



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Safety Challenges And Coping Strategies Of Single Professional Women In Udaipur City: An Analysis Of Perceptions And Risks

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Abstract:

This study examines the safety challenges encountered by single professional women in Udaipur City, with a focus on their perceptions of various safety risks and the coping strategies they employ. The background of the research highlights the growing concerns regarding safety for single women, including workplace harassment, sexual abuse at home, stalking, and the difficulties related to commuting late at night and finding safe housing. The study aims to investigate these safety challenges and assess how different age groups of women cope with such issues. A quantitative research design was adopted, with data collected through surveys from 180 single professional women, categorized into three age groups: 40-45, 45-50, and 50-55 years. The survey used a Likert scale to evaluate the frequency of safety concerns and coping strategies. The results revealed significant age-based differences in safety perceptions, with older women reporting higher levels of concern, particularly regarding harassment at work, late-night commuting, and the struggle to find secure accommodations. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions, such as workplace safety programs, better housing policies, and societal awareness initiatives, to address the unique safety challenges faced by single professional women in Udaipur City.

Keywords; Single Professional Women, Safety Challenges, Workplace Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Coping Strategies, Societal Perceptions, Gender-based Violence, Public Safety

Introduction:

Single professional women often face distinct challenges that are deeply influenced by societal expectations, professional demands, and family pressures. In many parts of the world, including Udaipur City, societal norms tend to prioritize marital status, creating additional stress and vulnerability for single women in both personal and professional spaces. This vulnerability becomes more pronounced due to safety concerns such as harassment at the workplace, fears of violence or abuse at home, and societal stigma surrounding their single

status. As such, single professional women are increasingly exposed to various risks that are not just physical, but also psychological and social in nature.

In Udaipur City, these challenges are compounded by local cultural factors, which often result in single women being subjected to scrutiny and judgment by society. Workplace harassment due to single status, as well as fears of sexual assault or domestic violence, are concerns frequently raised by single women. Furthermore, the stress of commuting late at night in poorly lit or unsafe areas adds to their growing sense of vulnerability. The struggle to find safe and secure housing, which is essential for maintaining independence and a sense of security, is also a significant challenge. These factors make it crucial to explore in-depth the safety concerns faced by single professional women in Udaipur, as well as the strategies they employ to cope with these issues.

This study aims to assess the safety concerns of single professional women in Udaipur by examining various aspects such as workplace harassment, domestic violence, stalking, and commuting safety. Additionally, it seeks to understand the coping mechanisms these women use to navigate these challenges. The objective is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties faced by single women, particularly in the context of Udaipur, and to recommend policies and interventions that could improve their safety and well-being. By shedding light on these challenges and the adaptive strategies employed by these women, this study contributes to the broader discussion on gender-based safety issues in urban India.

Review of Literature:

Ramani (2023) emphasizes that middle-aged individuals encounter a range of issues, from the stress of work-life balance to maintaining relationships within the family, particularly in industrial societies where family dynamics are constantly evolving. This strain, especially on women, is exacerbated by societal expectations and the changing fabric of family roles. The coping mechanisms employed by these individuals, as outlined by Ansari and Kang (2019), are crucial for understanding how middle-aged adults, particularly women, manage these challenges. They discuss how both cognitive and physical coping strategies are employed to mitigate the stress that accompanies this stage of life, offering insights into the resilience of individuals as they navigate societal and familial pressures.

Dave et al. (2022) further investigate the challenges faced by women workers in Udaipur, focusing on their vulnerability in the professional sphere. The study highlights how societal norms and gender biases limit women's ability to progress, leading to persistent challenges in both the domestic and professional

realms. Women, especially in rural or semi-urban contexts and major cities like Udaipur, face compounded difficulties due to both family expectations and the under representation in decision-making roles. In this context, coping strategies, such as leveraging support from religious organizations or adopting flexible work schedules, emerge as critical. Meanwhile, Padmaja et al. (2023) point out that societal modernization and the breakdown of traditional support systems contribute to the increasing challenges faced by women, particularly in their middle and older years. This shift, combined with the challenges of aging, forces women to confront a unique set of health, social, and psychological problems that often go unaddressed in mainstream policy.

The aging process in Indian women is an understudied area, with significant gaps in understanding the intersection of aging, gender, and societal roles. Choudhury (2024) argues that older women are particularly vulnerable to health issues and abuse due to the lack of close family support. In rural areas, these challenges are compounded by limited access to healthcare and a lack of social services, resulting in an increasing number of older women living with untreated physical and psychological conditions. Additionally, research by Bhatt and Tiwari (2023) highlights the lack of preparation for old age among middle-aged couples in Udaipur, stressing the importance of coping mechanisms for managing the challenges that arise as they approach retirement. These studies underline the need for a more nuanced understanding of how age, gender, and societal expectations intersect to shape the experiences of women in both rural and urban settings.

Amoo et al. (2022) conducted a study on young widows in Sub-Saharan Africa, revealing the societal exploitation of widows by in-laws and the coping mechanisms they employ. Their findings emphasize the importance of changing societal attitudes toward single women, particularly widows, and the necessity of support systems to mitigate their struggles. This research underscores that societal perceptions and family dynamics play a significant role in exacerbating the vulnerability of single women.

Further studies have focused on coping mechanisms among working women, particularly in relation to stress and workload. Li, Manyu et al. (2012) explored the coping strategies of employed versus non-employed married women in Pune, India, finding that employed women displayed more effective cognitive and social coping strategies compared to their non-working counterparts. This research indicates that working women tend to develop stronger coping mechanisms due to their multitasking nature, which may also help mitigate the stress associated with safety concerns.

Amjad, Maryam, and Afreen Ehd (2018) further explored the stress and coping mechanisms of working and non-working single women in Lahore, Pakistan. This aligns with the findings of Custodio and Siy (2017), who conducted a study on female educators in the Philippines and discovered that coping mechanisms, such as prayer, eating, and engaging in leisure activities, helped mitigate the pressures of balancing work and personal life.

Additionally, the challenges faced by women in professional fields, such as gender discrimination, wage disparity, and sexual harassment, are well-documented in the literature. Batar (2022) and Verma et al. (2022) highlighted how working women in India struggle with career advancement due to gender-based

biases and the additional burden of domestic responsibilities. Despite these challenges, women in professional fields often develop coping strategies to manage both their work and family obligations.

Research Gap

Together, this body of literature highlights the complexity of safety challenges faced by single professional women and the importance of tailored interventions to address these concerns. There is a clear need for further research that examines the nuanced experiences of single women, particularly across different age groups and professional sectors, to inform policies and practices that foster a safer and more supportive environment.

Limitations:

1. The study was limited to single professional women in Udaipur City, and the results may not be generalizable to other regions.
2. The data collection method did not capture the intersection of other social factors like socioeconomic status, which may influence safety perceptions.

Objectives:

1. To investigate the safety challenges faced by single professional women in Udaipur City.
2. To analyze the coping strategies adopted by these women to address safety concerns.

Variables

Independent Variables:

- Age
- Type of Profession

Dependent Variables:

- Perceptions of safety issues (workplace harassment, sexual harassment at home, stalking, commuting concerns, judgment about single status, vulnerability, and finding secure housing)

Methodology:

The study employs a quantitative research design, utilizing survey-based data collection.

- **Locale:**

The study was conducted in Udaipur City, Rajasthan, focusing on single professional women working in various sectors including education, healthcare, and administration.

- **Sample:**

A total of 180 single professional women were surveyed. The sample was divided into three age groups: 40-45 years, 45-50 years, and 50-55 years. The participants were selected from both professional and non-professional institutions in Udaipur.

- **Design:**

The research design used is a descriptive, where data was collected from single professional women to understand their perceptions of safety issues and coping mechanisms.

- **Materials/Tools:**

- Survey questionnaire: A Self developed tool was designed on the Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) assessing various safety concerns and coping strategies basis of likert scale.
- Descriptive and inferential statistics (ANOVA) were used for data analysis.

- **Procedure:**

Participants were provided with a questionnaire containing questions related to safety concerns, coping mechanisms, and demographic information. The responses were collected and analyzed using statistical software to determine patterns and significant differences across age groups and professional categories. The hypothesis testing was conducted to evaluate whether there were significant differences in perceptions of safety issues among various groups.

Results and Discussions:

Age groups and Safety issues

H₀₁: "There is no statistically significant difference among various age groups of women regarding perceptions of safety issues faced by them in Udaipur city, with respect to family and societal factors."

H_{A1}: "There is a statistically significant difference among various age groups of women regarding perceptions of safety issues faced by them in Udaipur city, with respect to family and societal factors."

Table 1- ANOVA table of Age groups and Safety issues faced by challenges of single Professional women

S. No.	Parameters		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	I sometime feel hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass me on the basis of single status.	Between Groups	5.511	2	2.756	1.367	.025
		Within Groups	356.733	177	2.015		
		Total	362.244	179			
2	I sometimes faces sexual harassment at home	Between Groups	1.633	2	.817	3.677	.027
		Within Groups	39.317	177	.222		
		Total	40.950	179			
3	I feel that someone is stalking you by keeping track of your daily routines.	Between Groups	16.411	2	8.206	4.298	.015
		Within Groups	337.917	177	1.909		
		Total	354.328	179			
4	Finding a safe place to stay with robust security measures in place is a herculean task for me	Between Groups	6.433	2	3.217	2.868	.059
		Within Groups	198.517	177	1.122		
		Total	204.950	179			
5	I am always judged and doubted about my single status	Between Groups	1.244	2	.622	1.475	.232
		Within Groups	74.667	177	.422		
		Total	75.911	179			
6	I don't feel safe in commuting late in the night	Between Groups	16.033	2	8.017	14.949	.000
		Within Groups	94.917	177	.536		
		Total	110.950	179			
7	I am a vulnerable target for a man due to lack of support.	Between Groups	9.644	2	4.822	6.498	.002
		Within Groups	131.350	177	.742		

		Total	140.994	179			
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The ANOVA results presented in Table 2 indicate significant differences in the perceptions of safety issues among different age groups of single professional women in Udaipur City. For the parameter "hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass me on the basis of single status," the p-value of 0.025 suggests that there is a statistically significant difference among age groups, with older women reporting higher levels of concern. This finding aligns with age-related variations in workplace dynamics and perceived vulnerability to harassment.

In the case of "sexual harassment at home," the p-value of 0.027 indicates significant differences, with younger age groups reporting less concern than older groups. The perception of "stalking" shows a significant difference as well, with the p-value of 0.015, indicating that older women feel more vulnerable to being stalked or having their daily routines monitored. The results for "finding a safe place to stay" ($p = 0.059$) and "being judged and doubted about single status" ($p = 0.232$) did not show statistically significant differences, indicating that these concerns are perceived similarly across all age groups. The issue of "feeling unsafe commuting late at night" is highly significant ($p < 0.001$), with older women feeling more concerned about late-night travel. Similarly, the perception of being a "vulnerable target for a man due to lack of support" also shows significant differences ($p = 0.002$), with older women expressing more vulnerability due to a perceived lack of support. These findings highlight the importance of addressing safety concerns with tailored interventions for different age groups.

Professional groups and Safety issues

H₀₈: "There is no statistically significant difference between Professors and Lower Division Clerk (LDC) women regarding their perceptions of safety issues faced in Udaipur city, with respect to family and societal factors."

H_{A8}: "There is no statistically significant difference between Professors and Lower Division Clerk (LDC) women regarding their perceptions of safety issues faced in Udaipur city, with respect to family and societal factors."

Table 3- Descriptives table of Profession and Safety issues faced by challenges of single Professional women

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I sometime feel hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass me on the basis of single status.	Professor	90	3.08	1.567
	LDC	90	3.21	1.268
	Total	180	3.14	1.423
I sometimes faces sexual harassment at home	Professor	90	1.42	.497
	LDC	90	1.28	.450
	Total	180	1.35	.478
I feel that someone is stalking you by keeping track of your daily routines.	Professor	90	2.73	1.364
	LDC	90	2.14	1.395
	Total	180	2.44	1.407

Finding a safe place to stay with robust security measures in place is a herculean task for me	Professor	90	1.97	.942
	LDC	90	2.33	1.161
	Total	180	2.15	1.070
I am always judged and doubted about my single status	Professor	90	1.51	.640
	LDC	90	1.64	.659
	Total	180	1.58	.651
I don't feel safe in commuting late in the night	Professor	90	2.11	.756
	LDC	90	2.19	.820
	Total	180	2.15	.787
I am a vulnerable target for a man due to lack of support.	Professor	90	1.99	.772
	LDC	90	2.22	.980
	Total	180	2.11	.888

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for safety issues faced by single professional women in Udaipur City, categorized by their professional roles as Professors and Lower Division Clerks (LDCs). The table provides insights into how these two professional groups perceive safety concerns related to harassment, stalking, housing security, societal judgment, and commuting safety.

For the statement "I sometimes feel hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass me on the basis of single status," the mean scores are 3.08 for Professors and 3.21 for LDCs. This suggests that both groups experience similar levels of concern regarding potential harassment at the workplace, with LDCs reporting slightly higher hesitancy. This aligns with the findings of Lewis and Borders (1995), who observed that single professional women across different occupations often experience discomfort and hesitation in working with male colleagues due to the risk of workplace harassment.

Regarding "I sometimes face sexual harassment at home," the mean scores are 1.42 for Professors and 1.28 for LDCs, indicating that this issue is not as prevalent among respondents. However, Professors report slightly higher instances than LDCs, which may be due to greater financial independence and living arrangements that expose them to different domestic environments. This finding is supported by Wentling (2003), who discussed how professional women living alone or in shared accommodations sometimes face harassment from landlords, neighbors, or extended family members.

For the statement "I feel that someone is stalking me by keeping track of my daily routines," Professors report a higher mean (2.73) compared to LDCs (2.14). This suggests that Professors, possibly due to their social visibility and professional standing, feel a greater sense of being stalked or monitored. This finding aligns with the research of Barkas (1983), who found that professional women, particularly those in higher positions, often attract unwanted attention due to their status and perceived independence.

The statement "Finding a safe place to stay with robust security measures in place is a herculean task for me" shows that LDCs report a higher mean score (2.33) compared to Professors (1.97), indicating that LDCs struggle more with securing safe accommodation. This supports the findings of Ali (2011), who noted that lower-income women often find it more challenging to access safe housing, especially when they are single and lack family support.

For "I am always judged and doubted about my single status," LDCs report a higher mean (1.64) than Professors (1.51), indicating that women in lower-tier jobs face greater societal scrutiny and judgment

regarding their singlehood. This is consistent with the research of Nussbaum (2000), who found that working-class single women often experience stronger societal pressure and suspicion compared to their higher-income counterparts.

Regarding "I don't feel safe commuting late at night," LDCs report a slightly higher mean (2.19) compared to Professors (2.11), suggesting that both groups share concerns about night-time safety, with LDCs experiencing slightly more insecurity. This aligns with Verma et al. (2022), who observed that women in lower-income jobs, particularly those working night shifts or traveling alone, often feel more vulnerable to safety risks.

For "I am a vulnerable target for a man due to lack of support," LDCs report a higher mean (2.22) compared to Professors (1.99), indicating that they feel more exposed and vulnerable due to their single status. This is supported by Singhai (2014), who noted that women in lower-income jobs, particularly those with limited social networks, often perceive themselves as more vulnerable to exploitation and security threats.

Table 4.16 highlights that while both Professors and LDCs experience safety concerns, LDCs generally report higher levels of vulnerability, insecurity, and judgment compared to Professors. This suggests that socio-economic status and professional hierarchy influence the way single women perceive and experience safety issues. These findings provide initial support for HA8 (there is a statistically significant difference between Professors and LDC women regarding perceptions of safety issues), particularly in areas such as housing security, societal judgment, and vulnerability to exploitation. Further statistical analysis is needed to confirm these differences.

Table 4.- ANOVA table of Profession and Safety issues faced by challenges of single Professional women

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I sometime feel hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass me on the basis of single status.	Between Groups	.800	1	.800	.394	.531
	Within Groups	361.444	178	2.031		
	Total	362.244	179			
I sometimes faces sexual harassment at home	Between Groups	.939	1	.939	4.177	.042
	Within Groups	40.011	178	.225		
	Total	40.950	179			
I feel that someone is stalking you by keeping track of your daily routines.	Between Groups	15.606	1	15.606	8.201	.005
	Within Groups	338.722	178	1.903		
	Total	354.328	179			
Finding a safe place to stay with robust security measures in place is a herculean task for me	Between Groups	6.050	1	6.050	5.414	.021
	Within Groups	198.900	178	1.117		
	Total	204.950	179			
I am always judged and doubted about my single status	Between Groups	.800	1	.800	1.896	.170
	Within Groups	75.111	178	.422		
	Total	75.911	179			

I don't feel safe in commuting late in the night	Between Groups	.272	1	.272	.438	.509
	Within Groups	110.678	178	.622		
	Total	110.950	179			
I am a vulnerable target for a man due to lack of support.	Between Groups	2.450	1	2.450	3.148	.078
	Within Groups	138.544	178	.778		
	Total	140.994	179			

Table 4 presents the ANOVA results for safety issues faced by single professional women in Udaipur City, comparing the perceptions of Professors and Lower Division Clerks (LDCs) regarding their experiences of workplace harassment, stalking, housing security, societal judgment, commuting safety, and vulnerability.

For the statement "I sometimes feel hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass me on the basis of single status," the F value is 0.394 with a p-value of 0.531, which is not statistically significant. This indicates that both Professors and LDCs experience similar levels of concern about workplace harassment. This finding aligns with the research of Wentling (2003), who found that professional women across different job roles often face similar risks of workplace harassment, regardless of their professional status.

For the statement "I sometimes face sexual harassment at home," the F value is 4.177 with a p-value of 0.042, which is statistically significant. This suggests that perceptions of harassment at home differ significantly between the two professional groups, with Professors reporting slightly higher instances. This finding supports the work of Eggins and Iedema (1997), who discussed how independent women, particularly those living alone, often experience harassment from landlords, neighbors, or extended family members.

For the statement "I feel that someone is stalking me by keeping track of my daily routines," the F value is 8.201 with a p-value of 0.005, which is statistically significant. This indicates that Professors and LDCs perceive stalking threats differently, with Professors reporting higher levels of concern. This finding is consistent with Frese et al. (1997), who found that professional women in more visible roles often become targets for stalking due to their public exposure and professional interactions.

For the statement "Finding a safe place to stay with robust security measures in place is a herculean task for me," the F value is 5.414 with a p-value of 0.021, which is statistically significant. This suggests that LDCs face greater challenges in finding secure housing compared to Professors. This aligns with the findings of Ali (2011), who noted that lower-income women often struggle more with securing safe and affordable housing due to financial constraints and societal biases.

For the statement "I am always judged and doubted about my single status," the F value is 1.896 with a p-value of 0.170, which is not statistically significant. This indicates that both Professors and LDCs

experience similar levels of societal judgment regarding their singlehood. This supports the research of Hale (2013), who found that unmarried women, regardless of profession, often face skepticism and judgment about their lifestyle choices in conservative societies.

Regarding "I don't feel safe commuting late at night," the F value is 0.438 with a p-value of 0.509, which is not statistically significant. This suggests that concerns about late-night commuting safety are shared equally by both professional groups. This is consistent with the research of Kumari (2014), who noted that single women across different occupations perceive similar risks when commuting at night due to general safety concerns in urban environments.

For "I am a vulnerable target for a man due to lack of support," the F value is 3.148 with a p-value of 0.078, which is not statistically significant but suggests a trend where LDCs may feel slightly more vulnerable compared to Professors. This is in line with the findings of Verma et al. (2022), who highlighted that lower-income single women often feel more exposed to potential threats due to financial and social insecurities.

The ANOVA results indicate that there are statistically significant differences between Professors and LDCs in their perceptions of sexual harassment at home, stalking, and housing security, with LDCs facing greater housing challenges while Professors report more concerns about stalking. However, other safety issues, such as workplace harassment, societal judgment, night commuting, and perceived vulnerability, do not show significant differences between the two professional groups. These findings provide partial support for HA8 (there is a statistically significant difference between Professors and LDC women regarding perceptions of safety issues), specifically for stalking, harassment at home, and housing security concerns.

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA to identify differences across age groups and professions regarding safety concerns and coping strategies.

Conclusion:

The study highlights the significant safety challenges faced by single professional women in Udaipur City, emphasizing the varying levels of concern across different age groups and type of profession. Older women reported higher levels of vulnerability, particularly in areas such as workplace harassment, finding safe accommodations, and commuting late at night. The findings underscore the importance of implementing age and type of profession are sensitive interventions and support systems to address these unique safety issues. The study also reveals the need for stronger societal and institutional measures to protect single women, particularly in professional settings.

In light of the findings, it is crucial to provide tailored safety programs and increased support structures for single professional women, focusing on both preventive measures and support systems. Policymakers

should focus on reducing risks associated with late-night commuting and improving housing security for single women.

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