Results and Discussion
outside home, ii) Attainment of higher education and a specific career pursuit or involvement may lead to delayed age at marriage and employment outside the home affects the lifestyle of single working women to a greater extent. iii) Single working women enjoy more freedom at familial and societal level but they have to face certain problems due to their single status.

These hypotheses were partially proved by the study as an analysis of the case studies reveals that the desire to have an independent identity in society is the most important motivational factor that led educated women to take up gainful employment though it can not be singled out as the only factor. Educational and occupational opportunities for women, urban exposure and prolonged stay in an educational institution specially in a University which may be considered as an institutional arrangement for developing modern outlook in every walk of life seems to have affected the attitudes of these women and motivated them towards pursuing a career. Their parents may send them to educational institutions more for social considerations rather than for economic reasons. But educational institution may help them to prepare for a career. They realise that education and employment may help them develop their hidden talents
and faculties and create confidence so that they can improve their status and achieve heights enjoyed by men. This is evident in the cases of Rana and Hina who were motivated to take up a career because of their exposure to the stimulating educational and urban environment. They realized that employment is a necessity in a woman's life as it would provide them the opportunity to establish themselves independently and create an individual identity. This changed status will bring them social prestige and respect. Though for their parents women's employment outside home adversely affects the family's social standing as it is the duty of the male members to provide for the family. Women's employment outside the home also shows the inability of the male family members to make provisions for the family.

Parents educational and occupational status, specially that of the father, motivates the occupational goals to a greater extent. It was found that in most cases, educated parents encouraged their daughters to pursue careers. Most of the women from urban educated and well-to-do families were provided with an environment conducive to their realizing their occupational goals and plan for their future life from the very early years of their childhood. Instead of forcing them to
pursue a specific career or to restructure their educational and occupational goals, they were encouraged to take decisions in this regard. They however, received sufficient guidance and help by the elders. A few parents, however, planned a specific career for their daughters. In such cases these fathers fulfilled their own childhood desire through their daughters. They wanted to make their dreams come true through their children.

It should be noted here that the attitudes and behaviour of a few parents regarding their daughters' educational and occupational pursuits seemed ambivalent. On the one hand they encouraged and guided their daughters to go for higher education and pursue a career. On the other hand, under social pressure, they ruined their daughters' careers by preventing them from availing educational opportunities required to pursue a specific career. This was done specifically in the case of Salma, who was not allowed to join co-educational institution to study science subjects to enable her to study medicine. The social pressures of Salma's small home-town were such that even though both she and her parents wanted her to pursue a medical studies, they had to bough down to the former. Thus, Salma's dreams were dashed and she offered the art subjects in the girls' school. Perhaps, if she had been a
resident of urban area, her fate may have been different. This indicates that perhaps, place of residence plays an important role in affecting the life of people positively. The case further shows that Salma's had incorporated the traditional values and, without argument, succumbed to her parents wishes. She did not even question their decision at that time. But once she was exposed to urban life she realised the mistake that her parents had committed. Now, in her opinion, co-education helps in the development of healthy mental growth for both boys and girls.

The present study indicates that while some parents want their daughters to acquire education for social considerations, or, until they get married, some other parents and family members encourage their daughters to pursue a career to utilise their potential and talents. The case of Saba is a case in point. Saba was interested in acquiring knowledge not a career but she was encouraged by her parents to pursue a career. It is only after getting employed that she realised the importance of women's employment as it gave her confidence and independence. Thus, it appears that women are motivated not only by other working women but their actual work involvement, experience and the confidence that they exuberate encourage them to continue in the job.
Some women, on the other hand, inspired by working women’s independence want to continue in the job for some other reasons. The case of Rana may be discussed in this regard who, despite her poor health conditions and related problems, had to continue the job so that she could lead an independent life and work out plans regarding her future. If she were to give up her job she would have to return home and lead a dependent life with her parents. Her parents then would compel her to marry a person of their choice. Rana preferred to remain independent and single rather than suffer humiliation.

Economic reasons and economic necessity were also found to have a remarkable impact as important motivational factors affecting the career pursuits of some of the women. In fact, their economic necessity was found more effective in changing the direction of their career pursuit. Some women set their occupational goals under the influence of modern forces of change but their family responsibilities and economic necessity compelled them to take some alternative employment before completing their education or embarking on their career. In view of their responsibility of running the house, some women like Renu, Priya and Mamta opted for some other alternative occupations.
Those women who were involved in prestigious jobs were found more likely to do the job for identity and individual status while those involved in low paid jobs or business were guided by economic necessity. Women from educated and well off families developed interest in those occupations that were likely to bring them prestige, respect and power in society. A few of these women like Nida do not have definite career plans but they want to be in the jobs simply to have power over their subordinates and to have respect in the society. Some other women like Zeba, Ruby and Anu want to satisfy their intellectual needs through their professions as they work out of their love for a particular occupation. These women were found more conscious of their obligations towards society and country and their involvement in outdoor activities.

It should be pointed out here that teaching was found most preferred job among most of the women under study. They considered teaching to be what is generally called a 'noble profession' and a contribution towards the development of society. Apart from this, the job demanded fewer working hours and more prestige in society.

A few women like Anu realise that being a woman is not confined to dutifulness towards the family as a daughter, wife and
mother. A woman has wider interests and obligations towards society which may give her a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Thus, in order to devote her whole life to serve the community she got herself a suitable job, and did not enter into matrimony as she considers marriage incompatible with career. These dual responsibilities would prevent her from her household duties, and is likely to hinder her career pursuit.

Physical handicap or prolonged disease has also appeared to be an important motivational factor for women to take up employment, as diseased women can rarely find life partners. Such women have no alternative than to forego marriage. They get themselves in jobs as an independent means of their livelihood or to divert their attention from their weakness. This was the case of Iram who considered gainful employment important to lead a satisfied and independent life and to keep herself busy. Her employment not only diverted her attention from her incurable disease but also raised her status in the family.

The study showed a close relationship between the unmarried status of women and their educational and career pursuit. Most of the women under study did not remain unmarried voluntarily. Their educational or occupational pursuit seemed to have played an important
role in delaying their age at marriage and by the time they attained their
goal, they had already missed the bus, because now they were too 'old' to
find a suitable spouse. The emphasis on expected relationship of
companionship between husband and wife, emphasis on personal choice
in mate selection and negative attitudes towards early marriage were
quite apparent among most of the women. Most of them considered it
important to be well acquainted with their prospective marriage
partners as they attached much importance to similarity of views and
interests. Additionally, they sought a higher level of education and a
particular type of occupation.

A few women who were extra conscious and ambitious about
their career or social work, did not want to enter into matrimony as
they believed that they can achieve their aims in life as unmarried
women. They considered marriage as adversely affecting one's
independence assigning her traditional duties of wife and mother. Anu
strongly felt about this aspect.

Some women remained unmarried due to compelling
circumstances like due to some incurable disease or family
responsibilities or tragic love tangles. Iram, Renu, Mamta, Priya and
Hina are the examples of such cases.
Some other women did not get married because their family members, who were beneficiaries of their income and did not want to lose that benefit, did not encourage them to marry, or even prevented their marriage. This is seen in the case of Iram and Lata.

Regardless of the reasons for these women to have stayed out of wedlock, it appears that there is latent desire among most of the women to get married. A look at the cases of Ruby, Rana, Mamta, Saba, Lata, Radha, Nida, Priya and Iram reveals that most of them considered marriage to be an important balancing factor between education and employment.

These women under study differed considerably among themselves in terms of changes in their life style and resultant problems as in terms of their motivations.

The most widely expressed change that these women observed in their life style as a result of their employment is the prestige and respect in the family and society. They consider their professional achievement and social position as a significant contribution to family and society and therefore, they feel that they are more respected than they were before taking up employment. The study also revealed that women in prestigious jobs enjoyed more respect as compared to
women involved in low paid jobs and low business turnover. Despite this, the women felt that their occupation has undoubtedly given them independence and confidence. The cases of Iram and Lata amply point to this opinion.

The single status and economic independence of most of these women made them confident enough to take important decisions regarding their life. It should be pointed out that a few women who were brought up in a typical patriarchal family (where they did not talk directly to their father) asserted themselves regarding important matters relating to their life. Like Rana who took the permission to go in for higher education through her mother, stuck to her decision to marry a person of her own choice and failing this, she opted to remain unmarried. She stayed on in Aligarh only because of her employed status. Likewise, Anu also asserted herself against the pressure of her family to enter into a levirate alliance. Had she been unemployed she would have succumbed under family pressure.

A common trend among these working women was observed that they were more independent to spend their income on their own, helping the poor, social work and giving gifts to friends and relatives. Women from upper class families were found to be even more
independent to spend money on their own as is clearly visible in the cases of Saba, Nida, Zeba and Radha. Most of the women were found less interested in saving the money mainly because of lack of responsibilities. They seem to find a psychological satisfaction by making others feel happy through their financial capability.

Most of the women considered themselves more privileged as compared to married working women as they do not have so much of responsibilities concerning cooking and other household chores. They sometimes consider themselves like men who are not expected to cook on a daily basis. These women cook different dishes as a hobby as and when desired. Their families do not expect them to do the household chores keeping in view their outdoor activities. Their mothers, sisters or maid servants do the job. While those women who are staying alone either their maid servant help them or they often visit their friends’ place, restaurants or order food from hotels. It is noteworthy that the same traditional pattern of division of labour is observed in a few families where the women live with female partners like in the case of Hina who stays with her sister, since Hina is the bread-winner of the family and is also busy with outdoor activities. She is exempted from performing household duties. Her sister who stays at home is responsible for performing all household chores.
It seems that single working women have enough leisure time to spend on their hobbies. They mostly read magazines and watch television programs, some are also involved in social work as in the case of Anu. Others spend their leisure time in cinema halls, restaurants with their friends and family. This is evident from case studies of Ruby, Ranu, Nida, Saba and Radha. Moreover, single unmarried women living with parents or other family members have more leisure time as compared to those who stay all alone they have to assume all the responsibilities of running the house while, women with parents or other family members share these responsibilities with other members. Women such as Ruby, Radha, Nida, Renu, Priya were found more emotionally secure too.

Most of the working women had a greater say in the decision making process. Some women who assume the responsibility of running the house mostly due to their parents’ death were given the status of head of the family. No decision in the family is taken without their advice and subsequent approval like Renu, Priya and Lata.

The case studies revealed that women hailing from higher socio-economic families did not observe much change in their life style as compared to women who take up gainful employment due to
economic pressure. Changes, however, were found in terms of their dress pattern as not only the number of dresses increased but the quality of the dress material also improved. The western influence is clearly visible in the patterns of consumption, language, dietary habits, exposure to mass media and various sources of entertainment. For instance, most of them owned various modern gadgets and amenities and other consumer goods. The desire to have more luxury items and consumer goods was quite apparent among most of the women.

This pattern of an almost conspicuous consumption indicates the desire of women to gain a higher status in society. Such a desire is expressed by Renu whose earlier existence in poverty had deprived her and her family of the desired life style. Now when her boutique picked up and she had money to spare, she brought expensive gifts for her family and friends, purchased designer clothes for herself and frequently ate out in restaurants. This was perhaps the influence of her urban experience and her employed status which also made her more aware of the changing demands of the society. Therefore, in order to cope with the changing demands of society she tried to change her style of life. The furniture in the house was replaced with fancy furniture, fashionable items and decorated with art objects. Special attention was directed towards beautifying the home setting emphasising cleanliness. While a few cases, such as Mamta neither did this nor did they want to do so.
Most of the women regularly read newspapers and magazines and watched television programs. On the other hand, some women subscribed for magazines and newspapers simply because they had money but rarely had time to read them. This was the case with Renu. Some preferred to visit friends instead of visiting restaurants while some other got themselves involved in social work or their profession which gave them a sense of satisfaction as well as entertainment. Anu and Zeba are good examples. The employment of some women seem to have affected the dietary habits as in the case of Priya.

Muslim influence on life style of Hindus was also evident as the use of fluent spoken Urdu and desire of non-vegetarian dishes was apparent among some of the Hindu respondents who were previously vegetarian because of religious compulsion. Now, however, under the influence of their Muslim friends they changed their dietary habits and style of speech, as revealed by the cases of Radha and Renu. Similarly, Muslim women adopted ‘Sari’ from Hindu culture. The case studies of Rana and Salma quite explicitly indicated this. Besides these acculturating trends, some traditional patterns of behaviour were also observed among both Hindu and Muslim women. Though some of them were ready to accept inter-caste or inter-religious marriage yet the
preference for setting matrimonial alliances within their own religion and caste were clearly visible, more so among their parents. Though educated and employed women feel free to take important decisions regarding their own life yet a few women like Radha, were not allowed by her parents to get married to a person of a different religious background. This attitude of the parents, and that the daughter succumbed to their pressure, indicates the force with which religion regulates the lives of people. Obviously, Radha's employed status vanished into oblivion under religious norms.

Another change that can easily be observed in the life style of Muslim working women is concerned with the observance of purdah. Some Muslim women, who belong to such places where strict observance of purdah is observed, do not observe purdah for the simple reason that they are living in an urban area and participate in outdoor activities. In this case it does not appear as the observance of purdah is directly related to religion as no evidence to this fact was forthcoming. But this finding corroborates Verde de Stuer's (1968) findings that anonymity in the environment is an important factor for the giving up purdah. This may also have an underlying socio-economic motive. Not only these women are free and do not to observe purdah, they also
wear 'Sarees'—a dress which they could have never been able to wear in their home-town. In fact, there would have been a definite sanction against it and, like their sisters and sisters-in-law, they would have clothed themselves in *salwar kameez and dupatta*. *A saree* is considered to be the proper attire for the Hindu woman and *salwar kameez* for Muslim women. The latter however, under influence of Hindu culture accept *saree* as the acceptable and proper dress for unmarried working women.

A few women under study wear some gold ornaments and use cosmetics. It appears that they feel more confident in presenting themselves as efficient workers at their place of work. Sometimes their dress style commensurates with their cadre position. Their style of dress, wearing a saree and adorning ornaments and the use of cosmetics also gives them a matronly appearance, and the people sometimes get confused regarding their marital status. The very fact that they present themselves in such a manner demonstrates that they are uncomfortable with the status of a single woman and all that it connotes.

So far as the political awareness is concerned, most of the women were found to be politically aware. Perhaps their reading habits and their frequent interaction with their male colleagues are
responsible for this interest in polity. The arena of politics is generally confined to males and females who frequent the company of men are more likely to be affected. This is the case with only those women who live away from the family and were found to interact freely with males. For instance, Mamta who freely interacts with her male rather than her female colleagues and friends. No stigma is attached to her frank interaction with men as she is well past forty years of age. Perhaps, a younger woman could not have faced the situation as boldly as she may have been targeted as a woman of loose character or may have had to face criticism for her 'unbecoming' inappropriate behaviour. Mamta has now acquired so much of independence and confidence that she herself tries to seek out a suitable spouse whenever matrimonial proposals are sent.

Another notable change that can be attributed to the employed status of these women is that a few women who suffer from some incurable diseases receive matrimonial proposals, simply because of their employed status. Had the same woman been unemployed, it is most unlikely that any proposal would have been sent for her.

Thus, most of the women under study experienced different kind of changes in their life style as a result of their gainful
employment. For some of them their job is a pleasure in itself but economic necessity makes it a burden and they face some kind of problems.

It appears that the educational and occupational achievements of the women under study experienced reduction in the degree of dependency and discrimination but they have to face some problems which are quite different from the problems of married working women. Though they feel happy and satisfied due to social and economic independence yet a hidden desire to get married can easily be observed among most of them. Most of them consider marriage necessary for one's life for emotional satisfaction and security because being unmarried women they experience lack of emotional and physical security. They prefer to work because of some socio-psycho-economic reasons but experience stress and strains due to their single and working status. Their educational and employed status help them to accept the challenges and face the problems arising out of their single status but they find it difficult to extricate themselves from kinship and religious traditions. Those who stay all alone often face problems of loneliness, insecurity and depression. This is seen especially in the case of those women who assume the responsibility of their family.
members at an early age and do not think of their own marriage or about their own future. Later on, they become conscious of their loneliness when they see other members of the family (like their sister and sisters-in-law) busy with their husband and children. The case of Mamta can be highlighted to show the sacrifice she made for her younger sister at the cost of her own marriage. But now that her sister is well settled, neither she nor her husband take any interest in Mamta's matrimony. Mamta's marriage would deprive them of her income and generous gifts, which she and her in-laws demand from time to time. Such indifferent attitudes of her sister and brother-in-law made Ms. Mamta conscious of her future life and she now herself goes to consider matrimonial proposals.

In some other cases, when parents treat their daughter more like a 'son' rather than a daughter, other types of problems accrue. This is evident in the case of Lata whose parents do not want her to get married, as there is no one else to take care of them. In fact, even if Lata were to marry, they would prefer a 'ghar jamai' (that is to say, that the groom should establish a matrilocal residence.) Lata then has no choice and continues to be the bread winner of her natal family and support them in their old age, as no proposals from prospective ghar jamais are forthcoming.
Another emerging problem that can be observed is that women who are highly qualified and have some additional qualities, like good looks etc. expect the same or better qualities in the prospective husband. Thus, the marital choice for highly educated and qualified women is limited as compared to their less educated and unemployed counterparts. Consequently, the negotiations for their marriage are more time consuming. Their parents and they themselves take time to judge the qualifications of the prospective groom and if the parents of the eligible groom take a similar stance, it results in delaying marriage and leads to the women's decision to remain single. A few women were found likely to compromise or adjust in this regard as they believe that one must get married within a certain age limit. One must note that though it is considered infradig among Muslims to send proposals from girls side through newspapers, yet Ruby's family advertised through matrimonial columns in various national and local dailies.

It is interesting to note that women, in this age of globalization, who claim gender equality, seek husbands who are superior in qualifications and hold more lucrative and prestigious occupations. This attitude of women indicates their adherence to traditions that consider superiority of male as opposed to females. It
also indicates, that despite their belief that as employed women they have found a new independent individual identity and yet they eschew this position in favour of acquiring a new better identity through their husband's position. Men and women are presumably equal in terms of opportunities available to them society today. If a man can accept his wife's inferior educational and occupational status, then why can not a woman do the same? Perhaps because the equal gender opportunities have not fully brought about change in the traditional value system of Indian society.

It is seen that as single working women they face some problems at their work place also. Any delay in their work is attributed to their being a "frustrated" spinster. Their colleagues believe that their 'frustration' arises from their single unmarried status and affects their work and profession negatively. On the other hand, the female married colleagues of some women like Zeba and Hina justify their incompetence by giving the excuse of their own dual responsibilities of work at home and outside. They argue that single working women do not have any kind of responsibilities or work in their family or home and are responsible only for their professional activities. So, if Hina and Zeba fail in their professional duties, it is obvious that this is due to
their own frustration. This clearly tells us that the stereotypic images of spinteres are well established.

Other women like Nida, face different kinds of problems at their work place. Since they hold a superior position their male subordinates cannot stomach their superior position. Nida’s colleagues and subordinates did not cooperate with her and tried to let her down. Such a negative attitude of her subordinates compelled Nida to behave aggressively towards them, despite the fact that she basically has a polite and pleasant nature.

Some other women had to change their parlance according to their clients' social background. This is so in the case of women such as Lata who runs her own small scale business. She is also not respected in society as a low income business woman. She faces problems while dealing with different kinds of people who treat her just store keeper devoid of respect. It appears in this case that financial gains are socially more important than simple efforts to maintain one’s independence through small earnings. Had Lata been the owner of a large departmental store, her status in society would have enhanced and people would have paid her more respect.

Another important problem that most of the women face is the questions posed by their friends, colleagues and neighbours regarding
large departmental store, her status in society would have enhanced and people would have paid her more respect.

Another important problem that most of the women face is the questions posed by their friends, colleagues and neighbours regarding their unmarried status. They are often asked the reasons for not getting married. It was also found that single women who live with their parents or other family members are considered as a burden on the family and society. On the other hand, women who own their house or live all alone are less prone to such questions of matrimony, but they are not positively accepted, rather they are considered a category of their own.

Most of the women consider that marriage, in addition to education and employment, is an integral part of one’s life but it should not be considered as a compulsion, formality or just a compromise. They believe that one must marry only when he or she is well acquainted with life partner and mentally prepared to enjoy and adjust to the new and changing demands of married. The results significantly point to the fact that all the hypotheses were partially proved. No hypothesis was rejected outright.