As ‘social fact,’ singleness is not a suddenly appeared phenomenon; its symptoms were seen from many years back. Hate’s (1946) study reveals that 50 percent of the unmarried educated girls declared their wish to remain single about five to six decades ago. This point out that remaining single is not a new concept in this era. Modern singlehood is far different from the past pessimism associated with it. It is the byproduct of modern feminism. Singleness is most prevalent in Europe and United States and has increased over the last decades. A study conducted on unmarried women in England and US by Freeman and Klans (1984) found that after 1870, single females in UK and US began to speak favourably about singlehood.

Hallen (1966) indicated that the traditional value of marriage is fast dying out and females show greater dislike for marriage. Women are of the view that most men do not understand women well and under such circumstance a companionship type of marriage is not likely to succeed. In the late 19th century, significant number of women began to choose career over marriage and it was acceptable for single women. Professionally single women can enter almost any field, her abilities and inner drive might inspire. The career woman is definitely a positive concept in today’s world. The young women of today, especially in the urban higher economic sector, are well informed, independent in outlook, and affluent. They want to chalk out their own future with less parental guidance. They wish to break away from
everything traditional and conventional, and blindly ape western modes of
dress, life style, tastes, aspirations and even behavior. They believe that
singlehood will provide more freedom, independence and more life
satisfaction than married life. As more women remain single, the social
stigma and isolation associated with spinsterhood declines, reforming
singlehood, as an alternative to marriage (Chambers 1984).

The negative stereotype of an ‘old maid’ who has not been able to ‘get’
a man and is single against her will, has changed and a new stereotype has
developed of a ‘city single’ who does not ‘want’ a man and is single through
choice. Majority singletons are engaged with different types of jobs. They are
independent in all sense, because of their economic freedom. Some singles
are not against marriage but circumstances compelled them not to marry.
That is, singles prefer to be so than to purchase a groom as against non-
working spinsters who remain single due to the forced circumstances of not
being able to pay the dowry (Misra 1992).

The earlier studies (Hate 1930; Merchant 1935; Kapadia 1954; Desai
1945; Tandon 1959; Krishnamurthy 1970; Tripathi 1967) have shown that
the attitudes of educated working women have considerably changed
especially with regard to their own status and with regard to marriage and
family. The greater acceptability of premarital sex and higher rate of
cohabitation indicate that marriage is seen as less necessary than it once was.
But, not much interest is shown by the Indian youngsters to these,
relationships because they also sometimes lead to obligations similar to
marriage. It is inevitable in urban areas, especially in Metropolitan cities
where many youngsters conform this new life style. There is a recent trend
among women to choose not to marry but to have a child and raise it on her
own. This trend has been receiving increasing attention in the popular media. At the same time, some of them doubt this contract basis relationship.

Singlehood has emerged as an intensely ritualized and newly respectable style of life (ISR Newsletter 1979). Compared to rural area, the rate of single women is increasing rapidly in urban centers. In modern times, a man or woman can opt to remain unmarried and be not only highly valuable member of society but perfectly normal as well. A woman living alone today is more acceptable than she would have been many years ago, but the sense of social awkwardness often experienced by many single women still remain. The single women have emerged as a distinct social category in rapidly changing urban India. We have a number of successful unmarried women who enjoy high status in the fields of professions, services and social works. Thus marriage is not necessary for a happy life. A singleton can certainly lead a happy life. Marriage is no longer the first thing which defines a woman’s prestige. It is noticeable to witness a lessened social pressure on women to marry in the last twenty years. Singlehood of woman is nothing special or derogatory but an alternative life style to marriage.

2.1 Socio-cultural Background

In western countries, single women’s ratio is very high compared to eastern countries. This gap is mainly because of cultural differences of west and east. Sherif (1999), in his study, examines the central role of marriage in the social background and it is shown that societal norms as well as family structure and expectations influence the prevalence of marriage as a necessary rite of passage for achieving adulthood among this population sector.
The popular image is that, although, it is a state which will happen or has happened virtually to everybody, being single is still seen as somewhat abnormal by most people (Ean 2002). As a whole, women on their own were perceived by others as odd, frustrated, dangerous, unfortunate, to be pitied or to be avoided. People consider spinsters’ life is wasted and barren. Jain (1992) says, in certain societies, it is difficult for people to comprehend the value of a single woman’s life. The past four decades have witnessed great changes in the attitudes of women towards marriage and singlehood. Singletons are not ready to conform to the traditional rules existed in the society and they are thirsting for freedom. Middle class women no longer regard marriage as necessary for financial support or for, self-respect. There are new acceptable means to earn money and a growing openness about the fragility of happiness in marriage.

With the changing socio-cultural conditions, women have started attaining education and entering salaried jobs. In the modern era, most of the urban as well as rural singles are engaged with a work. Regarding the changing attitude towards marriage, Tripathi (1967) have shown that the attitudes of educated women, particularly of educated working women, have considerably changed, especially with regard to their own status and with regard to marriage and the family.

The traditional outlook of the Indian society estimates male as an employed person and female as a house wife. Though men are highly educated and hold prestigious positions, they are still traditional and even orthodox in their attitudes. Reddy tried in his book to portrait the real picture of male attitude. He states “until 1950’s husband would expect his wife to welcome him with smiling face at the entrance of the house with water in her
hand and children waiting for Dad in the evening, when he comes back from office. When he looks at his wife with smiling face he feels relieved of all the troubles and frustration of the day. He prefers to have such women as life mate” (Reddy 1986:141). Even in these modern days, most of the males are rarely interested in women with brain and prowess. Moreover, they never tolerate the wide social networks of females.

In past, Chakraborty (1978) argues that many middle class women with university education prefer to marry and perform their usual roles as wives and mothers. The higher education of women leads to a new circumstances and it increases the age of marriage of girls. Chaterjee (1957), states that with sharp rise in the age at marriage of the girls and in their educational attainment in the middle and high income groups, they have acquired separate identity as individuals. This has reduced in many cases the appeal of an ‘arranged marriage’ to them. The need for women literacy and women employment has been increasing for last years. Kapoor (2005) pointed out that more than half of the girls wanted to continue their higher studies beyond graduation. The desire to study and get employed was more pronounced among singletons than among married girls. Single women are often far more competent and skilled in practical matters than their married sisters. Gould (1982) supported that urban females had received a higher education than their rural counterparts. It thus seems possible that education might affect a greater change in attitudes towards marriage for women than for men.

Devi (2002) states that employment rate among the single women are higher than among married women. The study of Kapur (1974) states that educated urban women have begun to realize that job will raise their self-
esteem and self-confidence and accomplish their socio-psychological security and freedom. Now, educated girls are ready to accept life-long singlehood, which is easier for their employment. Because of their economic contribution, these singletons’ social status and family status changed a lot. She adds that in the modern era, most of the urban as well as rural singles are engaged with a work. Even the professional women admit that they decided to remain single despite family pressure.

Single women’s participation in the labour force varies by age, education, and size of the family. Ranjan (1993) says, most of the unmarried women had strong attachment to their occupational work. The single women’s background shows heterogeneous patterns of life, different religions, diverse origins, and multiplicity of standards.

### 2.2 Factors of Singlehood

Many studies in abroad and India has discussed about the factors of singlehood. In ancient time, a significant minority of women remained single, depending on a variety of reasons. Sharma (1996) argued that in Indian context, voluntary unmarried life-style among woman is a rare phenomenon. Ross (1961) writes, that Hindu girls have one great advantage over western girls as they do not have to worry about finding husbands themselves during their college years; whereas girls in the west are often faced with two of the most difficult tasks of their lives, that of finding a husband and preparing themselves for future careers, simultaneously. Those who failed to find out their partner opted to be single.

The modern situations create many factors for the development of modern singlehood in our society. Many social scientists indicated these
factors in their studies. It is useful to go through these factors to identify modern singlehood. Vanjani (1996) in her study, ‘A sociological study of single never married women,’ describes that singlehood in women is a combined phenomenon of attraction and repulsion, pleasure and sorrows of experience. It is the result of family constraints, self constraints, physical constraints, financial constraints and miscellaneous reasons. Her study concludes that the circumstantial factors compel a girl to remain single.

Cross (2004) in her study “Single Professional Women: A Global Phenomenon Challenges and Opportunities” trace the economic root of the phenomenon and how female empowerment interacts with the psychological prerequisites for mating. According to her, worldwide, educated women are finding it more and more difficult to find a mate of the opposite sex. The reasons vary from country to country but include (a) the desire and need (psychological and economic) of women to have a long period as a single adult, free of the constraints of a committed relationship, (b) the increased status and threat of highly educated women; making it preferable for men to mate with less educated women, (c) increased status and threat of women who earn as much or more than a man; making it preferable to mate a less educated woman, (d) demand for more equitable relationships among educated women, (e) emigration of large number of men who need to find work in a foreign country, reducing the pool of available men, (f) death of a large number of young men due to drugs, wars and AIDS, (g) male preference for younger women who cannot proceed higher education due to marital constraints, and (h) increased acceptance of lesbian relationships and single – parent life style.
Ratra (2006) reveals that several factors appear to influence women to remain single today, like freedom, independence, and employment opportunities. Altekar (1962) explains some particular qualities or 'nature' of the women such as having will power, being adjustable, being spirituality minded and not liking marriage or not being suited to marriage enables one to resist sexual temptation or to overcome social disapproval.

Wakil (1980) in his study described the distribution and the rank of these reasons. Among these are: “Not good looking”, “too independent”, “too demanding”, and “no mates available”. According to Wakil, a girl’s desire to get married is associated with her appetite for love, security and sincerity. Once it is violated, she refuses to get married again because of the fear that it may also end up in the same way.

From the functionalist perspective, behaviour is largely a response to shared norms and values. It follows that a change in the rate of marriage and rate of singlehood are to some degree a reflection of changing norms and values in general. The emergence of working women and their socio-economic role in the family led to attitudinal changes towards social aspects; marriage, family, education, customs (Reddy 1986). Ferguson (2000) found that single native and foreign born Chinese, American and Japanese reject marriage for four reasons –their parents’ marriage, status as the eldest or only daughter, educational goals and perceived lack of suitors.

Singh (2000) the author of ‘Single in the City’, documents the rise of the single professional women in India. She discusses two broad categories: those women who are single due to ‘circumstances’ and the new growing
sector that are single due to ‘choice’. Both these categories include a wide range of factors like.

2.2.1 Educational and Occupational Factors

Education and employment are interlinked with singleton. Today a singleton of high status and position is not disrespected by society (Jethani 1994). The various studies, surveys and statistics show that educated women are now keen to utilize their education and training than was the case previously. Now, educated women show interest to enter into new spheres of roles and in challenging the traditional roles. With economic independence the working women are adopting single life. Balse’s (1973) study of students and parents revealed that 26.50 percent of students and 4.80 percent of the parents did not view marriage as a must. It infers that the educated community is less favourable towards the importance of marriage than the uneducated and older generation.

Levy (1949) suggests that higher education enable a girl to become aware of alternatives to marriage. In addition, it is seen that families are beginning to accept the right of at least some of their daughters to substitute career for marriage. The earlier studies showed that educated working girls, those who earn good salaries, have no chance to marry or they are neglected in the ‘Marriage Market’, only because of their high salaries. Pandey (2002), found that the single women who do exist are highly qualified women in careers, because of their positions, education, or age unable to find husbands older and more qualified. She adds that it is a new trend of thought, 20 yrs ago people were infavour of highly educated girls and men wanted to marry them. But in the last ten years men have become hesitant to marry dominant women.
Kapur (1974) in her study, ‘Changing status of the working women in India’ showed some naked truths that exist in all over the world. She pointed out that women discrimination is not a problem in India alone, but is a global one. A survey was carried out in London to assess the attitudes of young unmarried males about equality for women. It revealed that the majority of the young men believed that women should not have equality with men. Ninety two percent respondents reported that they would not like to marry women who earned more than they were. The findings of the study indicated how even in most advanced country like Britain, the attitude of young males are still traditional, conservative and patriarchal with regard to the status of women. Some of the respondents revealed that the higher education is a barrier for their marriage. Male’s negative attitude towards educated women is a factor for increasing unmarried singles in our society. Sholz (2004) points out that the main reason why men are reluctant to marry employed women is that both parties bring home the values and modes of behaviour they learnt at work, the most important being the spirit of competition.

Bronzaft (1991), studying professional women in the United States found that 7 per cent of Black women, 2 per cent of white women, and 0 per cent of Hispanic want a career and do not want to get married. Increasing opportunities for modern education, greater geographical and occupational mobility and the emergence of new economic patterns are the main factors responsible for this trend (Dube 1963).

Single women are hostile to marriage because it will affect their career. They give more prominence to career than marriage. Marital status has a significant influence on decision-making of women to participate in the labour force. According to Devi (2002), for single women, work at home
does not constitute a major activity and hence their choice narrows down to either paid employment or leisure, though sometimes they work out of sheer economic necessity. The study indicates that employment among single women is higher than among married women. Stein (1983) interviewed 60 single individuals in the age range 25-45. Most felt ambivalent about being single. They recognized that being single often helped their career opportunities, because they could concentrate wholeheartedly on work; it made available a wider variety of different experiences and promoted overall freedom and autonomy.

Blumberg and Dwaraki (1980) says, the pattern found by Levy in modern China, in which highly educated women preferred spinsterhood to unsuitable marriages may well repeat itself in India. Again, she adds that work is becoming the only realistic alternative to marriage for middle class Indian women now.

2.2.2 Familial and Financial Factors

Krishnakumary (1987) in her study found that family circumstances, financial constraints and combination of several factors seem to have influenced a large number of females to remain single. Adams (1996) in his book, ‘A choice not to wed? Unmarried women in the 18th century’, frame the economic and social conditions of single women in early modern Western Europe, based on the lives of sisters Marie and Mariance of Lamothe. It describes the role of spinsters in early family formations; negative image of spinsterhood; singlehood as choice may have served to benefit their family. Far from always being unwanted burdens, single women could play a stabilizing role in family formations, and their families some times
discouraged them from marrying. Single women filled in, to smooth the operations of house hold economics.

Kapur (1974) says that among some lower middle class families’ there are instances of parents who do not want their working daughters to get married merely because the money that she brings home would then stop coming in. She indicates that “parental dominance” as one of the most important factors for being never-married. As Chaterjee (1975) states, besides dowry, income of the girl is also another factor that leaves her unmarried. He found in his comparative study that reason for remaining single is mediated by the combination of family need and personal choice. Watkins (1984) in his book stated that at home, spinsters are engaged in household management, caring for ageing parents and child minding. They also act as surrogate wives for widowed fathers or unmarried brothers. Many families had one unmarried daughter to take care of the old parents.

### 2.2.3 Social Factors

A national report (Government of India 1974: 88) claims that “In pre-independence days some women had voluntarily decided against marriage in order to devote their life to the national cause or social service”. Kapur (1974) indicated that social consciousness among the working spinsters is very high. One’s attitude and behaviour determines the role, she plays in the society. If a girl has a service minded spirit, she will thirst for doing such type of activities and she faces the barriers against it. Today in service and social work sectors; we have a number of successful unmarried women who enjoy high status. Being single lets them move around freely and reach out to people without obstacles; hence modern young service minded girls prefer to be single to achieve their goals in life.
2.2.4 Freedom and Independence

A few in-depth studies of singles and their life style indicate that the primary ‘pull’ for remaining single is a desire to preserve psychological and social autonomy (Adams 1976; Edwards and Hoover 1974; Stein 1976). Durkheim (1897) reveals that the trend toward maintaining a single life style for a longer period of time is related to the growing economic independence of young people.

Jethani (1994) states that self-motivation rather than motivation by parents, relatives, and friends prompted single women to take up jobs. Security for the future, improving living standard and augmenting meager family income induced respondents to seek jobs. It gives them more economic independence and freedom. Modern singletons reveal that they avoid the institution of marriage only for freedom and equality with men; and if they do so, they fear that they may become slaves of their partners.

2.2.5 Horoscope

In Hindu religion horoscope is another cause that contribute towards singlehood. Astrology is one of the oldest sciences practiced in India. Whenever a child is born, horoscope is written. The horoscope that contain all the particulars of the individual beginning from birth to death indicating both minor as well as major incidents; good and dangerous situations etc, will be written. Jathakarma means writing of Horoscope. Before deciding a matrimonial alliance, the horoscopes of the man and lady will be compared to ascertain whether the couple will be a perfect match. If two horoscopes are agreeable to each other the marriage will be fixed. In short, Jathakam or complete horoscope of a human can be predicted with the help of factors like time of birth, place of birth, name and gender. This will be a help to look into
the future and to take adequate measures to prevent ill-fate or to boost up supportive occasions. This special custom of Hindu marriage, sometimes compel them to become single due to failure in finding matching horoscope. According to Altekar (1962), the practice of consulting horoscopes, came into prominence along with child marriage, thus providing support for the father who had the duty of making fateful decisions for young children. The use of horoscopes was intended to minimize risks, and continues to ease tension for some fathers. Even in the 21st century this custom is continuing.

### 2.2.6 Physical Factors

Fifty years ago, the majority of Indian women who chose careers instead of marriage did so because they were physically less attractive than others. It was quite different from the U.S where there have been many beautiful, and attractive women becoming single by choice. Nowadays, in India more and more cute, intelligent, educated and working girls are showing interest to join the ‘singles’ group. According to Ratra (2006) women who have been burned several times in relationships may decide it’s easier to remain single. Those who have been abused or misused are likely to choose not to be involved again. Ratra also found other reasons like unattractive appearance, physical defects or prolonged illness, no suitable match, unwillingness to assume responsibilities, too busy in career building process, family responsibilities, imaging unhappy experiences, sexual availability without marriage as reasons for the increasing singlehood.

### 2.3 Problems of Singlehood

Socially victimized and psychologically depressed single women play the dual role of both men and women and in the process face a lot of problems. Bahir (1980) observes that single status of women have more
negative outlook and they readily express negative feelings, loneliness and depression or unhappiness than the married. Subbamma (1985), states that unmarried women will be looked down upon; that her situation will cause harm to her. All these indicated that society’s outlook not much changed. Thus singles face problems for no fault of theirs.

Krishnakumary (1987) reveals that in general, the problems and difficulties of single women are multi-dimensional and they need a deep probe. They emerge in two situations – home and work, and they are two fold. One is of inner conflicts due to commitment and concern and the other is at the practical level- practical difficulty of combining work commitment with their role at home.

2.3.1 Adjustment Problems

Individual’s adjustment has been defined by Fairchild (1944:6) as ‘the process by which an individual consciously modifies a socially acquired characteristic in order to make it conform to a desired standard or norm’. Adjustment is the satisfactory relation of an organism to its environment. It is a gradual process in day to day life. Schneiders (1960:12) in his study ‘Personal adjustment and mental health’ defined that adjustment is simply an organism’s individual, peculiar way of reacting to inner demands. In some instances, this reaction is efficient, satisfying and is known as good adjustment. Otherwise, when the reaction is inefficient and unsatisfactory; it becomes bad. Good adjustment always leads us to life satisfaction. Eysenck (1953) argued that adjustment takes the form of a highly developed sensitivity towards the needs and wishes of others. According to Shaffer (1961:3) “Adjustment is the process by which a living organism maintains a
balance between its needs and circumstances that influences the satisfaction of these needs”.

Adjustment implies the capacity to withstand inner and outer stress and in addition the ability to modify our own behaviour and the environment to which we are exposed. On a mature level, adjustment implies the capacity to enjoy emotions, especially those that derive from interpersonal contacts (Arkoff 1968). Singh (1982) described adjustment as a process which makes man to learn to deal effectively with environmental demands and strains and to get satisfaction of internal needs and urges. The lack of adjustment leads to problems. Well adjusted single women face very little problems in their life. At the same time, if they are not adjusted with their circumstances, they will face many problems. The absence of the marital relationship which supports a wide range of social, emotional and sustenance needs, makes them extremely vulnerable to problems - social, psychological, economic and sexual (Jethani 1994).

2.3.2 Stress

Stress can be regarded as the non-specific biological, emotional and behavioural process that occur when physical or psychological well being is disrupted or threatened. According to nature, Atwater (1995) divided stress into four types. They are eustress (good), harmful stress, Hyper stress (excessive) and Hypostress (insufficient). It is when events disrupt our usual level of functioning and require us to make an extra effort to re-establish our equilibrium that we experience stress. Some times, stress also involves the non-specific physiological reactions that occur in response to stressful events such as the increased flow of adrenalin that mobilizes us for an extra effort.
Mechanic (1970) states that stress always disrupt the perfect functioning of human being and increase the rate of problems.

Stress is difficult to define partly because it means different things to different people. Zimbardo (1988: 87), defined stress as, “the pattern of specific and non-specific responses an organism makes to stimulus events that disturb its equilibrium and tax or exceed its ability to cope”. According to Aberger (1990) if an individual experience severe psychological trauma like a life-threatening situation, destruction or being the victim of the physical or emotional violence, can suffer from post traumatic stress disorders. The symptoms include anxiety, apprehension, chronic tension, insomnia, repetitive nightmares, feeling of depression, inability to relax, withdrawal from social contacts and suicidal tendencies.

Psychologists classified the problems and stresses into different types. Lazarus and Cohen (1977) have suggested three categories of stresses: Cataclysmic phenomena, individual crisis and daily hassles. The adaptations with new circumstances also lead to stress. That is, stress will come to our mind, when our mind and body react to new situations.

In single women’s life stress is a crucial factor. Loewenstein (1981) studied the satisfactions and stresses of single women in mid-life and found that the majority were highly satisfied with most aspects of their life. Davidson and Cooper (1983) reveals that for those women living alone, lack of domestic and emotional support at home was often the major stressors. Jethani (1994), in her study reveals five main problems and stresses which single women largely face: financial, occupational, familial, neighborhood and feelings of insecurity for future.
2.3.3 Social Problems

It is usually easier for man to adjust to being single than for a woman. A single man is in great social demand and has little time to feel lonely. He is usually financially able to pursue a pattern of life that is to his liking (Ratra 2006). Again he says the woman encounter social complications that men do not face. She may be unwilling or reluctant to go out by herself. Further, during old age, long periods of loneliness, complicated by financial and social problem arise.

Pandey (2002) says that society never showed the readiness to accept the status of single women. Actually, they did nothing wrong but preferred an alternative to the conventional pattern. Pandey pointed out that woman who remains unmarried for long time are blamed by neighbours and society. As years pass by, nobody comes forward to marry them. Either they live in the parental home or their brother’s home. They are subjected to harsh treatment and they often vegetate (Subbamma 1985).

Once a woman becomes single, discrimination plays a routine in her life. In past, single women had no right to freely interact with other members of the society. In Brahmin caste, they had no contact with their own family male members (Gangadaran 1994). The community interprets everything from a different point of view in their case. Neither have they had the freedom of young unmarried girls nor of older married women. Everything they do is misunderstood and thus they become the scapegoats of the society.

Single women’s presence in the social gatherings and marriage functions are not expected by society. Society considers them as bad omen. Blumberg and Dwaraki (1980) states that ‘if one is not married, she will face
the rubbish comments from society’. While it appears that societal pressures on the unmarried women are lessening, traditional living arrangements and the needs for protection and companionship still present practical difficulties.

In a society dominated by men, it is extremely difficult for single women to survive. The social condition and status of unmarried women not being very high, they seem to be harassed both by society as well as by their family members. Krishnakumary (1987) argues that social problems of single women are classified in terms of the social stigma attached to them, the social restrictions imposed on them and the social boycott or rejection society meets out to them resulting in their low social status. Under such circumstances it is natural that they suffer from numerous psychological problems.

2.3.4 Psychological Problems

The antagonism single women suffer at the hands of society results in several psychological problems, such as emotional insecurity, loneliness, inferiority complex etc. Krishnakumary (1987) says psychologically, they feel insecure and experience various mental conflicts and the agony of living life of utter loneliness. They find it extremely difficult to live in a patriarchal society. Although quite a high proportion of working singles have remained single by choice they seem to be suffering from a sense of loneliness and insecurity.

Loneliness is a subjective feeling which conveys the feeling of being cut off from meaningful social contact or roles, or an unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship (Shanas 1968). Bahir (1980) observed that single status women have more negative outlooks and they readily express negative feelings, loneliness and depression or unhappiness than the married.
Chapter 2

Attitudes of a person are central to his subjective life and largely determine his thought, feelings and behaviour.

Blumberg and Dwaraki (1980) says that under the present Indian set-up of society, an unmarried girl may not lead a happy life. Mere money may not bring happiness as her social environment is not very cheerful for her. While the parents are alive it is all right, later she will have to live with her brother, and the brother’s wife may not treat her right. Sheehan (1989) examined loneliness as it related to childhood and current relationships. She found that loneliness was not related to being single, but rather to a lack of security in personal relationships with friends, spouse / partner and family. The lack of formal female support system exacerbates the feeling of alienation (Singh 2000).

Gowri et al. (2003) stress in her study, the lives of aged singles become very problematic. That is, the psychological problems faced by old spinsters are greater and they increase the degree of mental stress than the modern singletons. For Bhatia (1983), loneliness and psychological state of health is related. Single women are often presented as being on the edges of men’s world. Johnson and Susan (1984), in their study, examined the psychological and social adjustment of the never-married women in contrast to the married women. Their findings indicate that never-married women are better adjusted socially and psychologically.

2.3.5 Health Problems

Dalton (1992) says that married people appear healthiest and having low rates of chronic illness. Their disability and hospital stays tend to be short compared to widowed and single people. But this idea is not supported by others. Haralambos (2004) says, in terms of physical health single women
are significantly healthier than the married counterparts. Hoeffer (2006) looked at the outlook of different groups of women in mid-life depending on their present and past marital status and found that never-married women were healthier and more positive about life than other women. Their health problems are related with generation differentials. The aged single women’s health condition was entirely different from modern singletons. It is probed by social scientists in diverse ways. Many psychological problems may arise in old age. The most common of the psychological problems in old age are forgetfulness, sleeplessness, getting bad dreams and feeling loneliness. All these are related with mental health. ‘Mental health’ is a necessary condition of good adjustment; and, when a person is mentally healthy, there is little likelihood of serious maladjustment. Mental health status is directly related to the positive physical health. This refers to behaviours, attitude and feelings that represent an individual’s level of personal effectiveness, success and satisfaction (Gowri et al. 2003).

2.3.6 Sexual Problems

Ratra (2006) says that finding a satisfactory outlet for the sex drive, which is especially strong during early adulthood, is the most difficult problem the unmarried person face. Several studies and day to day events indicate that men at work take women colleagues as sex objects and treat them as such, which hurts these women. In an Eves weekly enquiry about the experiences of women at work, a woman scientist pointed out that “being the only working single women in my department, I have occasions to listen to such as ‘working single women do not have any morals’ or women are not meant for such a profession” (Balse 1973:38). Moreover, women in the certain professions are viewed as ‘different people’ by most of their male colleagues.
Kapur (1974) says that unmarried women who might have chosen a career instead of a home life, independence and freedom to chains of bondage in marriage are rebuked and considered as social deviants. Their professional success is often seen with suspicion and their moral behaviour is the focus of almost all discussion. Some writers have pointed out about the ego problem of males, when they work under females, especially single women. This leads to many adjustment problems and stress to single women. While working with men, single women tend to develop intimate relations with any of them owing to prolonged and constant association, and can create all sorts of socio-psychological problems if she gets involved with a married man.

**2.3.7 Economic and Employment Problems**

With industrialisation and urbanisation the socio-economic parameters of the Indian society have changed rapidly. Modern women of India are passing through the most critical phase. She has to go through all types of tensions and frustrations, while playing the role of a working woman and simultaneously doing all types of house jobs. The break up of the joint family, which was a sort of insurance against all calamities, the single women who once had a sort of social security in such families are now exposed to economic distress, social and sexual exploitation. The position of single women who are economically dependent is worse. Without a job to maintain themselves financially these women are harassed by their own family members and relatives. This constant feeling of dependence often makes them miserable (Krishnakumary 1987). Again, for non-working respondents the main problem is that of their economic insecurity and dependence on family members, or relatives to meet their basic needs, for the working
respondents it is of inadequate income, discriminative facilities and exploitation at the work place and home.

Non-working singles seem to face more problems than working single women. Firstly, they are economically unstable; spend more time at home and secondly because of their financial dependence, they have to do household work from dawn to dusk for their relatives and they would not give any economical value for their work and consider them as a burden to their family.

2.3.8 Accommodation Problems

Besides these problems, the working single women have to face a number of practical difficulties. Since they are mainly employed in big cities, accommodation is a major problem, as working women hostels or flats are too little in number to meet their requirements. In Goldstein’s (1972), study he mentions the difficulty of finding respectable living quarters, away from home by the educated women graduates in Bangalore city. The absence of suitable housing facilities at place where jobs are available is the most important single factor which limits mobility (Sengupta 1960). Non-availability of housing facilities for a single women acts as a major deterrent for many women who aspire for employment other than those available in their local area (Meher 1971).

Chaturvedi (2006) states that there has been a steady increase in the number of single unmarried women moving to big cities in search of employment opportunities. But the availability of safe accommodation at affordable rates is not able to keep pace with the demand. Hostel life is not comfortable to most of them. There is a deadline time for hostlers to return,
which is difficult to meet by those women working in multi-national corporations, call centers and media. Staying outside hostel as a paying guest is also no better as people with traditional mindsets are often suspicious of single women.

2.3.9 Transportation Problems

Studies have shown that transportation is another problem in metropolitan cities as well as in urban places of Kerala. Because of inadequate State/District transport service, the buses are over crowded and create many problems for women workers traveling by bus. They have to rush and almost push others to catch bus. As a single woman, to buy and own vehicle is financially difficult and to drive a vehicle by herself will lead to criticism from society and close relatives. (Hindustan Times 1972).

2.4 Support System

Ahuja says that the self-image, self-esteem and adjustment of single women in life depend upon the emotional support they get from different sources. A ‘support’ is defined as “any object or action that the receiver and/or the giver define as necessary or helpful in maintaining a life-style” (Ahuja 1996:6). Darrington et al. (2005) says that the reasons for being single and the support singles receive from their social network all contribute to singles feeling of satisfaction with their unmarried state. The relationships between individuals are seldom static and essentially dynamic in nature (Hinde 1979). Communication is the backbone in assessing family relationships and dynamics. Effective and right types of communication bring family members together emotionally and make family functioning more meaningful and sound (Khasgiwala 1993).
Kraisonswasdi (1986) says that the standard of living of a particular family is conditioned by a number of variables, like value system, occupational background, education, income, locality etc. However, the economic factors play very pertinent role in determining the standard of living of the family. Family has monopolized caring, security, sharing, trust and intimacy. The varied situations generate a different atmosphere and create a varied family picture. These structural aspects have an important bearing on the quality and kind of relationships existing between parents and children; the distribution of rights and duties. How single women should behave towards the family members and society is determined by the conventions and formal definitions of the organization in which she is working/ where she is staying (Hinde 1979).

Rani (1976) states that in past, the family became largely responsible for attending to the mental health and emotional adjustment of single women. But now, the practice of single women living and working in the family is declining. That is, the social structure has completely changed. The importance of relatives for companionship and support has diminished.

Each Individual’s life is blossomed with the help of many support systems. In the case of single women also, their life is blossomed with support system like parents, relatives and friends. Ratra (2006) reveals that single women, usually develop a sense of family that differs from others. Friendships are very important to singles. Many of them acquire a social network that provides the kind of emotional and psychological support found among other family types. Singles participate in a variety of groups that provide social support and recreation. Academic activities and free choice activities are the main hobbies of the single women. They are not isolated
especially the modern singletons. Thornton (1989), opined that singles had a lot of connections with others.

Many people in our culture doubt that single people can be mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy. They find their niche in the public sphere through work and a range of public activities. In the private sphere single women find their niche in networks typically combing friends and relatives. Though the social integration of single women is still somewhat tenuous, there have been changes in their ‘outsider’ situation. Single women in the 19th century justified their existence by relying on notions of moral superiority and were engaged in supportive activities in public and private spheres.

In the view of Stain (1976), the lack of support for single life-styles undercuts the personal and social identity of the never-married contributing to the feelings of guilt and embarrassment, fear of loneliness and psychological weariness from initiating and sustaining a life-style which lacks a supportive ideology in the larger culture.

Kanter’s (1978) study of fifty young (24-34 years of age) and of medium socio-economic level never-married women living alone in an urban area found that they were “not relatively isolated.” They had networks of individuals who had ‘a deep and genuine concern for their well-being’ and they “were involved in intimate relations with others”. They had created homes for themselves with a comfortable and nurturing atmosphere which pleased them. It gave them a sense of ownership.

Single women are mostly friendly with their counterparts. Their lifestyles, interests and a sense of being different make it easier for such
friendships (Gorodon 1994). Ramu (1989) says that considering the nature and quality of interactions the single women have with their colleagues, it is quite clear that a majority of them had free and frank discussions, shared their experiences and found their colleagues quite helpful. So far as freedom of having personal relationships with their colleagues was concerned they were almost equally divided.

Singh (2000) says, some more traditional countries, like India, where social arrangements are less gender-integrated, traditional female ties seem to provide professional elite women with a support system that they lack in more modernized countries. Indeed, this is the largest significant cross-cultural difference that appeared among single professional women in the various countries. Kachru (2006) says that single women are not selfish and egoistic. They are already contributing and can contribute a lot, along with their own families. These contributions increase their mental satisfaction, happiness and contact with other members. A person who is engaged in a job which requires mental and physical exertion needs to engage in leisure activities which give her a feeling of ease and liveliness. Even with the change in the social fabric, single women have not given up their culture and values, and still believe and participate in many religious activities, which gives greater emotional support to them and it determines their life satisfaction.

2.5 Life Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a Latin word that means to make or do enough. Satisfaction with one’s life implies contentment with or acceptance of one’s life circumstances, or the fulfillment of one’s wants and needs for one’s life as a whole. In essence, life satisfaction is a subjective assessment of the
quality of one’s life. According to Diener and his colleagues (1999), life satisfaction is a subjective well-being, or happiness, which has both an affective (emotional) and a cognitive (judgmental) component. The affective component consists of how frequently an individual reports experiencing positive and negative effect. Life satisfaction is considered to be the cognitive component of this broader construct. According to Erikson (1964) the general life satisfaction includes the feeling of independence or freedom becomes an inevitable need in our life. Ability to do ones own decisions and to take responsibility for ones own actions are all implied in independence.

Sousa and Lyubomirsky (2001), says, the sources of life satisfaction include one’s overall wealth, whether one is single or married, male or female, or young or old. Life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one’s life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. It is one of three major indicators of well-being: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Diener et al. (1999). Flaherty (1970) states that the satisfaction of psychological needs is necessary for the healthy development and well-being of a personality. She brought forward five psychological needs – affection, security, achievement, independence and status. The maximum fulfillment of these needs determine the level of personal life satisfaction.

Suh (1996) conducted a longitudinal study and its results suggest that ‘Personality and Environmental’ explanations in isolation may not be sufficient to explain the source of people’s life satisfaction. It is related with all aspects of human beings’ life. The personal life satisfaction level of single women is mainly based on ‘atmosphere’ where they live. It includes the
‘nature and nurture’ aspects of life. Warren (2001) reveals that both ‘nature
and nurture’ appear to be influential in determining life satisfaction.

Sirgy’s theory (1998) similarly mentions several comparisons that
women may consider before arriving at a judgment of their life satisfaction.
He suggests that expectations of what one is capable of accomplishing, one’s
past circumstances, one’s ideals, what one feels one deserves, what one
minimally requires to be content and what one ultimately believes are
comparisons that help determine overall life satisfaction.

The life satisfaction of single women is based on the whole aspects of
their life. Cockrum and White (1985) in their research on ‘never married
singles,’ found that the main predictors of life satisfaction were related to the
quality and quantity of human relationships (e.g., social integration,
loneliness and attachment). Loewenstein et al. (1981) and her colleagues
studied the satisfactions and stresses of single women in mid-life and found
that the majority were highly satisfied with most aspects of their life. Ratra
(2006) says that the modern single women build up a life of her own to suit
her as a man does. As a result, she has much to keep her happy and occupied
in old age. He adds that even though she is retired, she is still happy and
because she never had to devote her leisure time to a family and has had an
opportunity to establish many interests. At the same time, some scholars’
idea is entirely different. Discussing marriage, Edwards and Hoover (1974)
have said that apart from the actual gratification of marriage, the never
married may be less happy because of the ‘considerable difficulties of being
single in a society, where being paired is widely regarded as natural, healthy
and a proper way of life.
In the case of working single women, their life satisfaction mainly depends upon job situations. One of the most stimulating and controversial theories of human nature proposed in recent years by Herzberg (1959), states that there are two significantly different classes of factors determining job-satisfaction. One set of factors relate to the ‘environment’ and are external to the job. They are referred to as ‘hygiene’ factors. These factors do not promote job-satisfaction rather their absence may lead to dissatisfaction. They are working conditions, interpersonal relations, money, status, security etc. The second class of factors are referred to as “motivators”. These factors are intrinsic to the job itself. They are strong determinants in job-seeking and job-satisfaction. He identified five such factors: achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility and advancement. Jethani (1994) states that the major factors giving job satisfaction to single women are: nature of work, opportunities of promotion, good income, sense of achievement and recognition through work. On the other hand, factors for dissatisfaction with the job were: unsatisfactory working conditions, inadequate income, low job prestige and no recognition.

Ball et al. (2004) in their study on ‘Women’ found that unemployed women had a lower life satisfaction in close personal relationships and social activities and not in friendships than other women in areas of work. About women issues, ‘Femina’ rightly reveals that “a working woman is well cared for and respected at home and usually consulted in all matters” (Kapur 1985:11). Carroll (2005) found for both men and women the longer the unemployment history the greater the probability of reporting low life satisfaction.

Warren (2006) in her study ‘Singles of Australia’ suggests that potentially the effect of unemployment on life satisfaction is greater for
women than men in Australia. Acnielsen (2005) in his study on Relationships 2005: “New Zealanders Attitudes and Experiences at New Zealand,” found that the spinsters swing and the bachelors worry that they will be left on the shelf. According to the research, women may be better at single life than men; because they enjoy it more – they consistently find every positive element of being single more important than men do. This suggests that women find more about single living to enjoy than men do.

It is found that women who live in poorer, less egalitarian nations tend to be less satisfied with their lives overall than women who live in wealthier nations (Sousa and Lyubomirsky 2001). Again they add that income appears to be a better predictor of life satisfaction than level of education. That is, the economic aspect of the single women actually determine the level of their life satisfaction. The financial dependence and their inability to contribute economically to the family income may, perhaps, be responsible for their low life satisfaction. Campbell (1976) conceptualized life satisfaction as the difference between what one wants and what one has – essentially, a comparison between reality and the ideal. Thus, a woman’s judgment of her life satisfaction involves drawing on her personal standards and expectations for herself and assessing the extent to which her life measures up.

2.6 Generation Differentials

Generation refers to the succession of people moving through the age strata, the younger replacing the older as all age together. Sorokin’s discussion of generation can best be understood in this sense, for he attributed the conflicts between younger and older generation to the differential response of people of different ages to the same events (Turner 1983:192-193). According to Erikson (1964) the developmental stage of the young
people is a period of questioning society’s values in order to develop one’s own system of values and attitudes. Thus according to developmental theory, the generational differences are considered as ‘generation gap’. It existed in the past and would continue to do so in the future as well.

With the modern social environment, the gap between younger generation and older generation is increasing. The younger generation has always been divided between its loyalty to the old and its inner convictions that the new trends set by the changing pattern of the society. A study conducted by Salaff (1989) throws some light on the varied nature of the problems that single women face. The study was conducted on the unmarried daughters of Chinese families living in Hong Kong. Salaff found the lifestyle of these girls vastly differ from that of their mothers. These women were providing economic assistance to advance the family.

The old generation of present India has been brought up in a society where there was a blind submission to caste and religious practices. On the other hand, the younger generation of modern India is brought up in a free country where distinction on the basis of caste, creed and religion are legally prohibited. The ideology of the younger generation seriously clashes with the restraints of the joint family system. Parents or grandparents’ attitude represent the old values which clash with the modern values and behaviour of their children. Single women also face many clashes like this in their life. Their new life style and ideologies are not accepted and recognized by old generations in the family.

Young people of today, especially in the urban higher economic sector are well informed, independent in outlook and are affluent. The modern life
style of youngsters often leads to a great conflict between the generations unless the parents also undergo a similar transformation (Khanna and Varghese 1978). Mehta (1987) argued that one group of modern youngsters believe that marriage is the root of all evils. It is a Capitalistic instrument to enslave women. The young women of today are a rebel in a way. She revolts against tradition not to retrain from it but to break it. Marriage situation is no exception to it. The values of the younger generations have been shaped by their inheritance of freedom, largely unavailable to earlier generations—freedom for woman to work and control their own reproduction, freedom to define one’s own style of life (Wilkinson and Geoff 1995). In short, though the life style of singlehood is not socially recognized, the rate of single women is increasing fast.

Increase in the number of singletons has focused the interest of scientists to find out the generation differentials between the spinsters and singletons. The experiences, adjustments, problems and life satisfaction of this two generation will vary as it is reflected in the generation differentials of the society in general. The older generations never revealed their personal interest about their partner but younger generations have no inhibition to reveal their opinion about mate’s selection. Kapoor (2005) viewed that modern singletons wanted honesty, understanding, patience and intelligence as essential ingredients for an attractive male partner.

The above review of related literature demonstrates that studies on unmarried single women are undertaken largely in the developed nations while this topic is still in its infancy in developing countries like India. The information available on unmarried single women in the Indian context is rather fragmentary and inconclusive. In fact, the problems confronted by the
single women are much more in urban sector and comparative studies on the problems of spinsters and singletons are very scanty and much remains to be explored. So far no study about the problems and prospects of the unmarried single women in Kerala is carried out. The present investigation, hopes to provide further information in the area of singlehood.