

Personality Predictors of Resilience among Single Women

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Background: In a traditionally patriarchal society, women have limited or significantly fewer chances to express their needs or participate in decision-making. Single women in a patriarchal society are confronted with several challenges that increase their vulnerability. They often find themselves getting oppressed and suppressed than married women by the prejudices, harassments, social pressures, and domination of male-relative/ family members. There is a drastic and constant increase in the number of single women in India, but little is understood about the factors that challenge and promote positive adaptations in single women. **Aim:** The present study examines whether HEXACO personality dimensions predict psychological distress, happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience among single women. **Method:** A sample of 300 single women (divorced, widows, and separated women) in the age group of 25 to 60 years ($M = 40$ years, $SD = 7.98$) were administered self-report measures of personality, psychological distress, subjective happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience. **Results:** Multiple regressions were carried out to analyse the data. Psychological distress was positively predicted by honesty-humility and negatively predicted by extraversion and agreeableness. Subjective happiness was positively predicted by extraversion and negatively predicted by honesty-humility. Life satisfaction was positively predicted by extraversion and agreeableness and negatively predicted by openness to experience. Psychological resilience was positively predicted by extraversion and negatively predicted by emotionality. **Conclusion:** These findings highlight the role of personality dimensions as individual resources that promote the positive adaptation of single women to the challenges of everyday life. Future research examining the role of demographic, psychological, social, and communal factors that help in positive adaptation among single women can provide a better understanding of the process of resilience in this population. The implications of the findings for policy, practice, and research are also discussed..

Keywords: Single women, Personality, Psychological Distress, Subjective Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Resilience

Single women is an umbrella term that covers widowed women, divorced women, separated women, unmarried mothers, and so on. 'Single women' in the present study were operationalised as women who were widowed, divorced, or separated. Even though the unwed mothers would also fit into this category of single women, they are different in terms of the absence of marital relationships from the former groups. Being in a marital relationship followed by marital dissolution with the death of spouse or separation from the spouse has had different perspectives, risk, and protective factors compared with unwed mothers or other single women categories.

India and other countries in the world witnessed a steady and drastic increase in the number of single women over the past years (Batha, 2017; Bharat, 2008; Härkönen et al., 2020; Schrader, 2019). A speedy transition from traditional male headship to female headship is observed in recent decades. In India, approximately 4.5% of all households are headed by single women (U.N. Women, 2019). Women, particularly middle-aged women, are more likely to become head of households, as they are willing to take responsibilities, take care of their economic needs and the needs of their children (Swain & Pillai, 2005).