Introduction
and
Review of Literature
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Women are sometimes considered to be less capable, less competitive, or less productive than men. As a result, we find that there is a scarcity of women in public life especially in India. Women in India today are faced with problems and challenges under the influence of changed socio-economic conditions, urban culture and growing impact of knowledge and scientific development. These changes affect the life styles of women and they find themselves under pressure to adjust to newer demands of modern living.

The present thesis sets out to examine the motivations responsible for affecting the lives of single working women, their problems and the subsequent changes in their life styles. The study of life styles is an important landmark in Sociology. As early as the turn of the twentieth century, it was Max Weber who considered life style to be an important aspect of social hierarchy. For Weber life style included quality of education, type of occupation, patterns of culture, and style of consumption and the like. These 'honorific preferences' culminated in what he identified as 'status group', or 'honorific preferences' and status were considered to go hand in hand with a monopoly of ideal and material goods or opportunities which were coveted by a certain group of people in such a manner that it came to be identified as 'typical' for that group.
Besides the specific 'status honour' which rests upon distance and exclusiveness, we find all sorts of material monopolies. Such honorific preferences may consist of the privilege of wearing special costumes, eating special unusual dishes which are normally not eaten by the man on the street. Similarly, some types of food are considered taboo. ...The right to pursue certain non-professional dilettante artistic practices e.g. to play certain musical instruments etc. " (Gerth, H.H. and C. Wright Mills (eds.), 1967 : 190-91).

For Weber, status group refers to an exclusive group of people who share common styles of life. The basis of Weber's distinction between class and status is prestige accorded to certain styles of life like clothing, family background, education, occupation, speech style and the like. Life style denotes acquisition of particular type of education, clothing, mannerisms etc. (Gerth and Mills (eds.) 1967: 186-195). Weber showed that acquisition of a particular styles of life enables individuals to change their status group over a period of time. He made special reference to those people whose newly acquired wealth was not sufficient to gain social recognition in society, and hence, they had to imitate the life styles of the upper classes .

Likewise Veblen, (1931) an American Sociologist, associated particular life styles with different classes of people and emphasized life style of what he called the 'leisure class'. He identified a group of
individuals who spent their time in unproductive work i.e. time is consumed non-productively from the sense of unworthiness of productive work and as an evidence of their being in a position to afford a life of idleness. He further stated that conspicuous abstention from labour became the conventional index of reputability. Abstention from labour was not a meritorious act but it was considered to be a requisite of decency. Abstention from labour was evidence of wealth and was, therefore, a mark of social standing. 'Leisure' in the narrow sense did not leave a material product but immaterial goods. Such immaterial evidence of leisure, for example “the knowledge of dead language (latin) and the occult science, of correct spelling of syntax and prosody, of the various forms of domestic music and other household art, of latest properties of dress, furniture and equipage, games, sports and fancy-bred animals such as dogs and race horses”. There were other symbols of leisure, namely, manners and breeding, polite usage, decorum and formal and ceremonial observances (Bendix, and Lipset (eds.) (1931 : 36-42).

On the Indian scene, Srinivas in an attempt to understand the process of social change highlighted the fact that low caste imitated the life style of upper castes including rituals, beliefs, ideology, manners etc.
Srinivas used the term ‘Sanskritization’ to describe the process of cultural mobility in the traditional social structure of India. In his study of the Coorgs of Mysore he found that the lower castes, in order to raise their position in the caste hierarchy, adopted some customs of the higher castes. They gave up some of their own customs and rituals which were considered to be 'impure' by the higher castes. For instance, they gave up meat eating, consumption of liquor and animal sacrifice and imitated the life styles of the upper castes in matters of dress, food and rituals. Through this process, within a generation or so they would claim higher position in the caste hierarchy (Srinivas, 1966).

Srinivas also used the term ‘Westernization’ to characterise the change brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over one fifty years of British rule. The term included changes occurring at different aspects of science, technology, institutions, ideology and values. The form and pace of westernization in India too varied from one region to another and from one section of population to another. For instance, one group of people became westernized in their dress, diet, speech, manners, sports and in the gadgets they used, while another absorbed western science, knowledge and literature remaining relatively free from westernization in external aspects (Srinivas, 1962: 50-51). The western ideology of humanitarianism, democracy,
secularism, rationalism and egalitarianism also began to take roots. The material changes were far more easily observable than the non-material changes and were manifested through changes in the life style of dressing, speech, the setting of the home, the type of food preferred and the occupation pursued. Education was an important aspect of westernization. In fact, western secular education became the order of the day.

The efficacy of education as an instrument of social change, depends on its orientation and content as well as those who impart and receive it (Dube, 1976: 105). In a country whose traditions extend to thousand of years in the past and control the behaviour of masses, it is difficult to change attitudes and values of the masses in a short period of time.

The educated single unmarried women, who form the respondent group of the present study, may join work under different compulsion and may be motivated by different reasons to do so. Their career involvement and professional commitment differ along occupations and motivations. For instance, some women may be likely to be involved in their jobs due to their low socio-economic status. On the other hand, some women may be likely to be involved in their jobs
for personal fulfillment and for utilisation of leisure time. Moreover, single women may be similar to men in terms of their career involvement although their motivations may not be very different from those of married working women in the same occupation. Still, they may face some problems in their family or society. For example, they may face the problem of insecurity especially when they live alone with a few friends or relatives; or they may be harassed physically or verbally at their work place; or they may get frustrated and depressed due to their unmarried single status especially when it is not their own decision to remain unmarried. Sometimes they may be compelled by the circumstances to remain unmarried. Their problem seems to be rooted in specific socio-cultural context. Most of the studies tended to ignore socio-cultural context within which women live and operate. This has implication for the study of unmarried single working women.

The position of women in general, and single women in particular is related to the status and role structure of society. Status and role are defined by cultural ideology, the normative system of beliefs and values, which the society has developed over a period of time. This would then mean that the very perception of men and women, their relative statuses and roles are ideologically defined and sanctioned by society. Thus, men and women are expected to follow a
set pattern of behaviour or play a social role which, in turn, determines their relative status in society. (Uplanokar, 1983).

Gender inequalities are a well established fact and found in almost all societies in different shades and forms. Of late, countries all over the world have begun to realize that the strict division of labour associated with gender must be reviewed. No society can develop its economy or polity without participation of women in public life.

In earlier years, in almost every society, women's roles were defined in terms of their status as daughters, wives and mothers. Their existence revolved round their home. Men on the other hand were not home-bound as they earned the daily bread for the family. They, therefore, enjoyed exclusive rights and a preferential position within the family. Their economic activities outside the home brought them power and prestige not only within the family, but also outside the home. Their status was directly weighed in terms of their productive activities. Men have been able to establish themselves as superior to women through their control of material and social resources. For many long years, both men and women continued to believe in the superiority of men and their unmatched ability with skills and knowledge little known to women.
As a result, women in general and Indian women in particular remained subservient to men and believed that they could never be as bold, clever or intelligent as the men. They adhered to the norms of society and accepted their subordinate position vis-à-vis men.

What they did not realize was that poverty, slower rate of economic growth, and their existence in an almost subhuman way, were all associated with developing societies, which were generally found to discriminate on the basis of gender.

The fact that gender issues were crucial to the development of a society, was ignored by both Indian men and women. For the healthy development of a country, greater emphasis on women's rights and female participation in public life should have been encouraged.

Indian women, irrespective of their caste, religion, race or creed, were totally dependent on men. They left all the burden of thinking and decision-making to men even when these decisions affected their personal well-being. (Even today, an Indian woman is under pressure from her husband in matters relating to family planning). This further reinforced the notion that women were inferior to men and were incapable of taking decisions independently. Their place, therefore, was within the four walls of the home (Ahmad 1983:27).
This belief and practice of strict division of labor, led to other gender inequalities, and also the double standards prevalent in society.

In India, a girl is generally considered as a liability and parents are keen to get rid themselves of this "burden" by marrying her off at an early age. Of course, the exaggerated form of getting rid of the girl child was the practice of infanticide. It was during the British period that the practice was legally abolished. Reports, however, show that even today, in some parts of India, like Chennai, Bihar, Gujrat and Rajasthan the practice of infanticide continues and, with the advent of new science and technology, feticide has gained momentum (Altekar 1956; ADHITHI 1992; Todd 1997) It is perhaps because of this traditional feeling against the girl child, as well as the belief that girls are paraie ("outsiders") that parents consider it important to marry off their daughters at an early age. Subsequently, an unmarried girl/woman is unwelcome not only in her own home but in the community as well. She often becomes the point of gossip and sometimes she becomes the victim of vicious propaganda involving her character. On the contrary, no such stigma is generally attached to the unmarried male. Even in western countries where such gender discrimination is supposed to be somewhat nonexistent, the term to describe an unmarried male bachelor is glorified. One often hears about the most "eligible bachelor" but one
does not hear about the most eligible "spinster" (the term generally used for the unmarried woman). Indeed, the single unmarried woman, the spinster, is sometimes ridiculed, at other times pitied and, often she is described in terms of certain stereotypes - viz: 'They are considered to be fickle, bad tempered, finicky, skeptical etc. One often hears people comment "...what else will expect from a spinster?" or 'look, how she behaves like a spinster' etc. etc. The contempt is but apparent. Eyebrows are raised when people learn that a certain middle-aged woman is unmarried. In fact, marriage raises the status of a woman and mothers were often heard proudly declaring ...Oh yes! All my daughters are married and well-settled".

It is then an obvious fact that single women form a category of their own and their role and status in society are a point of focus and must necessarily be examined especially in view of the challenges that they have faced in the past. Their position today, must be examined in relation to the changes that have occurred in the direction of emancipation of women in the recent past. (Daabla 1992 : 84).

One of the most significant outcome of various changes taking place in India during the last few decades and particularly after independence and more so after the declaration and commemoration of
the International women's year is the increasing awareness and
cognition of the fact that women who form one half of the society
cannot be ignored. Sociologists now feel that if the whole society is to
be understood and made to progress, then women have to be studied
and understood first. The importance of women's actual and potential
economic contribution is also being recognised as is clear by the
increasing rate of recruitment of women in higher technical and
professional education and their desire to seek jobs which commiserate
to their technical education. (Sengupta 1970-71; Planning Commission

Nonetheless the last quarter century has seen much
improvement in the status of women and in gender equality in most
developing countries. With few exceptions, female education levels
have improved considerably.

It is widely acknowledged that gender inequalities in education
and lack of access to other productive resources create inefficiencies
that reduce a country's prospects for economic growth. Education is
considered to be a powerful agent of social change. It enables women
to assume more autonomy and power in both traditional gender –
stratified family settings as well as in the more egalitarian ones.
These enhanced opportunities for education and the entry of women in public life changes their economic status and helps them to assume authority within the home. Apart from the economic and social autonomy which women assume, they also develop a sense of self-reliance, emotional autonomy and the ability to forge ahead to interact with the outside world.

In contrast to women, men, irrespective of their formal education and largely as a matter of course, simply by virtue of their gender, acquire of autonomy, self-reliance, authority and the like.

Education enhances women's economic independence and improves both access to and control over economic resources. It also enhances women's ability to rely on themselves, rather on their fathers, brothers, husbands or sons to attain high social status (Jejeebhoy 1995:37).

In the traditional Indian society women were denied the right to formal education; they were also not supposed to take up occupations outside their home. Although women from the lower castes and peasant groups worked in the fields, this fact did not, however, alter their social status in terms of their rights and duties (Uplanokar 1983:16).
An examination of the system of education in India for women in the historical past can only be done through the evidence of the position assigned to women in different historical periods. The Vedic period is recorded as one which accorded equality to women in all walks of life. Although the Vedic society was a patriarchal one, headed by the senior most male member of the family, the women in the family were reported to be equally entitled to all the privileges given to male members. Within the framework of a patriarchal society, the position of women was as high as that of men, and equal opportunities of education were provided for them. Thus the historical roots of equality of opportunities for women in the Indian society can be traced as far back as the Vedic period. However, the later periods saw a decline in education among women. Women were increasingly treated as property of men. Once again during the puranic period inequality of opportunities for religious rites and for education prevailed. The pre-puberty marriages were found popular and prevalent and the woman was consigned primarily and exclusively to the home and the family. She was deprived of education and self development. During the post puranic period the country suffered from a series of outside attacks. The foreign conquerors destroyed not only freedom but education and social development as well. The deterioration of the position of women
was complete. Restrictions of her rights and freedom resulted in more handicaps for her. The exploitation by foreign rule made its own contribution by awakening an urge among the Indians to fight for their independence. The contact with western thought and literature, especially those concerning humanistic liberalistic attitude, influenced the intellectuals who came in contact with them.

The social reform movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries greatly influenced the social life of the country. During this period, the struggle for women's education became one of the main aims of the reformers. In addition to this, the influence of western liberal thought invoked the liberal principles of individual liberty, equality of human beings irrespective of sex and other distinctions and respect for the personality of individual. Liberation of Indian women and the promotion of their education became the major plank of the social reform movement which in turn was related to the liberation of the country from foreign domination. The credit for initiating the social reform movement goes to Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The campaign for women's education initiated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy was carried forward by Ishwara Chandra Vidya Sagar Bahranji Malbari, Justice Ranade, G.K. Deodhar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Mrs. Annie Besant, Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita and other. Education meant the
development of faculty, not an accumulation of words, a training of individuals to will rightly and efficiently. In this regard one can aptly quote Swami Vivekananda: “Education of the right type should make women capable of solving their own problems. The freedom, secured by women, will develop in them an intelligence to decide for themselves what reforms were necessary to elevate their position” (Guha, 1969: 2).

A progressive movement to improve women’s educational opportunities, especially Muslim women, began to develop in the laterpart of the nineteenth century under the leadership of few individuals like Sheikh Abdullah and his wife, Bi Amma, at Aligarh. In Lucknow, Karamat Husain put in all his might to bring the muslim children to school. Thus, the period of various social reform movement was a period of great national awakening for women’s rights and their education.

The constitution of India guaranteed equal rights and opportunities to men and women. It has incorporated the Directive Principles for the removal of all handicaps that women face in society. It has provided equal opportunities specially in matters of education and employment.
The Kothari Commission observes that as suggested by the National Committee on Women’s Education (1958-59) under the Chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh “The role of Women outside the home has become an important feature of the social and economic life of the country and for the years to come, this will assume larger proportions affecting a majority of women. It will, therefore, be necessary to pay adequate attention to the problems of training and employment of women”.

One of the major consequences of the varied processes of change operating in independent India has been increased literacy rate among women. In free India more and more women are getting education and entering salaried occupations and professions in increasing number.

The literacy rate has shown substantial increase from 18.33 in 1951 to 52.51 in 1991. Over the last four decades (1951-91) female literacy has, however gone up five times i.e. from 8.86 in 1951 to 39.19 in 1991. During the decade 1981-91 in particular female literacy increased at a relatively faster pace (9.6 percent) than male literacy (7.5 percent). (Source Census of India 1991 – Final population Totals, paper – 2 of 1991, Registrar General and census Commissioner of India, New Delhi, India).
As far as the employment situation is concerned, the census data shows the work participation rate of females steadily rose from 14.22 percent in 1971 to 19.67 in 1981 and to 22.27 in 1991. The rise in work participation of rural females has been even steeper from 15.92 in 1971 to 26.79 in 1991. The rise in work participation of urban females over the two decades is somewhat less impressive.

Women’s employment in the organised sector has revealed significant increase from 1.9 million in 1971 to 4.0 million in 1993, constituting 14.6 percent of the total employment of 27.18 million of these 2.7 million women i.e. about 62 percent were employed in the public sector and 16 million i.e. 38 percent in the private sector. As compared to women in the organised sector the representation of men is almost 6 times more. About 56 percent of women’s employment in the organised sector is in community, social and personal services, 16 percent each in transport storage and communication and financing, insurance, real estate and banking services. Of the total employment of women, the organised sector employment forms only 4 percent, whereas, for men, organised sector employment constitutes 10 percent of total employment (Census of India, 191).

Indian women in the recent past have been increasingly resorting to productive occupations and paid employment in the modern
sector. This was inevitable but welcome result of a partial breakdown in familial mode of production leading to a labour market mode based on monetary wage payments (Shariff, 1990: 44).

Srinivas (1978) mentioned that in India the lower socio-economic group women worked along with men in agricultural field apart from doing household work. In these groups greater equality between sexes prevailed, but as the socio-economic status rose, women were withdrawn from the field, and the prestige of the husbands became inconsistent with the extra-mural movement of wives. Upward mobility virtually led to the immurement of women and increased their dependence on men because they were no longer engaged in productive activities. On the other hand, the immurment of women was considered to be a symbol of the economic capabilities of men. Such women were in the ‘Status trap’ (Srinivas 1978). In order to break the ‘Status trap’ and to come out from the domestic walls education and employment of females were essential. Kapadia (1966) mentioned that education had brought women out of the confines of the house and put them into contact with the philosophy of the west. It also enabled them to get a job and to be self-reliant (Bhagat, 1990: 20).

In addition to the women of lower social strata who always worked for wages, the upper class women have started coming out of
their seclusion and are entering vocations that were largely the preserves of men and which were supposed to be 'unsuitable' as well as 'beyond the capabilities' of women which is the most recent phenomenon. Its emergence is the result of the socio-politico-economic changes that have been occurring in India for the last eight decades or so and which have been accelerated particularly after independence (Kapur, 1986). It is a well established fact that men made up the labour force and the woman (married woman particularly) did not work in the occupation that had significant impact on economy.

But with the advancement of science and technology, there has been tremendous changes in the life styles of men and women, especially in urban areas. Due to development in education, transport, media, communication, changes in family life and sex mores women's education and participation in the world of work in urban areas has gained impetus after independence of our country. More and more women year after year, are making a thrust in the vocations which were primarily male dominated merely four decades back. From teaching, nursing and secretarial kind of jobs women are now getting training for professional technical courses and are in the Universities, I.A.S., business and trade, commerce and management, medicine, law, engineering, para-military forces and police. (Jha, Mehta and Menon 1998).
A salient social transformation is taking place in the Indian family with educated women breaking away from accepted 'family traditions' and 'family controls' and looking beyond their homes for self expression (Ross, 1961). The spread of liberal education, the new ideas of equality and self-respect the value attached to the development of individual personality, and the desire for economic and social freedom are some of the main factors which are affecting the pattern of marriage and family life and drawing women away from their hitherto major field of responsibility i.e. management of the home (Devanandam and Thomas 1966). Work outside the home has brought to women opportunities of widening their outlook and developing their social personality. From the standpoint of social progress, women's increasing participation in work outside the home indicates that their latent social and creative energies are given fuller scope and made socially more useful (D'Souza, 1972).

It should be noted that the size of female workforce is governed not only by the existence of job opportunities, but also by their capacity and willingness to avail them. The socio-cultural set up as well as the economic status, to a large extent, determines the size and nature of female workforce.
Transition in social fabric over the years has ushered in various changes desirable as well as undesirable. While there have been certain factors which have caused women to participate in the economic activities, there have also been factors restraining their economic development. Some of the psychological factors related to change are motivations, aspirations, rationality and attitudes. Thus a concern can easily be noticed among social thinkers to collect factual information about the factors which shape the personality and attitudes of individual specially that of women.

The traditional female sex role in Indian culture, that of mother and wife, does not necessarily negatively affect their lives. Rather, it is said to have certain advantages, for instance, the girl is said to be protected from life's struggles. She is sheltered as a child by her parents and other male members before marriage and marriage results in the simple transfer of her dependency from the parents to her husband. Through the process of sex role typing the person acquires the values, motives and behaviour appropriate to either males (Masculine) or females (feminine) in a specific culture. Though modern society represents a significant new element in male-female relationship, owing to the increasing participation of women in employment, Tittle (1981) point out that the attitudes towards sex roles still exhibit many of the
traditional views regarding the appropriate roles for females and males in the family settings. These roles appear to be more conservative for females. Bernard (1980) and Sara (1982) suggest another view of the female sex-role that is, women do not want to change the traditional aspects of their lives. They pointed out that the women are going through the process of role expansion rather than a process of role definition which may be what women in the coming years will experience.

Another psychological barrier in the way of women’s participation is their lack of motivation. It has been suggested by some researchers that women can be motivated to work at the peak of their efficiency with the help of ego-involving instructions (Malhotra 1975 and Kumar and Kapila 1986).

The subject of socio-cultural background and its relationship with changing position of women has attracted the attention of sociologists.

Ahmad’s (1974) study concerned with women students largely drawn from the upper castes and classes and urban background revealed that the main objective with which women students look to higher education was merely to get a degree, as a status symbol rather than, use higher education as a means of gainful employment.
Ross (1973) in her study of Urban family pointed out that most young Hindu girls of the middle and upper classes are still educated with a view to marriage rather than a career. Their parents were found anxious to have their daughters attend Universities perhaps because the leisure time of girls should be filled in upto nineteen or even twenty five years and college was one way of keeping them busy until marriage.

To quote Kranss (1974) “Socialisation in the family and education in the school reinforce, ‘gender roles’ that is cultural definitions of the traits and behaviour that are encouraged to aspire to a limited range of occupations which are believed to be feminine and compatible with the demands of their primary gender roles of wife and mother”.

Various studies, on the other hand (Desai, 1957; Hate 1969; Kapur 1970 and 1970) pointed out that the educated women of India are no more contented in carrying out only the traditional female roles of a wife and mother. Now they have begun to realise that the mission of a women’s life is not limited merely to dutifulness, to parents, more so to the husband, to love making, child bearing and carrying out domestic works. They are gradually realising that they have personalities of their
own as human beings. They would then be able to fulfill obligations towards the community and society. They do want diversion from mundane female roles and feel that employment affords a sense of achievement satisfaction and pleasure in life (Kapur 1986).

The attitudes of husbands and even those of the older members of middle and upper class families towards women’s employment have gone considerable change. In the past, it was considered below the dignity and prestige of a family to send their daughter or wife or daughter-in-law to enter employment outside the home. Many studies have pointed out (Kapur 1974; Kapadia 1959; Ross 1961; Ranade and Ramchandran 1970) that the husbands relatives and even members of older generation now approve or do not mind the educated wives and daughters and daughters-in-law getting employed. Interestingly enough they even encourage them to help the family by supplementing its income (Kapur 1986).

The above mentioned change in attitude has resulted in change in educated working women’s personality. These women are more respected than before for their occupational and professional achievements and position. Leonard (1976) argues very effectively that educated women’s career has been accepted by Indian society as a
contribution to the family and society. Such a favourable change in the attitudes towards career women itself is a very significant change. Dube (1963) in a similar way, says: “There are unmistakable signs that the traditional conceptions regarding the place and role of women are slowly changing in contemporary Indian society...... Increasing opportunities for modern education, greater geographical and occupational mobility and the emergence of new economic patterns are mainly responsible for this trend” (Dube, 1963 : 202).

Where education generates new employment opportunities for unmarried women, and where work outside the home is socially acceptable and available, women (or their parents) may defer early marriage in favour of participation in the labour force. This effect of women’s economic independence has been hypothesised as a leading motive for delayed marriage (Caldmell et.al.; Mason; Salaff and Wong 1977). In gender-stratified cultures, in which the benefits of an unmarried woman’s labour go to her natal family cease or diminish upon marriage, any increase in a daughter’s earning capacity may motivate parents to postpone the daughter’s marriage in favour of pre-marital employment. Likewise, educated women may prefer to delay marriage in order to established a career for themselves or to accumulate some savings. Educated women often postpone marriage in
favour of work to repay their parents for the cost of their enhanced schooling, to help pay for their own marriage or dowry requirements, to help finance the education of younger siblings, or simply to contribute to the daily household expenses. Thus, where families stand to gain from the employment of their educated daughters and where the woman herself stands to gain, premarital employment is an important motive for delayed marriage” (Mason 1984, 1993; Jeejbhoy, 1995).

In social settings where women have more direct control over their earnings, better educated women prefer to postpone marriage in favour of employment. Especially where women are required to quit their jobs for the sake of marriage, educated women may be less willing to forgo earnings in favour of early marriage.

Employment of females may defer marriage since it endowed them with financial capacity and economic independence and provide an alternative to marriage for certain years or for the entire life. Thus, one can easily notice a strong preference among women for paid employment over home-making. The researchers mentioned this dimension of marriage vis-à-vis employment as the opportunity cost of marriage, which was a loss incurred by an employed woman if she went in for marriage. But this factor may not be important because there was
a strong sentiment for wifehood and motherhood among women studied by Bhagat (1990) for whom living with husbands guaranteed a better life than an employed woman could secure by herself. It was found that employment status of the females may lead to a delay in marriage because they were no longer considered as a burden on the family. The parents, therefore were not in a haste to marry them off. Alternatively, they may be buying time to save money for their dowry.

Thus, we notice that in modern society economic pressures have made it more acceptable for educated women to enter the labour market. A working woman who makes a more or less significant contribution to the family income also feels that she should have a share in the decision making process. How much freedom is permitted to her and to what extent her individual status is recognised is a debatable issue and many studies have focused on this issue.

A review of literature at this juncture would help to look at the gamut of various factors affecting the lives of working women. It will help to gain an insight into the reality of women’s lives specially those of working women; and in defining and understanding the purpose of the present study.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The survey of literature revealed that the changes in the lifestyles of people as a result of various factors and consequent variations that are evident in Indian society. Much of the available literature had little direct bearing on the topic of research but is important because of its indirect association.

As early as in 1953 Cormack's study indicated a strict adherence to some of the traditional roles and values among western educated Hindu women of urban upper and middle class background. Her study examined the persistence of tradition and change among Indian women. The women under study were undergraduate students of the Columbia University coming from educated, urban middle and upper class background, representing various geographical areas. The study sought to discover how Indian girls internalised the traditional feminine role in a western setting. It was found that Hindu women, by and large, were tradition oriented and accepted social customs and values that are widely accepted by the Indian society. Traditions of Hinduism were deep rooted and since no culture makes a total break with the past, tradition continued to play a vigorous role in cultural change. Hindu women while responding to society's changing needs
continued selectively to adhere to their traditional roles and value system.

Ross's study (1961), while examining the effects of industrial and technological change on the traditional middle and upper class Hindu families, revealed that as a result of industrialization and urbanization, the large joint family had given way to smaller units – nuclear families. The main observable changes were in respect of role structure and role relationships, authority patterns, marriage patterns and educational and occupational opportunities.

Ross pointed out that in the urban nuclear families the division of labour tended to break down with the wives working outside home to supplement family income, and husbands helping them or substituting for them in doing household duties. The clear-cut gender differentiation was found on its way out.

It was also indicated by the study that most of the parents were found anxious about their son's education. In the nuclear family set up greater emphasis on girl's education was observed in contrast to joint families where girl's marriage was given much more importance than education. However, most of the parents stressed the type of education which would fit their daughters for marriage than career. Some changes
regarding marriage patterns were also observed, particularly the rise in age at marriage and a changing trend of personal choice in mate selection.

Ginzberg’s et al. (1966) showed that the educated women did not lead constricted and discontented lives, but had a multiplicity of options that permitted them to be in a highly advantageous position to realise whatever goals they wished to set for themselves. Liberal politics and deepening of democratic values broadened options and opportunities for women to prepare for and enter many desirable occupational fields which provided good income and considerable social prestige. The study concluded that a small percentage of women were concerned with directing and influencing others while most of them placed a high value on self determination and autonomy. They wanted to lead the type of lives that they had discovered as being best suited to their needs. Expecting a high degree of freedom and self determination for themselves, they adopted the same attitudes and values towards other women.

The scope for girls to determine the type of lives they would lead in adulthood were found to have broadened in comparison with conditions that existed a few generation ago. An increasing number of
girls realised that pursuing higher education would facilitate them to work even after they had children. Nevertheless, the educated women’s scope for self determination was broad but elements of dependency was still present. Her plans often hang on to the plans and needs of her husband and family which took precedence in her life and the status of married woman remained a derived one.

M.S. Gore’s study (1968) dealt with the impact of industrialization and urbanization on Hindu families in and around Delhi. The study examined the changes in the institution of family and analysed the characteristic differences between the joint and nuclear households.

The results of study showed that more respondents from nuclear families preferred nuclear family than respondents from joint families and parents took decisions about their children much more often in nuclear than joint families. The nuclear family women did not go out with their husbands or eat their meals with them any more than the joint family women. Women from both the joint and nuclear household observed purdah and showed deference to older men but the observance of this custom, in nuclear families, was limited to the visit of elder males.
The study found a direct relationship between educational level and marriage patterns. The higher the level of education, the lower was the proportion of respondents opposed to inter-caste marriages. Fewer urban respondents and male respondents were opposed to inter-caste marriages than non-urban and women respectively. The urban respondents, the more educated and women respondents tended to suggest higher ages of marriage. Moreover, urban residence and higher educational level were found to be important influences in determining the responses in favour of remarriage. Men were found more likely to be in favour of widow-remarriage than women.

The study indicated the persistence of joint family living pattern in behaviour, role perception and attitudes as well as greater influence of urban residence and education in introducing certain measures of variations within this overall pattern.

C.A. Hate (1969) in her book “Changing Status of Women in Post-Independence India”, dealt with marital condition, family life, education and employment of women. For this study she selected samples from middle class working and non-working women living in four cities of Maharashtra viz., Bombay, Poona, Nagpur and Sholapur. She attempted to present a comparison between Indian women and their
counterparts in relative positions and the role they played in shaping the destiny of the country they lived in. For the basis of choice of the partner at marriage, she observed that love, temperament, sameness of views, personality, economic stability and good character of the bridegroom were mostly considered. It is interesting to note that in her study most of the unmarried respondents desired that they would give up their jobs after marriage. Most of them said that they could perform the role of mother or domestic wife and working wife smoothly if there was cordial relationship between the working mother and other family members including the husband. However, they strongly argued that access to higher education, especially to so-called technical education – medicine, engineering, technology – should be restricted to those who are having a special aptitude for that. It appeared from her study that the attitudes of educated respondents towards marriage, family education and employment were in the process of transition.

Kapur's study (1970) attempted to examine the adjustment in the lives of married working women so as sought to examine how successfully along with the added responsibility of their jobs, the educated earning women have been able to make adjustment in their married life. This was examined with the prime object of finding out and analysing the factors that contribute towards marital adjustment or maladjustment of working women.
The results of the study indicated that educated married women of urban India are compelled to get into employment or professions not only by economic insufficiency but also by various other socio-psychological motivations that encourage them to take up gainful employment.

It was found that out of the working women, whether employed out of economic necessity or of their own choice – more women have been able to combine their role of a working woman with that of wife and mother successfully.

It was found that irrespective of whether the married women start working willingly or unwillingly, once they take up jobs or professions and continue to be in it for some years they feel glad to have been in jobs and they become so much used to the satisfaction of individual status, independent income, human contacts and a set life outside their homes that they find it unsatisfying to be without it. Their attitudes towards working were also found to be ambivalent. They liked to work because of the outing and other satisfaction of human contacts, freedom to move about, satisfaction of having an individual status, independent income and in many cases intellectual stimulation and sense of worthiness which they derive from their occupational status.
Inspite of all the advantages, they dislike it because of the stress and strain associated to their jobs as also because of the conflict and tensions created within the family members which results from their inability to look after their husbands, home and specially children.

The study indicated that consciously a majority of husbands want or at least approve of their working wives mainly because of extra money accruing to the family and certain advantages to them. But unconsciously they have not been able to accept this changed situation, for they have not been able to make compromises with the changes in wife’s personality as well as in the entire pattern of married and family life and the inconveniences which are inevitably associated with their wives’ gainful employment.

The study concluded that employment of married woman did not affect her marital adjustment adversely. It was found that most of the respondents were well adjusted before taking up jobs and remained so even after taking up jobs. So job was not the only cause but one of the many which affected marital adjustment.

In another study Kapur (1973) while explaining the concept, necessity and objective or aim of marriage examined the nature of expectations associated with marriage and the qualities sought after in prospective spouses.
In this study she observed that most of the respondents no longer considered marriage as a sacrament and realised that marriage was a social contract for the good of the individual and for his personal happiness and satisfaction. They mostly preferred neo-arranged marriages (that is, marriage with mutual consent of parents and children).

Bhatty (1975) examined the pattern of social stratification of a Muslim village of U.P. to study the institutionalised closed differentiation in status and life styles of Ashraf and non-Ashraf woman. She reports that the life style of Ashraf women was characterised by confinement to the home, subordination to male authority and no alternatives to the role of wife and mother. Non-Ashraf women, on the other hand, were freer as compared to Ashraf women. Their movement was less restricted and being equal partners in earning the daily bread.

The greatest change in Ashraf attitudes towards women has come about in the matter of education, at least among families that can afford it for their daughters. However, in matters of marriage they are still treated differently from men. They were not encouraged to make their own choice of husbands or even to express their preferences and the majority of marriages took place within close relatives.
The study concluded that, on one hand, largely because of education and urbanization, Ashraf women were coming out of 'purdah' and seeking employment outside the home. On the other hand, upwardly mobile non-Ashraf families, for whom the traditional Ashraf function as reference model, were found withdrawing their women from family work force regressing towards less egalitarian relation in family and putting them back into purdah. The non-Ashraf women were found to emulate the traditional pattern of Ashraf women who showed change in matters of dress styles, manners and language. The major forces of change influencing the lives upper class Ashraf women were education and urbanization. In the lower class the influence was economic progress.

Rani (1976) made an attempt to examine the situation of role conflict among the working women of Patna. The findings of her study revealed that most of the educated working women of Patna do no suffer from role-conflict. Most of them are dominated by traditional role orientation. It was also found that most of the working women did their household work willingly but sometimes they wanted the husbands' co-operation. She observed that very few husbands lend a hand in the household work. Another interesting observation in this study highlighted the fact that most working women took up jobs to
make use of their higher professional education so as to enable them to afford a higher standard of living. Some of them, however, were working out of gross economic necessity. Most of the husbands approved the employment of their wives. Very few of the women were so attached to their work that even at the prospect of separation from husbands in the event of transfer to another place, they would continue to be in jobs. The case of widowed, divorced and separated women was different. They worked with seriousness and sincerity and their employers are quite pleased with them. By and large, they did not experience much role conflict. It is worth noticing that most of the working women admitted that they had succeeded in managing both their roles, that of housewife and working woman, in a very satisfactory way. The study showed that conflict was not a function of either the profession, income or education of the working women. Ill health, inflexible attitudes of the in-laws, unfriendly behaviour of the friends and neighbours and lack of positive support from the husband were found important source of conflict. Wife’s employment does not necessarily put a strain on marital harmony and happiness. The strong emotional support from husband’s side gives an inner strength to the working woman. Most husbands take pride in their wives’ occupational achievement. The lower income and the gross necessity of a job for
survival was not an important source of conflict. There are other factors which were responsible for role conflict.

Sethi (1976) presented a comparative picture of the attitudes of working women of Chandigarh and Ankara (Turkey). The study concluded that the women of both the places equivocally supported higher education for women at par with men. But they differed in their opinions with regard to co-education. While Turkish women favoured co-education, Indian women were not favourable towards it. Although the women of both countries were married or preferred to get married at a relatively higher age, they, again, differed with regard to the selection of mates. Indian women favoured marriage by proxy and left the choice of husband the parents. The Turkish women took it as an individual or personal matter and disliked the involvement of parents in this regard. With respect to the position of a woman in comparison to a man, there were differences of attitudes. Indian women believed in the natural superiority of men but Turkish women believed in the gender equality.

Srivastava's study (1977) pointed out that as opposed to general perception the socialisation of woman in an institution of professional education may not be important, for the development of
values and attitudes that orient women positively to employment and facilitate their ability to manage the dual responsibilities of family and career. It appeared that significant attitudinal changes in women were brought about not so much by the type of education received as by a prolonged stay in the educational system and by actual work experience. If women are offered the opportunity of a college education and enter the labour force they tend to acquire values and attitudes which support women’s employment and facilitate the management of occupational demands and the needs of the family.

Roy (1979) made a comparative study of Lucknow and Delhi. She analysed the changes in the status of Muslim women by comparing and contrasting women of three different age categories.

Education was found to be an important factor in bringing about changes in the position of women. Among the employed women, the highly educated women exercised their rights over family savings and administration of family finances as compared to literate and employed women. Education of girls not only resulted in delaying their age at marriage but also made them potential earners. Education and gainful employment for women coupled together helped in strengthening the position of women by giving the women certain
added roles which attempt at bringing the women somewhat nearer to men in regard to rights and also moderate the erstwhile traditional authority of males. Younger generation woman, being educated, tended to become her husband's companion rather than being a mere wife. This sense of closeness and freer communication found among younger couples was largely missing in the couples of the older generation. Though these changes fell within the broader limits of the overall cultural milieu, yet the emerging situation of women's expanded role-playing pointed to their changing life styles and improvement in their status.

Ramanamma (1979) studied the changing attitudes of women towards different social institutions due to their education and employment. Her study showed that education and employment had brought about changes in the attitudes of women regarding different aspects of family position of women, friendship, marriage, education, employment, etc. Most of them wanted to marry for love and demanded freedom in the choice of marriage partners. But they were not completely free from cultural traditions as they preferred to marry in the traditional way. Most of them accepted marriage as a *sanskara* (sacrament). However, women's attitude changed significantly towards other aspects of marriage. They gave preference to love marriage,
abolition of dowry, equality of spouses and divorce (if necessary) by mutual consent. The author concluded that education and employment of women had changed their views regarding traditional values, though only few of the traditional practices had been completely disapproved.

Blumberg and Dwariki (1980) in their study on educated women of Bangalore examined the intermeshing of education and marriage systems as they affected the lives of women. They observed that tradition comprised many and sometimes conflicting elements, that some norms were congruent with the changing conditions, while others were not. It was observed that the system of arranged marriages and traditional notions about women affected their entrance into colleges. Most of them valued college education greatly and hoped to go in advanced studies and recommended higher education to other women. Urban families were already convinced of the importance of education for their sons, but now directing daughters towards college education was becoming conventional and necessary. Parents could be less anxious about finding a bridegroom, if their daughter was not merely sitting at home awaiting marriage. They found that college degree was acquired in view of better marriage prospects rather than employment. Under the arranged marriage system, women who had acquired higher level of education demanded husbands who were more qualified.
Most of the respondents preferred the job of a college lecturer, bank clerk or research worker. It was also observed that most of the women continued to contribute most of their salaries to the household. They found that educated women were finding it very difficult to work, especially after marriage, as they had no crèche or similar day care centers to leave their infant or preschool children, and had no trusted servants to care for the children at home. Finally, the authors concluded that women who tried to meet the traditional role obligation of the Indian wife and mother and also spent many hours away from home in a paid employment, experienced a role overload or a 'double day'. The combination of twin roles, where modern technology had not yet arrived to eliminate household drudgery, easily created strain for these working women.

Devi (1982) attempted to examine the impact of female employment on women's status within the family, office and in society. The findings of the study suggest that employment has contributed significantly to raise the status of woman in the family and that the employed woman has more status in the family than her unemployed counterparts. Her status has been examined on the basis of different activities viz., her participation in the decision making process, extent of freedom in speaking, and others. Respondents admitted that they
received ample cooperation from male members in the office and all of them experienced high degree of job satisfaction.

Employment enabled them to develop their faculties and created in them a new confidence in themselves. It provided them an opportunity to show the male world that they were as good as men in their work. Employment had also contributed to the development of a new set of attitudes which were not seen among the unemployed women. These new attitudes were modern in the sense that they had either raised their status or helped in raising their status by creating an urge in that line. Hence, she concluded that it was employment that had created the new attitudes and these in turn strengthened the claim of women to have higher status. And it was employment of women that has improved their status in the family, in the office and in the society as well.

Kaur (1983) has shown that the Hindu women are still quite traditional in their outlook. While studying the changing value orientation of Hindu women of urban middle-class families in eastern U.P. she found that they have highly selective attitudes towards tradition and modernity. The study pointed out that the value orientation of Hindu women in general have significantly altered
because of change in family pattern under the impact of urbanization. The constitution of the family, its internal relationship and its outlook towards traditions, superstitions, taboos etc. have undergone a tremendous change over the years.

Devi and Ravindran (1985) in their study pointed out that the burden of household work on working women may not always contribute to withdrawal of these women from work participation. Work participation and consequent wider contact and expected changes in ideas were not fast enough to change the attitudes of working women themselves towards the role of women in domestic work as a good majority of working women, contrary to expectations, did not expect help from their husbands in performing household work.

The study also found that as compared to non-working women, among working women a higher proportion spent less time at home activities, a higher proportion expected and received help from their husbands, and a lesser proportion believed domestic work as the responsibility of women alone.

Jain (1986) in an attempt to assess the degree of modernisation among Muslims in Jaipur, found that while Muslim family structure and organisation were least affected by the changing social and
economic situations yet some changes occurred as a result of exposure to education. They study revealed that the educated and working women enjoyed greater freedom in maintaining independent Bank accounts and in handling family finances. These women also showed a high degree of political consciousness and more confidence in their domestic dealing. It seemed to their advantage to have educated parents and husbands for women of these families were at liberty to relax purdah practices.

The study showed that education, occupation and income have greatly affected the religious thinking and political awareness and there was a growing trend of change from the traditional to the modern role structure.

Dak (1986) while attracting attention towards the role of socio-biological factors recognises that much of the household and productive tasks performed by women in India remains unaccounted for because of socio-biological factors. Between productive and re-productive roles and pregnancy, lactation and bringing up infants adversely affect the duration and efficiency in work. This creates a bias against female employment, especially in organised work situation. Another bias in women's gainful employment outside the home is considered to be an
indication of low status of their parents or husbands which led to the
determination of the prestige of their family. Due to such the women
are sometimes forced to give up jobs at the whims and fancies of her
parents or husband.

Siddiqui's study (1987) analysed the changes in the status of
Muslim women and indicated a close association between socio-
economic status and educational achievements in the case of both males
and females. The higher educational achievements were almost entirely
to be found among the higher socio-economic strata. Similarly, urban
Muslims, both males and females, had done much better in respect of
educational achievements than their rural counterparts, a trend which
was consistent with the general pattern in respect of other communities
in India.

Urban women had better access to educational facilities and
exhibited greater change in their social attitudes and practices. Women
from higher socio-economic classes in urban areas with access to
higher and professional education, were for full-time employment
whereas the women, both rural and urban, in the lower socio-economic
strata did part-time work generally of an unskilled nature.

The study reflected the greater participation level of urban
Muslim women in decision making or taking independent decision,
both at home and outside home, whereas rural women were comparatively less active.

Changes were also found in marriage patterns and purdah practices among Muslims. The concept of purdah as total seclusion of women has undergone change though it was found widely prevalent in both urban and rural areas. But the low observance of purdah by younger generation signified a change. There were gradual changes in respect to ideal age at marriage and consulting girls while taking decisions regarding their marriage but these changes in attitudes and practices were found more pronounced in some cases in urban areas and among the women with High School or above educational attainments. Thus, educated women with urban and sound economic background showed greater changes.

Sethi (1987) while examining the effects of woman’s employment on the power relations within the family highlighted that the traditional role of a woman as a house-maker and remains unaltered in spite of the fact that a woman adds to her role a new dimension – that of the bread earner. The cultural content has given the woman the freedom to work as a secondary breadwinner under compelling circumstances, but at the same time, it maintains a strict vigil over her activities as a home maker and is intolerant of any
aberration. No direct relationship was found between employed status of a woman and her power to take important family decisions.

Jeuti's study (1993) of single women comprising widows, divorcees and unmarried in the contemporary Assamese Hindu society was undertaken with a view to finding out their emerging problems and status. The study pointed out that education and separate means of livelihood contribute to the growth of a sense of independence among single women in the Assamese society. These attributes have no doubt helped them to accept the challenges and realities arising out of the single status. But at the same time they are still substantially dependent on the support of close kinship relations, though rather loosely.

Acharya's (1998) study concerns itself with the role conflict and problems of adjustment of gainfully employed mothers. The study was an attempt to find out the motivational factors that attracted the educated mothers to the teaching profession and also to determine the factors that attracted the educated mothers to teaching profession and also determine the factors and conditions under which working mothers either reconciled or failed to do so in their dual set of roles. The study revealed that adjustment in family life depends on the attitudes and personality traits of individuals and it was found that working women
successfully overcome the incompatibility between their dual roles only when they receive sympathy and cooperation from family members.

Having reviewed all the relevant literature on the subject of women, education and employment, a brief overview will help in further elaborating the different aspects of change in the life of educated working women. From the foregoing studies we find that most of the studies found that, largely under the influence of urbanization, education and employment of women have played a significant role in bringing about change in the attitudes and behaviour patterns of women by giving freedom and independence in the family and society (Cormack 1953; Ross 1961; Ginzberg 1966; Kapur 1970; Rani 1976; Roy 1979; Ramanamma 1979; Blumberg and Dwariki 1980; Jain 1986; Jeuti 1993). But most of the educated and employed women were found to be tradition oriented and adhered to some of their traditional behaviour pattern (Cormack, 1953; Sethi 1976; Blumberg and Dwariki 1980; Kaur 1983; Devi and Ravindran, 1985).

While Roy (1979) emphasises the role of education in affecting the social position of women as educated working women were found to have assumed greater independence as compared to uneducated working women, Devi (1982) considers employment as the most
important factor in raising the status of women in the society. Srivastava (1977), on the other hand, lays stress not on the type of education but the continuous stay of a woman in educational institution and working experience in bringing about change in the attitudes and behaviour pattern of women.

Though the educated working women of modern Indian society have gained more autonomy and freedom in different fields and matters relating to their age at marriage, choice in mate-selection and movement outside home (Ross 1961; Ginzberg, 1966; Roy 1979; Jain 1986; Siddiqui 1987), yet marriage and motherhood appear to be incompatible with a career for women and are seen as conflict arousing. Working women experience greater inter-role overload and conflict than either men or non-working women and the element of dependency on their family is still present. Their success, in managing their dual roles' and responsibilities and in overcoming the problem of role conflict, depends on their family's support. They manage their roles successfully with emotional support from their husbands and their family members (Ginzberg 1966; Hate 1969; Kapur 1970; Rani 1976; Jeuti 1993; Acharya 1998). Some of the women themselves do not require any help in household chores from their husbands (Devi and Ravindran, 1985).
Jeuti's (1993) study deals with 'single' women, but the sample comprises of widowed, separated, divorced and unmarried women. The focus of the present study is on 'single unmarried' women only and the universe of the study is Aligarh which is culturally and traditionally quite different from Assamese society. The present study deals with motivations and changes in the life styles as well, and includes both Hindu and Muslim women. The present study materialized at the turn of the century and as such takes a look at the situation of single employed women in the age of globalization.

The above discourse, notwithstanding, Indian society is marked by a peculiar trend of contradictions and continuity not generally known to many other societies. This unique aspect of Indian culture makes it difficult to identify specific variables affecting different aspects of the lives of women particularly working women in India.

The working women, who represent an emerging group of women working outside their families and getting regular salaries for their work and generally belong to the urban-educated middle and upper classes, have undergone significant degree of change in their life styles but, at the same time, have enhanced their problems. Though, in their case, the degree of dependency, discrimination and exploitation
has been reduced considerably, it seems, and studies also reveal) that new problems have completely engulfed them (Daabla, 1992).

A review of the existing literature reveals that the academic search to acquire knowledge concerning change and problems in lives of women have raised many issues. Studies, however, differed in their emphasis and perspective. Most of the studies emphasised the role of education and women's employment in bringing about change in the life of women. These studies have also highlighted the emerging problems of women associated with their high educational level and gainful employment but it is to be noted that most of these studies are concerned with married working women. Despite the popular preoccupation with educated working women little attention has been paid to the change, problems and adjustment in the lives of unmarried single working women. Studies concerned with the motivational factors that affect a single women particularly unmarried women and the problems that they face because of their single marital status; and the changes in their life styles are almost non-existent.

Some studies have taken into consideration the motivational factors that encourage or inspire women to take up gainful employment. (Ginzberg 1966; Bhatt 1975; Rani 1976; Kapur 1970; Jeuti 1993) but
some more empirical studies are required to gain a better understanding of the factors that affect the lives of single working women in terms of their different socio-cultural contexts.

Keeping in view the above discussion the present study makes an humble attempt to study the motivational factors that motivated women to take up gainful employment, the subsequent changes in their life styles and the problems associated with their gainful employment and single status. The case study method is used to probe in depth the nature of motivations, the problems faced by these women, and the changes in their life styles. This would enable the researcher to understand and gain deeper insight into the complex of factors associated with the problems of single working women.

NOTES

1. In a patriarchal society the girl needs to move to her husband’s home after marriage. Among Hindus she loses all her rights in her father’s home. Among Muslims it is incumbent on the parents to marry off their daughters before they go for Haj. This clearly shows the religious importance of marriage for girls.

2. It is observed that when girls remain unmarried, the neighbors and community are convinced that there is something awfully wrong with her, and they are mostly suspicious of her character.

3. This aspect needs to be researched.