

A STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE DIVORCED WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

This is a micro study of the socio-economic condition of divorced women. The theme and the findings of the present paper constitute one of the dimensions of my doctoral research. Considering the ever increasing spate of divorce and the ramifications of its negative impact, a fact finding study of this nature is very much in order. During the course of field work in Jaipur city many shocking and abominable facts about the loving condition particularly of the socially and economically backward women were revealed. The study revealed that among the different factors of divorced women in despair socio-economic condition of the women in Jaipur city. This paper addresses some of those serious issues which need attention of all socially responsible citizens.

KEYWORDS: Divorced women, Social Institution, Socio-economic conditions, Marriage, Marital relations, Irrevocable, Legal separation, Family Courts

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an important social institution that admits man and women for family life. It is more or less durable association between male and female beyond the mere acting of procreation. It is founded on glorious moral, ethical and social values such as mutual love, sacrifice, concern, dedication, commitment till the end of couple's life. In fact all religions emphasize the stability and permanence of marital relations. The adage that 'marriages are made in heaven' succinctly expresses the social expectations on the part of couples. In fact among Hindus theoretically the very idea of divorce is abhorred and the marital bond is irrevocable. Marital bonds are to be sustained for lives to come in future. Legal separation of couples is not recognized as real by orthodox Hindus.

Many a time's marriages have broken and couples have parted ways due to various reasons, sometimes legally through the family courts and sometimes with mutual consensus. In this paper I have made an attempt to bring out the consequences leading to divorce. Divorces have imbalanced the families due to selfish reasons such as sex and property and other psychological reasons and have created a worst situations leading to poverty and death in the family, usually the impact is on the children and women. Divorce is the legal dissolution of marriage.

There has been an increase in the incidence of divorce since 1960s with a corresponding increase in social and psychological problems (Bennet, 1987). It is very uncommon for both members of a couple to decide together to separate (Kelly, 1982). Usually one spouse is trying to close the door on a marriage, while the other spouse continues an attachment to this marriage (Margaret, 1993). When a marriage breaks up, urgent tasks confront everyone in the family-husband, wife, children, and kinfolk. The couples sever marriage contract and all of their habits of living together. They must adjust to living apart and should forgo with the habits of living together. They must go about healing their wounds of their broken marriage, helping their children to adjust. They have to get along with disrupted family patterns and make their relatives to accept their changed status.

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MAJOR CONSEQUENCES OF THE DIVORCE

Economic: There is great disparity between the economic ramifications of divorce between men and women. Men remain relatively unaffected while women, especially those with children, have difficulty “providing food, clothing and shelter for themselves and their children.” The government in urban areas usually provides some form of public assistance to single mothers, but this service is not fully taken advantage of because most do not know of its existence.

Often a woman is not able to rely on her family for support because many parents “feel they have discharged their obligations to a daughter by arranging her marriage and providing a dowry.” Dowries are not returned after a divorce. Also, due to the social stigma of divorce, women find it difficult to remarry and usually attempt to establish an independent household.

Social: While India feels that one should have the right to divorce, it is still a highly stigmatizing action. Women are looked upon more harshly than men in this regard. There continue to be segments of Indian society that feel divorce is never an option, regardless of how abusive or adulterous the husband may be which adds to the greater disapproval for women a divorced woman often will return to her family, but may not be wholeheartedly welcomed. She puts, especially if she has children, an economic burden on her family and is often given lowly household tasks to perform.

There is also the risk that a divorced woman's presence would ward off possible marriages for other daughters within the household. Unavoidably, the overall status of the family and household are lowered by having a divorcee living with amongst them. A woman's class and caste are a major factor in her acceptance back into society. Women from higher classes tend to have an easier time than middle or lower class women in returning to the social order after a divorce. An exception to this model is the extreme bottom of the society who have experienced little rebuff from peers after a divorce. This results from their already atypical status in society.

Common reasons for family disputes as observed today:

- The wife, as such, may not consider the husband as the sole provider, protector or philosopher who will direct and control major or even minor family decisions;
- When provocations and hurting each other by taunts, sarcasms and abuses become a repetitive pattern of behavior of spouses;
- Wife battering, dowry, bride burning;
- Violent behavior of either spouse more often than not the husbands;
- Another factor is education, particularly when the wife is more educated than the husband and the husband does not have regular or steady work;
- Use of alcohol and drug abuse are also important factors;
- Some women consider sex dirty and find it difficult to enjoy it with their partners, the husband or the wife or both may be anxiety prone;
- In many parts of India the question of dowry or promised dowry becomes a bone of contention and a point of wrangling between the spouses. The situation may be further worsened or aggravated by needless interference from in-laws;
- There are highly competent wives who may make the husband feel small. They are indiscriminate, insensitive and do not exercise caution in hurting fragile male vanity. The husband may retaliate to cover up feelings of inferiority by showing his physical power and aggression;
- Extra marital relations by either spouse or promiscuity;
- Doubting the integrity/ character of spouse (by either spouse).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The divorce cases are increasing in the family courts in Jaipur continuously. Overall 7500 approximate cases have been registered between the year 2020-2022 and as per the reports it shows 60% increase in

the cases during the last decade. It is really alarming. The reasons cited in majority of the cases are related to caste issues, love marriages, dowry religious issues. Has divorce proved a right decision? Has it improved the socio-economic and psychological condition of women divorcees? The present paper focuses on these twin issues. But another report revealed that in January to March 2022, 68,134 new cases started in family courts, down 6% on the equivalent quarter in 2021. This was due to decreases in most case types: financial remedy (18%), adoption (17%), private law (9%) and matrimonial (2%) cases. However, there was an increase in public law (4%) and domestic violence (2%) case starts. There were 57,094 case disposals in January to March 2022, down 12% on the equivalent quarter of 2021. This was due to decreases in most case types: adoption (28%), matrimonial (21%), public law (16%), financial remedy (7%) and private law (1%) cases. However, there was an increase in domestic violence (9%) case disposals.

STUDY AREA

Primary data for the present study have been collected from rural areas of the Jaipur city. Today as a large city and growing city, Jaipur is home to many of the most well-recognized colleges and research institutions in India. Numerous public sector heavy industries, software companies, aerospace, telecommunications, and defense organizations are located in the city. Most of the women population in Jaipur depends on home based assignments and other conventional works. Jaipur has emerged as a hub of automotive industries. JCB, Hero MotoCorp and Robert Bosch GmbH have their manufacturing plants in Jaipur. Chemical manufacturers in the city are Aro Granite and Emami Agrotech. National Engineering Industries have a plant in Jaipur.

The city is among top emerging IT hubs of India along with Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar and Kochi. Mahindra World City is an integrated business zone in Jaipur. It is home to several software and IT companies including Genpact, Appirio, Infosys, Wipro, ICICI Bank, Connexions and Deutsche Bank. The Government of Rajasthan have built Asia's largest incubator in Jaipur – the Bhamashah Techno Hub. Jaipur is a major hub for arts and crafts. It has many traditional shops selling antiques, jewellery, handicrafts, gems, bangles, pottery, carpets, textiles, leather and metal products. Jaipur is one of India's largest manufacturers of hand-knotted rugs. Jaipur foot, a rubber-based prosthetic leg for people with below-knee amputations, was designed and is produced in Jaipur. World Trade Park Jaipur, is a shopping mall in Jaipur opened in 2012. But in spite of developments city is struggling to cope with overcrowding, infrastructural issues and this has affected living in modern cities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Data were gathered through the use of structured questionnaires and oral interview. One hundred fifty (150) respondents consisting of women (150) were randomly selected. The sample respondents consist of software professionals, BPOs, teachers, businessmen, litterateurs and Government servants. Questionnaire consisting of twenty (20) items were administered and which was a co-operative effort done with the respondents. One hundred fifty (150) copies of questionnaires were administered to 150 divorced women. The questionnaires covered the socio-economic status of the divorced couples.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

In all 150 women divorcees were interviewed. And 70 or 47 percent among them were in age range of 25 to 35 years and another 42 (28 percent in 36 to 45 years). The data reveals the tendency to seek divorce is higher among the youths. Generally the first couple of years after marriage is crucial ensure stability and longevity of the bond. Similarly the tendency declines after completing a decade or more of married life. This does not mean the absence of conflict or presence of harmonious relations. Rather the married women, particularly in Indian context tend to reconcile with the situation and resigned to their fate. Native place of majority of (66%) the respondents is Jaipur. 58 percent of the respondents have reported in local/regional as their mother tongue. While 30 respondents are university graduates and, another 26 hold professional degrees particularly in Engineering. Only five respondents are illiterate. As many as 66

divorcees live independently with their children and another 32 with their parents. The data revealed that more than 58 percent respondents have one child and, another 45 women have two children to take care of.

As their occupation the data reveals that, 35(20.33%) of them work in IT sectors, 24 are Government servants and another 22 work in Factories. As many as 36 respondents are unemployed. All those (36) unemployed women some of whom work as servant maids have reported their income as less than Rs 4500 per month. Majority of those who work in IT sectors reported that they earn more than Rs 30000 per month. As many as 12 women have no income and they are living with their parents.

CONCLUSIONS

Separation and divorce of couple is no more shocking incidents now as they are on the raise. People are no longer attaching great importance to the essence of marriage today. Many people do not feel concerned about the social stigma which divorce places on separated couples, the children of the divorcee and the entire society. Divorce creates social instability and survival problem for the society. Some children from divorced homes grow up to become social misfits and later graduate into delinquents and criminals that may pose insecurity problems for the nation. Such children may also tarnish the image of the country abroad through non-compliance with the norms and value of the nation. The children from divorced parents are likely to be maladjusted in the society due to the lack of role model for them. Divorce is tending to become common epidemic in today's society. Unfortunately, some of the most negatively impacted by these divorcees are the offspring.

Studies, such as this one, are trying to do exactly this. They are trying to figure out what and to what extent things such as interpersonal relationships or academics are impacted by divorce. Once this is known, then these children can be better helped. After all, diagnosis determines treatment, so the more precisely these children's problems can be understood than the better off the solutions to solving them will be.

In India, in the wake of increased family disputes, divorces, family violence, and dowry harassment and family maladjustments some support systems came into existence to help the victims and the aggrieved parties. This gave rise to introduction of family courts and the concept of Family Counseling Centres.

Family disputes are as old as the institution of marriage itself. In modern legal lexicon, the mechanism of "Alternate Dispute Resolution" has gained acceptance and is a much sought after route to resolve even ticklish disputes speedily and at reasonable cost. Many Law Universities offer special courses in this green area of legal industry and litigants are encouraged to resort to the novel channel for getting justice speedily and at low cost.

Few would however recall that setting up of Family Courts was one of the early attempts at putting in place an alternate dispute resolution system to bring justice within easy reach of the people. Set up to resolve family disputes, mainly among married couple, the structure put in place was without frills and without excessive legalese. The system allowed both parties to pursue their case without the presence of lawyers with judges playing the role of benign arbitrator. Proceedings mainly aimed at reconciliation and in ensuring the well being of innocent children caught in the cross fire of family feud.

The Act addresses itself to two types of remedies to family disputes, namely: Employment of Family Therapy in order to effect reconciliation or a settlement between the parties to a family dispute, thereby maintaining the 'Family' as a cohesive unit. Speedier adjudication of cases where differences between the parties are irreconcilable by not adopting simplified rules of evidence and procedure but also seeking the assistance of professional experts, social welfare organizations or even individuals with expertise in the field of family welfare as provided.

SUGGESTIONS

It is strongly suggested on the basis of observations and findings of the research that:

- There is great need for marital and familial counseling and it must be accessible to all people.
- Marriages should solemnize after the boy and the girl have given sufficient thought and planning for their decision.
- In no case, marriage against the wishes of the spouses concerned should be encouraged.

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