

A Study on Impact of Divorce upon the Attitude and Social Relations of Women in Srinagar District

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ABSTRACT The present study was conducted on a sample of 40 divorced women. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample and self-designed questionnaire was used to collect the data. The results revealed that most of the marriages were successful in the beginning but later deteriorated with cruelty being the main reason for divorce. For working women salary was the only source of income but non-working women were dependant on their parents to fulfill their basic needs. The problem was even greater for women who had the custody of children. Majority of the women studied blamed the other partner for divorce and didn't regret their decision of divorce. The only emotion they felt for their ex-husbands was hatred and most of the women didn't want to marry again.

INTRODUCTION

Divorce (or the dissolution of marriage) is the final termination of a marital union, canceling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between the parties (unlike annulment, which declares the marriage null and void). Divorce laws vary considerably around the world, but in most countries it requires the sanction of a court or other authority in a legal process. The legal process of divorce may also involve issues of alimony (spousal support), child custody, child support, distribution of property and division of debt.

Between 1971 and 2011, several countries legalized divorce, the last one being Malta in 2011. The majority Catholic Philippines is the last officially secular country that does not have civil divorce for the whole population; Muslims, however, are granted divorce rights as per their religion. Vatican City, an ecclesiastical sovereign city-state, also has no procedure for divorce.

EFFECTS OF DIVORCE

Some of the effects associated with divorce include academic, behavioral, and psychological problems. Although this may not always be

true, studies suggest that children from divorced families are more likely to exhibit such behavioral issues than those from non-divorced families (Miller 2003).

Divorce and Relationships

Research done at Northern Illinois University on Family and Child Studies suggests that divorce can have a positive effect on families due to less conflict in the home. There are, however, many instances where the parent-child relationship may suffer due to divorce. Financial support is many times lost when an adult goes through a divorce. The adult may be obligated to obtain additional work to maintain financial stability. In turn, this can lead to a negative relationship between the parent and child. The relationship may suffer due to lack of attention towards the child as well as minimal parental supervision (Miller 2003).

Studies have also shown that parental skills decrease after a divorce occurs; however, this affect is only a temporary change. "A number of researchers have shown that a disequilibrium, including diminished parenting skills, occurs in the year following the divorce but that by two years after the divorce re-stabilization has occurred and parenting skills have improved" (Santrock 2003).

Divorce and Academic Achievements

Children who have experienced a divorce frequently have lower academic achievement

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than children from non-divorced families (Wolshik 2002). In a review done on family and school factors related to adolescents' academic performance, it is noted that it is two times more likely for a child from a divorced family to drop out of high school than a child from a non-divorced family. These children from divorced families may also be less likely to attend college, resulting in the discontinuation of their academic career (Rodgers 2001). Many times academic problems are associated with those children from single-parent families. Studies have shown that this issue may be directly related to the economical influence of divorce. A divorce may result in the parent and children moving to an area with a higher poverty rate and a poor education system all due to the financial struggles of a single parent (Santrock 2000).

Effects of Divorce on Children

Sociologists and psychologists have researched to show that the effects of divorce heavily depend on the child's age at the time the divorce occurs. The child's gender, personality, the amount of conflicts with the parents and support of family and friends all contribute to the effects of divorce on a child.

Infants

Although infants may not understand the exact conflict, they do react to the difference in their parent's mood and energy change. Some effects on infant may include a loss of appetite.

Pre-school Children

Children of this age range from 3–5 years old may often mistake the divorce as their own fault. At this age, children may feel as though they are alone and fear the thought of abandonment. Some of the effects for children at this age may include baby-like behavior such as old toys, a baby blanket, or even wetting the bed. They also may become depressed, uncooperative, or angry.

School-aged Children

Children at this age have more of a difficult time adjusting to the parental divorce than younger or older children. At this age, children

are able to understand the pain they feel due to the separation of their parents' but are too young to control how they respond to the pain. Many times children experience feelings of anger, grief, and embarrassment. In order to deal with the situation and cope, it is important that children become involved in activities with other kids. It is very common for children this age to hope that parents will eventually get back together.

Adolescents

Teens experience some of the same feelings as school-aged children. They feel anger, fear, depression, loneliness, and guilt. Some teens feel as though they must take on new responsibilities such as new chores and taking care of siblings. Teens may also doubt his or her ability to get married or stay married.

On an all-India level, the Special Marriage Act was passed in 1954, and the Hindu Marriage Act, in 1955 which legally permitted divorce to Hindus and other communities who chose to marry under these acts. Divorce can be sought by husband or wife on certain grounds, including: adultery, cruelty, desertion for two years, religious conversion, mental abnormality, venereal disease, and leprosy (The Hindu Marriage Act 1955). Divorce is also legal based on mutual consent of both the spouses, which can be filed after at least one year of separated living. Mutual consent divorce cannot be appealed against, and the law mandates a minimum period of six months (from the time divorce is applied for) for divorce to be granted (Section 13B, Hindu Marriage Act). Official figures of divorce rates are not available, but it has been estimated that 1 of 100 or another figure 11 of 1,000 marriages in India end up in divorce.

An amendment to the marriage laws to allow divorce based on "irretrievable breakdown of marriage" (as alleged by one of the spouses) is currently under consideration in India (Chandran 2011). In June 2010, the Union Cabinet of India approved the Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill 2010, which, if cleared by Parliament, would establish "irretrievable breakdown" as a new ground for divorce.

Objectives

- To study the impact of divorce on the attitude of women.

- To study the impact of divorce on attitude of society towards her.
- To study the impact of divorce on the social relations of women.

METHODOLOGY

For the study, forty divorced women were selected from the district Srinagar through purposive random sampling technique. A self-designed closed ended questionnaire was prepared. Each question had five options and the respondents were asked to tick mark the most appropriate one. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

- a) The first section of the questionnaire included the background information and also included questions relating to marriage and factors leading to divorce.
- b) Questions related to attitudinal change formed the second section and included questions aimed at finding the attitude of the respondent towards herself after her divorce.
- c) The third section comprised of queries investigating the change in the social relations of the woman after her divorce.

After the required information was gathered, the data was carefully analyzed and interpreted. In order to quantify the data, the data was coded and processed through software namely SPSS (Software Package for Social Science). The data was analyzed by using column percentages, Chi-square analysis, and levels of significance.

RESULTS

The results show the relationship of work status with the married life, reason for divorce, attitude towards divorce, residence and source of income. It was found that among working women for 47.83% women marriage was successful in the beginning, for 21.74 % marriage from the very beginning was a failure while as for 8.7% marriage was a compromise. Amongst non-working women 41.18% had successful marriage in the beginning, it was total failure for 35.29% whereas, and for 23.53% it deteriorated soon after marriage.

Also, cruelty was found to be the main reason for divorce amongst the two groups (43.48% and 29.41%). Amongst the other causes were adultery, followed by impotency and least im-

portant found was desertion. 47.83% working women and 41.18 % non working women had undergone an emotional trauma but 21.74 % working and 35.29% non- working women took it positively and thought that it was the opportunity to start a new life. For 13.04% working women and 17.65% non- working women divorce meant an increased responsibility especially if they had children to take care of.

Most of the women (69.57 % working and 82.35 % - working) lived with their parents after divorce, 17.39 % working women were living with their siblings and only 13.04% working and 17.65 % non- working were found to be living independently. For working women, 95.65 % depended on their salary but 82.35 % non- working women were dependant on their parents for financial support, and 5.88 % were dependent on their siblings for the same. All the results found were insignificant (significant at 0.05) (Table 1).

On interpreting Table 2 it was found that 100% illiterate women, 66.67 % literate women and 61.29 % educated women were depressed after divorce. 16.67 % literate and 12.90 % educated felt rejected and only 3.23 % educated thought of themselves as failure after divorce. Also, for 66.67% illiterate, 33.33% literate and 48.39 % interest in life had initially declined but they soon recovered. Though for 33.33% illiterate and literate women and 38.71 % educated women life was not much interesting even after so many years of divorce. Further, 38.71 % educated women, 66.67 % literate women and 33.33 % illiterate women paid a little bit of attention to themselves while the rest of women in the sample didn't pay much attention to their selves. Half the percentage of literate and educated women had a decreased self worth after divorce. All the results found were insignificant. (significant at 0.05).

33.33 percent illiterate women thought that both husband and wife suffer equally after divorce, while as 33.33 percent illiterate women think that only middle class women suffer more while the same percentage of women thought that women belonging to low socio economic status suffer more. Fifty percent literate women think unemployed women suffer more and 35.48 percent educated thought that single mothers suffer after divorce. This depicts insignificant relationship between educational status and women suffering more than men do after divorce. (significant at 0.05) (Table 2).

Table 1: Relationship of work status with: married life, reason, attitude, residence and income after divorce

Variables	Responses	Work status				Total		χ^2 analysis
		Working		Non-working				
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
Married Life	Successful in beginning	11	47.83	7	41.18	18	45.00	2.24 ₃ **
	Deteriorated	5	21.74	4	23.53	9	22.50	
	Failure	5	21.74	6	35.29	11	27.50	
	Compromise	2	8.70	-	-	2	5.00	
	Total	23	100.00	17	100.00	40	100.00	
Reason for Divorce	Adultery	4	17.39	4	23.53	8	20.00	2.63 ₄ ***
	Desertion	3	13.04	1	5.88	4	10.00	
	Cruelty	10	43.48	5	29.41	15	37.50	
	Impotency	2	8.70	4	23.53	6	15.00	
	Other	4	17.39	3	17.65	7	17.50	
	Total	23	100.00	17	100.00	40	100.00	
	Attitude Towards Divorce	Moral failure	2	8.70	-	-	2	
Personal failure		2	8.70	1	5.88	3	7.50	
Increased responsibility		3	13.04	3	17.65	6	15.00	
Opportunity for new life		5	21.74	6	35.29	11	27.50	
Emotional trauma		11	47.83	7	41.18	18	45.00	
Total		23	100.00	17	100.00	40	100.00	
Residence After Divorce	With parents	16	69.57	14	82.35	30	75.00	3.30 ₂ ***
	With siblings	4	17.39	-	-	4	10.00	
	Independent	3	13.04	3	17.65	6	15.00	
	Total	23	100.00	17	100.00	40	100.00	
Source of Income After Divorce	Salary	22	95.65	2	11.76	24	60.00	28.67 ₂ ***
	Parental support	1	4.35	14	82.35	15	37.50	
	Siblings	-	-	1	5.88	1	2.50	
	Total	23	100.00	17	100.00	40	100.00	

n = 40 Column percentage *** p-value ≥ 0.05 Degree of freedom in sub-scripts of χ^2 values

Table 2: Relationship of education status with: feelings, interest, self-attention, and self-worth

Variables	Responses	Educational status				Educated		Total		χ^2 analysis
		Illiterate		Literate						
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Feelings After Divorce	Rejected	-	-	1	16.67	4	12.90	5	12.50	2.72 ₈ ***
	Guilty	-	-	-	-	3	9.68	3	7.50	
	Sense of failure	-	-	-	-	1	3.23	1	2.50	
	Depressed	3	100.00	4	66.67	19	61.29	26	65.00	
	Self disapproval	-	-	1	16.67	4	12.90	5	12.50	
	Total	3	100.00	6	100.00	31	100.00	40	100.00	
Interest in Life	Initially declined	2	66.67	2	33.33	15	48.39	19	47.50	3.09 ₆ ***
	Decreased	1	33.33	2	33.33	12	38.71	15	37.50	
	Increased	-	-	1	16.67	1	3.23	2	5.00	
	Unchanged	-	-	1	16.67	3	9.68	4	10.00	
	Total	3	100.00	6	100.00	31	100.00	40	100.00	
Attention to Self	Not at all	1	33.33	-	-	2	6.45	3	7.50	6.00 ₈ ***
	Sometimes	1	33.33	1	16.67	7	22.58	9	22.50	
	Not in beginning	-	-	1	16.67	7	22.58	8	20.00	
	To some extent	1	33.33	4	66.67	12	38.71	17	42.50	
	Others	-	-	-	-	3	9.68	3	7.50	
	Total	3	100.00	6	100.00	31	100.00	40	100.00	
Decrease in Self-worth	Initially	1	33.33	2	33.33	9	29.03	12	30.00	7.51 ₆ ***
	To some extent	1	33.33	1	16.67	16	51.61	18	45.00	
	Completely	1	33.33	3	50.00	3	9.68	7	17.50	
	Unchanged	-	-	-	-	3	9.68	3	7.50	
	Total	3	100.00	6	100.00	31	100.00	40	100.00	

n = 40 Column percentage *** p-value ≥ 0.05 Degree of freedom in sub-scripts of χ^2 values

When asked about the difficulties in bringing up the children 100 percent illiterate women and 75 percent literate women thought that the various difficulties faced in upbringing the children were financial burden and emotional difficulties while as 41.18 percent educated women had emotional difficulty in upbringing their children which reveals insignificant relationship between the two significant at 0.05). All illiterates, 50 percent literates and 35.29 percent educated women shared the view that they were overburdened with the responsibility as a single parent while another 50 percent illiterate women are slightly overburdened with the responsibility as a single parent, which shows insignificant relationship. ($p > 0.05$) Further, 33.33 percent illiterate women, 83.33 percent literate and 61.29 percent educated had no suicidal tendency at all while as 33.33 percent illiterate women said they initially had suicidal tendency and another 33.33 percent still had slight suicidal tendencies (Table 3). Thus making it evident that there is insignificant relationship between the two (significant at 0.05).

60.87% working women and 64.71 % non-working women entirely blamed the other partner for divorce whereas only 17.39 % and 17.65

% working and non- working women felt that both of them were at fault which shows insignificant relationship (significant at 0.05) also majority, that is, 43.48% working women and 41.18 % non- working women didn't regret their decision of divorce followed by 30.43 % working and 29.41 % non- working women who rarely regretted their decision of divorce. Only 4.35% working and 5.88 % non-working women regretted the decision.

When asked if they were thinking of reconciliation with their husband's for the sake of their children almost half the percentage of working and non working women responded negatively and 35.29 % working and 11.11% non- working women sometimes did think about it. More than half the percentage of women hated their husbands, 30.43 % working and 5.88 % non-working women had no feeling at all. 20% women felt anger and only 5 % still loved their husband's. When asked if they ever thought of remarriage 57.50 % women were not at all thinking of remarriage, 20 % often thought about it, 12.50 % rarely thought about it and only 10 % were usually thinking about it. All results were found to be statistically insignificant (significant at 0.05) (Table 4).

Table 3: Relationship of education Status with: relative gender suffering, upbringing children, single parenting and suicidal tendency

Variables	Responses	Educational status				Educated		Total		χ^2 analysis
		Illiterate		Literate						
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
If Women Suffer More Than Men After Divorce	Both suffer equally	1	33.33	1	16.67	2	6.45	4	10.00	8.86 ₈ ***
	Middle class women suffer	1	33.33	1	16.67	6	19.35	8	20.00	
	Unemployed women suffer	-	-	3	50.00	10	32.26	13	32.50	
	Single mothers suffer	-	-	1	16.67	11	35.48	12	30.00	
	Low class women suffer	1	33.33	-	-	2	6.45	3	7.50	
	Total	3	100.00	6	100.00	31	100.00	40	100.00	
Difficulties in Upbringing Children	Financial	-	-	1	25.00	1	5.88	2	9.09	9.22 ₆ ***
	Emotional	-	-	-	-	7	41.18	7	31.82	
	Financial and emotional	-	-	3	75.00	5	29.41	8	36.36	
	All of above	1	100.00	-	-	4	23.53	5	22.73	
	Total	1	100.00	4	100.00	17	100.00	22	100.00	
	Overburdened as Single Parent	No	-	-	-	-	3	17.65	3	
Slightly		-	-	2	50.00	3	17.65	5	22.73	
Moderately		-	-	-	-	5	29.41	5	22.73	
Overburdened		1	100.00	2	50.00	6	35.29	9	40.91	
Total		1	100.00	4	100.00	17	100.00	22	100.00	
Suicidal Tendencies		Yes, initially	1	33.33	1	16.67	3	9.68	5	12.50
	Strong suicidal tendencies	-	-	-	-	2	6.45	2	5.00	
	Slight suicidal tendencies	1	33.33	-	-	7	22.58	8	20.00	
	No suicidal tendencies	1	33.33	5	83.33	19	61.29	25	62.50	
	Total	3	100.00	6	100.00	31	100.00	40	100.00	

n = 40

Column percentage

*** p-value ≥ 0.05

Degree of freedom in sub-scripts of χ^2 values

Table 4: Relationship of work status with: self fault, regret, reconciliation, ex-spouse and remarriage

Variables	Responses	Work status				Total		χ^2 analysis
		Working		Non-working		N	%	
		N	%	N	%			
Accept Self Fault for Divorce	More at fault	-	-	1	5.88	1	2.50	1.93 ₂ ***
	Less at fault	5	21.74	2	11.76	7	17.50	
	No fault	14	60.87	11	64.71	25	62.50	
	Both were at fault	4	17.39	3	17.65	7	17.50	
	Total	23	100.00	17	100.00	40	100.00	
Regret Decision of Divorce	Yes	1	4.35	1	5.88	2	5.00	3.71 ₄ ***
	Rarely	7	30.43	5	29.41	12	30.00	
	Often	3	13.04	-	-	3	7.50	
	Not at all	10	43.48	7	41.18	17	42.50	
	Others	2	8.70	4	23.53	6	15.00	
	Total	23	100.00	17	100.00	40	100.00	
Think About Reconcile for Sake of Children	Yes	1	5.88	1	11.11	2	7.69	5.74 ₄ ***
	Often	1	5.88	-	-	1	3.84	
	Sometimes	6	35.29	1	11.11	7	26.92	
	No	9	52.94	5	55.55	14	53.84	
	Others	-	-	2	22.22	2	7.69	
	Total	17	100.00	9	100.00	26	100.00	
Feelings towards Ex-husband	Anger	4	17.39	4	23.53	8	20.00	7.19 ₄ **
	Hatred	12	52.17	9	52.94	21	52.50	
	Sympathy	-	-	1	5.88	1	2.50	
	Love	-	-	2	11.76	2	5.00	
	No feeling	7	30.43	1	5.88	8	20.00	
	Total	23	100.00	17	100.00	40	100.00	
Think of Remarriage	Rarely	4	17.39	1	5.88	5	12.50	2.54 ₃ ***
	Often	3	13.06	5	29.41	8	20.00	
	Very often	2	8.70	2	11.76	4	10.00	
	Not at all	14	60.87	9	52.94	23	57.50	
	Total	23	100.00	17	100.00	40	100.00	

n = 40

Column percentage

*** p-value ≥ 0.05 Degree of freedom in sub-scripts of χ^2 values

DISCUSSION

Maximum percentage of working women had successful marriage in the beginning while for minimum; marriage from the very beginning was a compromise. Increasing participation of women in the labor force has reduced women's financial dependence on husbands. The growing economic strength of women may also strain conventional marriages as it gives women options of remaining in an unhappy relationship. About feelings after divorce, a large percentage of women were depressed and minimum thought that they were a failure. The results of one study conducted on a heterogeneous sample of 70 divorced mothers in Israel by Baum et al. (2005) aimed at finding changes in self-concept after divorce showed that most of the study participants saw themselves as having changed and improved, in the surveyed aspects of self-concept. Comparing their present situation to that before their divorce, most reported that they had become more independent, and in control of

their lives, and more responsible for themselves. They reported feeling greater self-esteem, more competent, and more likely to regard the tasks facing them as challenges. Moreover, they perceived these changes as very important and satisfying. On the other hand, a quarter of the divorced women saw themselves either as unchanged or as having changed in an undesirable way. The findings support the view that self-concept can change in adulthood, as well as the claim that divorce brings not only loss but also opportunity for self-development. Lorenz et al. (2006) in a study, "The Short-Term and Decade-Long Effects of Divorce on Women's Midlife Health" hypothesized that divorce immediately increases psychological distress and has long-term negative consequences for the physical health of divorced people. In addition, it was also hypothesized that divorce indirectly causes long-term increases in distress through stressful midlife events. The hypothesis was tested using data from 416 rural Iowa women who were interviewed repeatedly in the

early 1990s when they were mothers of adolescent children; the women were interviewed again in 2001. It was found that in the years immediately after their divorce (1991–1994), divorced women reported significantly higher levels of psychological distress than married women but no differences in physical illness. A decade later (in 2001), the divorced women reported significantly higher levels of illness, even after controlling for age, remarriage, education, income, and prior health. Compared to their married counterparts, divorced women reported higher levels of stressful life events between 1994 and 2000, which led to higher levels of depressive symptoms in 2001.

Wineman (2000) interviewed eighteen women who were divorced in mid-life for a study about divorce and its impact. Nine of the women in the study initiated their divorces. The spouses initiated the divorces of the other nine participants. All of the women in the study had been married for at least ten years. The study employed the Grounded Theory qualitative research method in order to discover and understand the subjective experience of the divorced mid-life woman, and how the experience changed over time. Six categories emerged from the analysis of the interviews. 'Early Rumblings' describes the often many years of unhappiness women felt in their marriages. 'The Horror of It All' captures the experience of the divorce process. 'Suddenly Single' reflects the disorientating experience of the loss of support networks and rejection by married women. 'The Torment Continues' discusses the sense of failure many women experienced. 'Coming out of it' refers to the process of finding a new identity and sense of accomplishment. 'When You Least Expect It' identifies and details the ongoing impact of the divorce when children play out their anger over the divorce and loyalty conflicts around holidays and major family events. There were several important findings with implications for the conceptualization of the divorce process and for clinical intervention with divorced women. The data indicates that for the women in this study the experience was a massive disruption of narcissistic equilibrium that is repeatedly reactivated that is more closely related to trauma. The initial impact of the divorce, additional injury of rejection by married women, and a deep sense of failure modulated over time.

Further, cruelty was found to be the reason of divorce for maximum women while desertion for the minimum.

Further, maximum divorced women were living with their parents while minimum were living independently with their own children. This may be attributed to the fact that Kashmir is still a conservative society and women are not allowed to live on their own (without men).

For maximum women salary was the only source of income while for non-working women maximum were dependant on parental support and minimum on their own siblings. For the divorced non-working women, responsibility is automatically taken over by their parents even if their own income is meager. In only few cases (where parents are no more) siblings take the responsibility though reluctantly. Women suffer greater economic loss following divorce than do their former male partners. Yu and Liu (2007) found that average household size (number of people in a household) in divorced households (households with divorced heads) was 27–41% smaller than married households (households with married heads) in 12 countries across the world (between 1998 and 2002). If divorced households had combined to have the same average household size as married households, there could have been 7.4 million fewer households in these countries. The number of rooms per person in divorced households was 33–95% greater than in married households.

The study further reveals that for majority of women, interest in life had initially declined while minimum percentage revealed that their interest in life had actually increased. Majority of women had financial and emotional problems in upbringing their children and minimum faced only financial. In addition, maximum women felt that they were overburdened as a single parent while the minimum were slightly overburdened. Recent research consistently finds that men realize an increase in needs-adjusted income following separation.

From the interpretation of the table, it was further revealed that maximum women had no fault and only minimum women held themselves solely responsible for their divorce as for maximum, divorce was forced upon them leaving no choice. Further, maximum women had no regrets regarding their decision to divorce while minimum women did regret their decision of divorce.

CONCLUSION

From the study it was concluded that cruelty was the main reason of divorce and maximum women were emotionally traumatized and depressed after divorce. They lived with their parents and had to face a lot of difficulty in the upbringing of their children especially financial and emotional. Little attention was paid to self and their self worth had also decreased. Majority of the women thought that unemployed women suffer the most but suicidal tendency was not found among the maximum of them. They blamed the other partner for divorce and hated their ex husband's. Decision of divorce is not regretted and they rarely think of reconciliation and remarriage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Pre and post marital counseling should be available.
2. Laws should be properly enacted as to see that women are getting their maintenance and other rights.

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