

## To Explore Unpacked Social Adjustment Issues of Divorced Women

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### ABSTRACT

*Divorce defines as “the dissolution of a marriage, normally permitting each party to remarry” (Christopher, 1999). Social adjustment after divorce refers to resettlement of an individual in the society after being divorced and resettlement is in terms of economic empowerment and decision making by her. The current study was investigating the problems faced by divorced women and to figure out the social adjustment issues of divorced women. Social adjustment issues of divorced women were studied with the sample of 15 case studies of Muslim divorced women who were resided in different areas of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. Case study technique was used based on grounded theory. It is concluded from over all findings of this study that divorce effects on women in every spheres of their lives. It impacts on them negatively. Society sees them as stigmatized personality and criticizes them without knowing that whether they are guilty for their marriage termination or not. She feels herself alien and these thoughts put her under grave of psychological stress and social alienation. In this phase, when she goes through from this disturbance, she needs support. Society needs to understand the problems of divorcees rather than to criticizes her and blaming her on her marriage termination. So there is need for awareness and change in the minds of people to do not stress her, understand her condition and must encourage her to begin her life again. The increased awareness of society in this regard will ensure the health of the victimized individuals and the society at large.*

**Keywords:** marriage, divorce, social adjustment, society

### INTRODUCTION

The current study was investigating the problems faced by divorced women and to figure out the social adjustment issues of divorced women. Social adjustment issues of divorced women were studied with the sample of 15 case studies of Muslim divorced women who were resided in different areas of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. Divorce defines as “the dissolution of a marriage, normally permitting each party to remarry” (Christopher, 1999). Legally, divorce refers to a specific event, a court ruling that dissolves the conditions agreed on in a legalized marriage (Worell, 2001). Social adjustment refers to resettlement of an individual in the society after being divorced and resettlement is in terms of economic empowerment and decision making by her.

Case study technique was used based on grounded theory. In a study of family life, however, divorce is better conceptualized as a process of transitions in a family relationship (Worell, 2001). For example, in 1991 Andrew charlin and colleagues reported results from longitudinal research on more than 17,000 families in the United States and Britain, showing that much of the distress observed after divorce actually begins years prior to the divorce. In addition, results from the Virginia Longitudinal study of divorce, conducted by E. Mavis Hetherington and colleagues, suggest that disruptions in the family life continue for several years after the divorce event (Worell, 2001).

Main focus of the study was on social adjustment of divorced women and their strategy of tackling problem and adjusts themselves in society as a normal person. It was intended to see that whether they are supported by their families and society after divorce or not.

Lack of communication is one of the leading causes of divorce. A marriage can be terminating when the lines of communication fail. spouses can't have an effective relationship if either they won't discuss their feelings, can't talk about their mutual or personal issues, keep their minor issues hidden with each other and expect partner to guess what the whole problem is about (Panse, 2007).

In Islam, if men have power to divorce his wife then women has also right to get divorce. A divorce deed obtained by wife against her husband is known as "khula". Khula means to take off. According to Shariah: It consists in destroying the *Milk-i-Nikah* or ownership of marriage, with the consent and acceptance of the wife by the use of the word *khula'* or what is the same as of the word (Khan, 2007).

In our society, the concept of divorce is far removed from what Islam, tells us about it. Allah hates divorce, says the Quran. Divorce, according to Islam, is not an act of revenge or hatred that it has become in our society. The after effects of divorce on a woman especially, are devastating. Divorce is almost always considering woman's fault and even in the west the woman is held mainly responsible for the failure of a marriage. The social stigma of being a divorcee impacts women in all spheres of life, making it an uphill struggle to lead a life of dignity and honor. The custody of children after the parents have divorced is also a thorny issue (Jallendhary, 2001). As cited by Kumar (2006) at one side it is relief for bettered and distressed women but on the other side the stigma is attached to divorced women. A decade later, however, the divorced women reported 37% more physical illness. Women in the study ranging from the common cold and sore throat to heart conditions and cancer (Lorentzen, 2006).

The traumatic effect of divorce is usually greater than that of death because of the bitterness and emotional tensions and also the social attitude towards divorce. In many women, feelings of guilt, shame, dislike ness, anger and anxiety about the future are so dominant that they bring about personality changes. Their social lives are limited mainly to relatives and friends of the same sex. They also face social disgrace (Ratra, Kaur & Chhikara, 2006).

There is little room for failure in a marriage in the social norm network. There is considerable stigma associated with divorce; families do not want shame and dishonor inflict upon them by society. Parents therefore insist on women enduring a poor marriage rather than get a divorce (Qadir, Silva, Prince, & Khan, 2005)

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For qualitative research in-depth interview guideline was used in order to see that how women coped with their marital or personal adjustment problems after divorce and how they adjust themselves in society. A purposive sample (15 case studies) of Muslim divorced women was taken. In sample size, the age limit of respondents was not specified. Non probability snowball sampling technique was used for selecting sample because only those participants were taken who fulfilled the criteria and theme of the research.

After the finalization of the tool, researcher had visited in field for pre-testing of questionnaire and after pre-testing, necessary amendments in questionnaire were done then researcher started voluntary data collection. Voluntary participation of the participants was encouraged. Before taking interviews every participant was given full understanding of the research. Confidentiality and privacy was maintained. After the interviews, researcher

compiled those interviews and developed case studies and then those case studies were thoroughly discussed

## RESULTS

### Characteristics of Respondants

**Table 1. Frequency and percentage of age of respondents at marriage (N=15)**

| <i>Age</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|------------|----------|----------|
| 16-20      | 6        | 40.0     |
| 21-24      | 9        | 60.0     |
| Total      | 15       | 100.0    |

The above table indicates that 40% of the respondents lie at the age of their marriages of 16 to 20 and 60% fall at the age of 21 to 24.

**Table 2. Frequency and percentage of age at divorce of respondents (N=15)**

| <i>Age</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|------------|----------|----------|
| 21-25      | 9        | 60.0     |
| 26-30      | 6        | 40.0     |
| Total      | 15       | 100.0    |

Second table shows the age of divorce of respondents, table reveals that 60% of respondents has divorced at the age of 21 to 25 and 40% has divorced in the age of 26 to 30.

**Table 3. Frequency and percentage of current age of respondents (N=15)**

| <i>Age</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|------------|----------|----------|
| 24-35      | 8        | 53.3     |
| 36-50      | 7        | 46.7     |
| Total      | 15       | 100.0    |

Above table indicates that 53.3% of respondents lie in their current age from 24 to 35 and fall in the age of 36 to 50.

**Table 4. Frequency and Percentage of Education of respondents (N=15)**

| <i>Education</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| Null-primary     | 1        | 6.7      |
| Primary-Matric   | 2        | 13.3     |
| F.A-B.A          | 8        | 53.3     |
| Up to Graduation | 4        | 26.7     |
| Total            | 15       | 100.0    |

Above table shows that 6.7% of respondents lies in null to primary education, 13.3% of respondents lies in primary to Matriculation , 53.3% of respondents lies in F.A to B.A and 26.7% falls in the category of up to Graduation.

**Table 5. Frequency and Percentage of jobs of respondents (N=15)**

| <i>Jobs</i>    | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|----------------|----------|----------|
| Teaching       | 5        | 33.3     |
| Factory worker | 1        | 6.7      |
| House maids    | 1        | 6.7      |
| Non-working    | 8        | 53.3     |
| Total          | 15       | 100.0    |

The above table indicates that 33.3% of respondents doing teaching, 6.7% of respondents are factory workers, 53.3% of them are non-working after their divorce and 6.7% are house maids.

**Table 6. Frequency and Percentage of respondent's no. of children (N=15)**

| No. of Children | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| One             | 3        | 20.0     |
| Two             | 2        | 13.3     |
| Five            | 1        | 6.7      |
| Nothing         | 9        | 60.0     |
| Total           | 15       | 100.0    |

This table shows that in the category of one 20.0% no. children lies, category of two 13.3% of children lies, category of five 6.7% children falls and category of nothing 60.0% children falls.

## DISCUSSION

Present study was intended to see the social adjustment of divorced women, the study was also focused on their problems which they faced after divorce and it was endeavored to whether these women supported by their families or not and what kind of behavior they faced by their families as well as society.

Many respondents were divorced by their spouses. Few respondents had taken it on many reasons. Reasons behind their divorce were that their spouses were remarried or having another wife, suspiciousness, sterile ness of respondent, infidelity of ex spouse, problem with in laws were the common causes of marriage termination of respondents.

Divorce is considered to be an issue religiously and socially. It badly affects people in both personal and public spheres. Unluckily, there are so many people who effect by the breaking of their marriage. Only the husband and wife do not suffer the misery but also their children

usually forced to choose one side and lose a parent. Divorce is a dilemma, it represents social problems because it is caused by human action. Communication problems were most often mentioned as the primary cause. The second and third most frequent reasons were basic unhappiness and incompatibility. (Beauchamp, 2003)

It was also noticed that there is a link between the higher number of physical illnesses and the different stresses associated with divorce, including financial problems, demotions and parenting problems. It was added that divorced women have fewer support systems. The women also suffer stress from having to make changes in housing, insurance, transportation and time with children (Lorentzen, 2006). It was noticed that it looks like (divorced women) are trapped in this vicious circle of financial problems and other stressful life events.

After this traumatic event, the feelings of intense anger, rejection, loneliness, depression and anxiety are to be expected from particular women. Those women may no longer receive the level of love and support from family that she was previously. Their world is suddenly unpredictable on many levels, and this can be frightening and especially if she is from a troubled background, it may include violence, substance abuse, rejection or mental disturbance. She may not be able to cope with the divorce effectively. In such cases the separation is intense, and the person is often unable to cope with this discomfort. This may lead to high levels of hostility, rejection of the children, and even violent and self-destructive behavior (Beauchamp, 2003).

When the divorce process has been started, it brings along other problems and issues. These physical and psychiatric problems, divorced women face additional issues of economic hardship far more frequently than men do so. In the matter of relatives and neighbors' attitude towards their divorce, respondents faced discrimination, prejudice, verbal torture and criticism. Many respondents were socially isolated themselves and not met any relative or neighbor.

Many respondents mentioned education as a source to deal with their matters by themselves. Many respondents stated that if they were well educated they would earn their own income and would not become a burden on their families and may not remarry. On the other hand those respondents who were well educated they mentioned that they found education as a best source to relying on themselves and not to become a burden on any one.

Majority of the respondents isolated themselves socially because of people's curiosity, fake sympathy and their attitude. It disappointed them and made a hurdle in their social adjustment.

Majority of the respondents tackled all problems with the help of their families. Few were not supported by their families. Majority of them remarried and now socially adjusted, some were engaged themselves in their jobs and ignored their attitude and some said that with the passage of time their negative attitude became decrease.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is concluded from over all findings of this study that divorce effects on women in every spheres of their lives. It impacts on them negatively.

Society sees them as stigmatized personality and criticizes them without knowing that whether they are guilty for their marriage termination or not. No matter she is guiltless, but our society stigmatizes her and this stigma never eliminated from her for whole life. Society condemn her and raise their fingers on her, consider her fault of her divorce and their criticism make hurdle in her social adjustment. She feels herself alien and these thoughts put her under grave of psychological stress and social alienation.

In this phase, when she goes through from this disturbance, she needs support. If her family supports her emotionally, morally as well as economically then she can survive in society. Her family must support her as well as they show their sympathies towards her for that she can recover soon and can come out her from this trauma. She also needs of the help of society in which her relatives and neighbors also included. Society needs to understand the problems of divorcees rather than to criticizes her and blaming her on her marriage termination. So there is need for awareness and change in the minds of people to do not stress her, understand her condition and must encourage her to begin her life again.

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