

A qualitative analysis of relationship management of young adults belonging to single parent families with mother as primary caregiver.

Surbhi Kelkar (MA II)

Dr. Rajashree Kapure (Asst. Prof)

HPT Arts and RYK Science College
Nashik (MAHARASHTRA)

ABSTRACT:

The study examined the relationship management of young adults from single mother families with their first-degree relatives and friends. was applied in this study. Semi structured interview as a part of qualitative research method was conducted with ten participants to gain in depth knowledge about their relations with their family and friends. These interviews were recorded and using narrative analysis, the data was interpreted. The findings suggested that the young adults from single mother families develop very close and deeply connected relationship and take on the role of an emotional supporter and a companion with their mother. Young adult take on the role of a father and guide for their sibling/s. The study also unveiled that the participants prefer to have a few close friends with sincere and meaningful relationship that would benefit each other's growth. In addition, this study has implications for developing programs to assist and facilitate the well-being of single parent families. The long-term effects of single parenting may not appear until late adolescence or early adulthood when individuals start establishing intimate relationships or deeper relationships with people other than family as they become independent. A strategy is needed to enhance the single parenting.

Keywords: Single parent, Single mother, young adults, Child development, Relationship management.

Introduction:

Single parent is one who is bringing up a child by their own because the other parent is not living with them. And it has been noted that the number of single mothers is notably high than single fathers. Hence, in the 21st century, we have the super-breed of single mothers who have not only defied cultural norms by raising a child without a partner but also challenged the norms of patriarchy by working and raising a child at the same time.

Single parenting is a situation in which one of the two individuals involved in the conception of the child is being responsible for upbringing of the child (Child, 2003 and Esleman, 2005) An estimated 4.5% of all Indian households are run by single mothers, says UN report which draws attention to significant number of lone parent families in the country. Even as the dominant household form in India continues to be a mix of couples living with their children of any age, followed by extended families, the UN Women puts the figure of lone mother households in India at 13 million according to a survey of July, 2019. Research shows that many children from disrupted families have a harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage, or even holding a steady Job (David, 2009)

The single parenting effect on child development can be good or bad. However, despite the effect that single- parenting might have on children, they can grow up happily, successfully, and well-adjusted. With extra care, single parents can raise successful children with excellent overall development in their social and emotional lives. Single parent families with mother as a primary caregiver can have effects on the social development of the child, either negatively or positively. This can make the relationships of the child when he/she becomes an adult different than those who live with both parents or with father only. These relationships contain family, (mother, siblings, etc.), extended family, friends, romantic relationships, colleagues, organizations, etc. There are various factors of a relationship that can affect the quality of relations with 4 others like honesty, vulnerability, trustfulness, decision making, problem solving, etc.

Young adults: The period of human development in which full physical growth and maturity have been achieved and certain biological, cognitive, social, personality, and other changes associated with the aging process occur. The age group of 18 to 25.

Relationship Management: an emotional intelligence imperative, is defined as, "using your awareness of your own emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully". All relationships take work. As discussed by Bradberry and Greaves, "working on a relationship takes time, effort, and know-how. The know-how is emotional intelligence". By utilizing the strategies learned in improving your self-awareness, self-management, and 5 social awareness you will be able to successfully develop your relationship management.

Statement of problem:

To study the relations of children who were brought up by single parent, with their family and friends.

Objectives of the study:

- To study the relationship of young adults from single mother family with their first-degree relatives.
- To study the relationship of young adults from single mother family with their friends.

Review of literature:

John, Wajim and Shimfe, Harry Grace (2020) conducted a study on the effects of single parenting on the development of children which claimed that there is strong bond developed between the mother and the children in single parent houses. There is less conflict in the household as there is no other parent which somewhere impacts the children positively. Children develop self confidence early due to the development of self dependency and self efficacy early in life. It also helps the children to improve their resilience. The 9 kids learn about responsibility and grow into mature and well- balanced adults. There are also negative effects that can be financial instability, threat of mental illness if faced with triggering situations, poor performance at school, etc.

Nasir Ahamd Bhat, (April 2019) in his study claims that losing or falling off either of the parents creates instability in family structure and there is the emergence of new family structure which may be disorganized due to the conflict between their job and housekeeping duties. The expressions of anger and conflict are often seen in children of dual parenting as compared to children with single parents. This means that children of single parenting families are encouraged to be assertive and self-sufficient to take their own decisions. Participation in social and recreational activities is slightly lower in children of single parenting families because they might be getting socially 10 acceptable and desirable responses. Single parenting children withdraw themselves socially and emotionally to become less expressive in terms of their feelings they do not prefer to see themselves as expressive even in the ideal family environment as compared to a child brought up in dual parent households.

Wallerstein and Lewis (2004) claim that children at every age are also affected by divorce in different ways. Many studies identify the relevance of age at the time of separation on children's divorce adjustment. The younger the child when the parental divorce occurred, the more the child was negatively affected. Amato (1996) demonstrates that the younger the child is when his parents' divorce, the more the divorce will negatively affect that child's communication behavior and decrease their trust in future partners. He also finds that children who were younger than 12 years old when their parents divorced were the most likely to experience negative effects. This is because younger children had a shorter period of time in which to learn functional dyadic communication skills from their parents, which could result in experiencing an incidence of divorce later in their life. Wallerstein and Lewis (2004) also claim that parental divorce's negative effects tend to be most strong in those children who experienced their parents' divorce when they were six years old or younger, because they had so little ability to comfort themselves during this traumatic time in their young lives. 11 Whereas parental involvement and parenting and style of discipline play a crucial role in children's behaviour, parental conflicts and violence in families are found to put them at risk of using violence as adults. Children who witness violence can experience serious emotional difficulties, lack of sense of self, and have little confidence in the future (Saunders 1994; Johnson et al. 1996). They often live with anxiety and fear of the next violence to arise. Adolescents may react by running away or getting involved with risky behaviours. Those children, in turn, come to see violence as the right way of dealing with conflict in human relationships and this can affect children's adjustment at school and with their peers.

Yusuf and Fahrudin (2020) studied the effects of single parenting by mothers on the development of children and found that the certain pitfalls may be encountered by parents that can present clinical issues including responding to children as a reminder of the former spouse, developing over dependencies on children, seeing children as a burden and the tendency to focus on surviving rather than on parenting children and attempting to meet their developmental needs. This doesn't meet the emotional needs of the children and develops certain insecurities in them which are later on reflected in their adult life. After the mother becomes a single parent, she takes a more authoritarian role. This tends to promote healthier, more positive adjustment among children. It is not unusual for single-parent mothers to institute changes in the boundaries, patterns, and rules that define the usual adult and child role behaviours. A mother may expect that child to be more mature than 12 he or she is developmentally ready to be. Accordingly, the child's role becomes transformed; he or she is now the mother's confidant. The mother increasingly relies on this child for emotional support and assigns him or her much of the missing adult partner's responsibilities. As a result, the child may be forced

into interaction patterns that call for the developmental maturity that he or she does not have or is not prepared to provide for the mother.

Method:

A qualitative approach was chosen as the research method for this study. The process of research involves empirical work being carried out with the collection of data which can concur, refute or contest theories which in turn allows for understanding and clarification for different observations (May, 1997). Qualitative research involves a process known as induction, whereby data is collected relating to a specific area of study and from this data the researcher constructs different concepts and theories. A qualitative approach was considered more relevant to undertake this research as it allowed greater capacity to gain more depth and meaning based on an individual's experiences of their relationships with their family and friends along with their beliefs and feelings opposed to a quantitative approach which is more structured, broader in scale and more numerically based.

Interview: Semi-structured interviews were selected to carry out this research study. They allowed the participants to elaborate and with that provided more flexibility, range and therefore the capacity to elicit more information from the participant. Semi-structured interviews permit scope for individuals to answer questions more on their own terms than the standardised interview permits, yet still provides a good structure for comparability over that of the focused interview (May, 1997). Kumar (2005) views the interview as the most suitable approach for studying complex and sensitive areas as the interviewer has the opportunity to prepare a participant before asking sensitive questions and to explain complex ones to them in person. While the interview process is a valuable means of collecting rich and in depth data, it can prove to be an expensive and time-consuming process. Interaction between the interviewer and the participant can differ as each interview is unique and the quality of the responses obtained from different interviews may vary significantly (Kumar, 2005). Furthermore, the quality of the data generated is affected by the experience, skills and commitment of the interviewer (Kumar, 2005). A risk of researcher bias can also exist. In addition, it can prove to be a difficult task to gain reliable data on the research subject if there are a small number of participants involved, unlike the quantitative approach which involves a higher number of participants and hence in certain circumstances can provide more far reaching and reliable data results.

Procedure:

A snowball sampling method was used to find a sample of 10 participants for the study. The very first participants were friends, then more participants were found through friends and their friends and so on. In depth interviews were conducted with the participants at a mutually agreed place which was the college campus or a café with less rush. Prior to the interview, the participants were asked to fill the consent form and their doubts and curiosities regarding the study were answered. All the interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed into brief responses after receiving permissions from the participants. There was no time limit set for the interviews, but on an average, it took 40 minutes to complete and interview.

In the interviews, the participants were asked about their personal qualities which play an important role in any relationship on the aspects of trust, empathy, mutual respect, honesty, etc. The questions were asked considering different settings and relations such as family- mother, family- sibling, etc.

Data analysis:

The recorded interviews of all the 10 participants were briefed in writing and common patterns in their relational characteristics were noted. The analysis was done by suitable interpretation with collected information shared by all the participants. Mainly the objectives and qualitative research strategies were taken into consideration.

Observation:

Semi – structured interviews were conducted on participants aged 20-25 years old who have been living with single parent i.e., their mother since 5 years or more. The following are the responses of the individuals: As the mother became a single parent, her responsibilities increased as well as the responsibility of her children. The children seeing the increased responsibility of the mother, try to help her in as many things as possible and thus take responsibilities of the house sooner. The financial problems, in some cases more than in others also leads the children to feel responsible of the expenses and priorities.

The relationship between the siblings also changed to fill the void that was created and to fill in the role of the missing parent for each other. Mostly the older sibling would inculcate in himself/herself the qualities of the role of the father, but it has also been observed in the younger siblings in some cases. The relationship between the mother and the child growing up became stronger and they developed a special bond, the one that wouldn't have been created in a household of two parents. The reason for this might be that the mother alone

takes care of all the needs of the child and gives the child her complete attention towards all his physical as well as emotional needs, fearing that the lack of one parent should not affect the child. The mother paid close attention to her children right from childhood, thus they received full 17 emotional support which has further led to high emotional intelligence as an adult. This is reflected in the common observation that all the participants would share everything with their mother except for the things that would cause her to worry.

In case of friendships, it was observed that the participants had very few friends, a close group of friends and did not have a big group that they would hang out with. They value meaningful and fulfilling relationships when it comes to friendships rather than the casual ones. In the present study it was observed that the boys did not like to share their problems with their friends as they think it would drain their friends mentally and would also make them look weak. Girls seemed to share some of their problems with their very close friends, the problems that they could not share with the mother or siblings. Also, the children tend to develop respect for personal space of self and others strongly. It was observed that they have set strict boundaries in all types of relationships. In the Indian society, a family with a single parent is not seen as normal and is continuously under scrutiny. It has been observed that many times the mother being female, is seen as weak and is scrutinised for many things as dressing in a particular way, her lifestyle, etc. This affects the observant children and they develop a non-significant view of the society.

Discussion:

The participants answered the questions of the interview with the help of introspection and recalling their personal experiences. The study revealed that adults who had a single parent and mother as a primary caregiver since childhood have deep and meaningful relationship with their first-degree relatives such as their mother and siblings, especially with their mother. They prefer few deep and meaningful friendships rather than being friendly with many friends. These friendships are characterised with high trust and respect, which the individuals develop over time and with experience. If these relations are not meeting the standards, it would result in change in the friendships/ altering the friendships.

Conclusion:

Single parenting has positive as well as negative effects on the children which is reflected in the developing stages of their life. The positive effects being good management of relationships due to development more suitability in various areas of developments such as emotional, moral etc.

Limitations and Suggestions:

- In this study, children of single mother families were interviewed and not of single father families.
- This research can be used to further study the relationship between single parenting and social development of the children as adults.
- Sometimes the person's answers may be affected due to discrepancy between perceived and real self, so an interview with family members and friends can also be conducted.
- A comparative study can be conducted between development of children of single mothers and single fathers.

Referances:

Capaldi, D. M., & Patterson, G. R. (1991). Relation of parental transitions to boys' adjustment problems: I. A linear hypothesis: II. Mothers at risk for transitions and unskilled parenting. *Developmental Psychology*, 27(3), 489–504.

Cockett, M. and J. Tripp. (1994). "Children Living in Re-ordered Families". *Social Policy Research Findings*, 45. 45-48.

Felner, R.D., Farber, S.S., Ginter, M.A., Boike, M.F. and E.L. Cowen. (1980). "Family Stress and Organization Following Parental Divorce or Death". *Journal of Divorce*, 4 (2), 67-76.

Hetherington, E. M., & Elmore, A. M. (2003). Risk and resilience in children coping with their parents' divorce and remarriage. In *Resilience and Vulnerability: Adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities*. pp. 182–212.

Hilton, J. M. , & Devall, E. L. (1998). Comparison of parenting and children's behavior in single-mother, single-father, and intact families. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 29, 23-53.

Husmiati Yusuf, Adi Fahrudin, Budiman, Fahmilman Fahrudin, Fikran Aranda Fahrudin. (2020). Impact of Single Mother Family on Child Development: A Review Literature. - *Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology* 17(10) 1985-1994. ISSN 1567- 214X.

John, Wajim. (2020). Single Parenting and Its Effects on the Development of Children in Nigeria. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*. 7. 5891-5902. 10.18535/ijsshi/v7i04.02

- McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent: What helps, what hurts*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Nasir, Ahamd & Bhat, Nasir & Patil, R. (2019). Single Parenthood Families and their impact on children in India.
- Richter D, Lemola S (2017) Growing up with a single mother and life satisfaction in adulthood: A test of mediating and moderating factors. *PLoS ONE* 12(6): e0179639.