Conclusion
CONCLUSION

The present study of educated single unmarried working women of thirty five or above thirty five years of age was carried out in Aligarh. The study was undertaken with a view to understand and analyse the motivations, problems and changes in the life style of these women and the complex factors associated with them. The case study method was used for the purpose.

The foregoing results of the study show that the desire to be financially independent plays a very important role in motivating women to take up employment. This, however, is not the only motivational force responsible for women's employment. Certain other motivational factors were also observed. Women desired an independent identity and an individual status in the society. Changes in the socio-economic structure affected the pattern of the processes of socialization. Additionally, greater educational and occupational opportunities available to women today, along with women’s increasing participation and achievements in outdoor activities, also affected the attitudes of women in contemporary Indian society and made them conscious of their individual status as compared to the women of traditional society. Their educational pursuits affect their occupational goals to a greater extent. Their stay in an educational institution
encouraged them to pursue a career making them realise that education and employment of women help them develop their faculties and create confidence to utilise their talent and capabilities.

The changing patterns of socialisation among educated urban middle and upper class families seems to play an instrumental role in making younger generation of women conscious of their individual status and career. Most of the women from urban educated well off families were provided with family guidance and encouragement that made them realise their occupational goals and plans for their future life during the formative years of their life. Instead of forcing them to pursue a specific career, they were allowed to take their independent decision.

Thus, most of the women, inspired by other working women, aspired for higher educational attainment so as to plan their occupational pursuit with the exception of a few whose family did not want them to work. The reason was quite apparent that as the family members were affluent they felt that any form of employment for women was inferior and it would be quite unthinkable to allow women to work as it was the duty of men to provide for the family. Women's employment, it seems, is equated only with monetary gains and thus, if the women of the family take up employment then it would be
construed that the men are unable to sufficiently provide for the family. This would adversely affect the social position of the family. Such attitudes are almost in line with what Veblen (1967) had to say regarding the leisure class – viz: that for the leisure class conspicuous abstention from labour becomes the conventional index of reputability and, conversely, since application to productive labour is a mark of poverty and subjection it becomes inconsistent with a reputable standing in the community. Interestingly enough, a few of these young women, too, had no definite career plans even they were willing to go in for higher education. They, too, considered higher education more a virtue in itself and a means for social reputability rather than as a means for a career and an independent existence.

The results of the study show that some other educated women from well off families had a great desire to be gainfully employed as they were secure in social standing and employment for them mean not only an additional income but also an independent provision for women. Thus, this situation would set them apart in a higher social standing than the ordinary unemployed women. These women did not necessarily want to seek employment for economic reasons. Rather, most of them wanted to be career women in order to have their own identity and independence.
The role of urban residence or urban exposure, in addition to the family guidance and encouragement, in achieving the desired goals of women is clearly visible as is the role of rural environment in changing the direction of their desired goal. Co-education is considered undesirable in rural areas to avoid free interaction between sexes. Such restrictions prevent women from attaining desired type of education available only in co-educational institution and results in changing the direction of their career pursuit. Women in such areas are socialised in a manner that they, too, easily accept the same restrictions and mould themselves in accordance with the social requirements but after urban exposure they do not find anything wrong with the co-education. Rather they favour it for the complete mental growth of a person.

In a society characterised by patriarchy and male superiority women generally do not get supremacy and even in matriarchal societies they are not given highest position. As Andre Beteille (1975) observes that practically in all societies property is transmitted through women but this only means that it generally passes from mother’s brother to sister’s son. In most such cases the woman instead of being under the control of her husband is under her brother’s control. Neither matriliny nor polyandry (where a single women is at the same time married to several men) is a guarantee of supremacy of women". 
Perhaps for the same reason, the study found, some women have hidden desire to have power or to be the ‘Boss’ or to acquire highest position in any institution and in their opinion education and employment is the only way to get this position though practically their position is not accepted by the society.

Some noble cause or a great desire to serve the community encourage women to be gainfully employed mainly because of the realisation and consciousness of their obligations towards society and personal interest. Such a realisation led them devote their life to serve the community rather than to serve their families simply as a wife and mother because they believe that the best way to serve the community is to get gainfully employed and not to act married as marriage is incompatible with career pursuit.

Economic reasons were also found to have a remarkable impact as an important motivational factor affecting the educational and career pursuit of women. A desire to be economically independent was quite apparent among these women in order to get social independence and freedom of movement and to raise the standard of living and to have a desired and independent life style. The use of and desire to have more luxury items, consumer goods, modern gadgets and amenities was quite apparent among these women. They need money to change their life
style in order to keep pace with the changing demands of the society as these women were widely read and exposed to mass media and various sources of entertainment which make them aware and conscious of changing demands of society as well as to adjust themselves to these changing demands. The desire to lead a luxurious life, however, is not the only economic factor that lead women to take up employment.

Economic necessity arising from the responsibility of running the house also motivate women to be gainfully employed. Economic necessity affects their occupational pursuit to a greater extent as it plays a very important role in changing the direction of their occupational pursuit at times when some women have to assume the responsibilities of their natal family at a very young age.

The independent economic status of some women helped them to take important decisions regarding their life and more importantly to be assertive in their decision. Therefore some women continue their jobs in order to be assertive.

Physical handicap or some incurable prolonged diseases is also one of the motivational factors for women's employment. It was observed that these women realised that they could lead their lives independently and keep themselves busy as employed women.
Some women are also motivated by their great desire to be in a particular type of occupation. In other words they work simply out of their love for a particular type of occupation, mostly teaching.

Attainment of higher educational and occupational status, their participation and achievement in outdoor activities have changed their conceptions regarding status and role of women in the society and they are making their own choices about their future life. Their unmarried status is no longer considered to be exceptional or extraordinary phenomenon in modern society though people still show their concern towards the unmarried status of these women.

Most of the women, however, consider marriage as an integral part of one’s life with the exception of a few ambitious women who do not want to get married in order to serve the community. These women voluntarily opt for remaining unmarried but most of the women involuntarily remain unmarried either because of their family responsibilities or due to their incurable disease and mostly due to non-availability of a suitable match for them.

These women experienced different kind of changes in their life style due to their employed status. Prestige, respect and independence acquired by these women appears to be most widely expressed change in addition to change in dress style, language,
dietary habits, reading habits, exposure to mass media and sources of entertainment. Not only they prefer cotton dress material but they are allowed to wear the type of dresses that could have never been allowed to them being a single women at rural places. A few of them wear jewellery and use cosmetics despite their unmarried status. They have to adjust their timings for meals according to their work schedule. They are better exposed to mass media and a part of cinema and restaurant culture. Most of the women do not get time to observe religious rituals and consider themselves as rational followers of their religion with the exception of a few who rely heavily on their religion to get themselves emotionally satisfied.

The study did not observe much changes in the life style of women from well off families as they were already living a luxurious life. Their employment resulted in making them more active and confident and they do not want to be just “wife of” and “daughter of”. Their employed status help them in gaining social independence and freedom of movement.

Women who assume the responsibility of family are considered as head of the family. They are given respect by all members of the family and no decision in the family is taken without their approval. But in some cases even educated employed women can not express
their opinion or take decision regarding their marriage. The role of religion in setting marriages even in urban area can easily be observed where a new trend to choose life partners of their own choice with or without the consent of their parents has emerged. Some girls, however, do not go against their parents’ wishes or objection on a partner of their own choice but, at the same time, they do not agree to marry another person of their parents’ choice and opt for remaining unmarried involving themselves in some career pursuit. Their parents’ objection on inter-religious marriage motivated these women to remain unmarried.

Muslim working women moved freely in the society and did not observe purdah. The type of outdoor activities they are involved in and urban atmosphere affected their attitudes regarding purdah observance to a greater extent.

Thus, the women under study experienced different kind of changes in their life style due to their employed status while for some women their job is a pleasure in itself. Since the decision to take up a particular occupation is an indicator of one’s preference for a particular type of occupation, their entry in to that occupation is likely to facilitate job satisfaction. Economic necessity makes it a burden, thus, instead of satisfaction some women are likely to face some problems
and these are enhanced being a single working women because it is true that the emerging group of single working women in contemporary society has experienced a reduction in the degree of dependency, discrimination and exploitation but several problems have engulfed them quite different from the typical problems of role-conflict of married women. Both married and unmarried working women face some problems because a single status and employed status can not make a women happy as society does not allow her to live peacefully on her own. The situation of a married working woman who is provided with a sense of emotional security, as she lives with her husband and children, is considered as ideal. But a married working woman is expected to justify her profession and to fulfill all the responsibilities at her home and place of work simultaneously.

While on the one hand, educational and occupational opportunities have provided enhanced economic independence to women and increased their decision making power, on the other hand, it has undermined traditional social security available to women specially single women who still depend on their kin to support and provide for them. Their education and employment has helped them to accept the challenges and face the problems arising out of their single status. But they are still dependent on the support of close kin.
It seems that though the women under study feel happy and satisfied due to economic and social independence yet a desire to get married is quite apparent. Most of them consider marriage necessary for one’s life for emotional satisfaction and security being a single women they experience lack of emotional or physical security. They like to work because of various socio-economic reasons, but they are not free from stress and strains due to their single and working status. In the context of the single working women Srinivas (1978) observes that “There is a mix of tradition and modernity. The single working women are in a somewhat diffuse transitional stage neither wholly traditional nor fully modern.”

As human beings, single working women require some partners for life. Though they gain independence but life for them seems incomplete without marriage. Those working women who are living with their parents or other family members are happier and satisfied as compared to those who are living alone. Some of them rely on religion or social work to get emotional satisfaction and to overcome the problem of loneliness and depression. They need somebody to care as at some stages of their life they realise that they have missed something in their life and, therefore, suggest other young women not to follow their path and to get married at the right age. That is why some women
still want to get married and believe that a combination of education, employment and marriage are equally important for a balanced life.

An emerging problem concerning the life of modern young women is that those women who are highly qualified their expectations rise and consequently they do not get married. Moreover, people criticize them for not getting married and ask questions in this regard. Higher education and qualification limit their marital choice since it is considered that the husband should have at least equal and preferably higher education than the wife. It should be noted here that women claim for equality but want a husband who is superior to them – the same traditional concept of male superiority, indicating that the equal opportunities for men and women do not change the traditional value system associated with sex.

Educated Indian women today, are under the pressure of various forces of social change. On the one hand, they find employment as an important source of livelihood and this also provides them social security and independent identity. Yet, on the other hand, they are not fully free from their traditional values and, whether they admit it or not, are not at all happy with their single status. As employed women they enjoy a status in society but have to face contempt, pity or sorrow on their unmarried status. This creates a situation of stress and strain
for these women as to face society under such a situation is difficult and sometimes embarrassing. But the respondents in this study showed how bravely they faced the situations and have continued to exist and enjoy living their lives despite all social criticisms. These women have inadvertently or inadvertently deviated from the established norms and values of traditional Indian society.

Even in this age of globalization, and the fast pace at which India's science and technology are developing, the traditional norms and values continue to exist unabatedly. It is therefore, difficult for unmarried women to establish themselves on their own. Thus, it would be better to understand the motivations, changes and problems of single working women in terms of their socio-cultural context which shapes their lives in a definite manner.

The case study method adopted for the present study enabled the researcher to make an in depth study of the currents and undercurrents involved in molding the lives of single working women.

The researcher however feels that the present study was an exploratory study and more studies of this nature would enable us to gain greater insights into various socio-psychological processes of change. The limitation of the present study is that it focuses itself on educated unmarried working women only. To gain deeper insight into
their lives and the problems and challenges that they face, need to be covered through more empirical comparative studies. These comparisons can be made between educated and uneducated single working women; rural and urban single working women; and single and married working women and can be taken up in the future to acquire more knowledge about different aspects of their lives.