	$100(7-0.5)/10$	65	42
8.	$100(8-0.5)/10$	75	37
9.	$100(9-0.5)/10$	85	30
10.	$100(10-0.5)/10$	95	18

Source: Table 3 & 4 - Dhanavandanam. S. (2016). Application of Garrett ranking technique: Practical approach. **International journal of library and information studies**, 6(3), 135-148.