

## Physical, Mental and Social Health Problems of Divorced Women -A Sociological Study

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### Abstract:

*The study tries to explore the physical, mental and social health problems of divorced women. Different functional areas are identified in order to understand what kind of problems the divorced women face. It was found that these women were suffering from various types of psychological and physiological problems. Symptoms found in the functional areas included function impairments weakness and tired, low appetite, sleep disturbance, headache, chest pain, brain stroke, senseless, numbness etc. Emotional function impairments includes helplessness all the time, severely depressed, frustrated, anxious, upset, hopelessness, suicidal ideation, low confidence, low self esteem etc. Behavioral impairments are, unable to perform household chores lose temper for every silly thing; misbehave with family members and relatives. Occupational impairments are declined level of interest, unable to take any responsibility, dependent on others, Social function impairments are avoiding social program, feeling embarrassed to meet other people, isolating oneself etc. Studies have shown that depression, anxiety and schizophrenic thinking of divorced women compared to other women is more. It was also hypothesized that mean need for achievement and self esteem will be low in divorced women. It was found that mean depression, schizophrenic thinking, anxiety of divorced women was significantly high as compared to mean depression, anxiety and schizophrenic thinking of other women. The objective of the study was to compare and find whether divorced women have more health problems then other married women and the study has shown they do have more problems.*

### Introduction

**M**arriage is a legal relationship between a man and a woman. Though it is a legal contract in almost all societies, it is also a social relationship. Indeed, in all societies, marriage is generally social. It is relatively a stable relationship between man and woman including social norms evolved for having children. It is an old institution, common throughout most of the civilized world. Traditionally, marriage was more than a linkage of two individuals, and even now. In our culture, girls actually marry the whole family. The psychological framework views marriage as an occurrence that makes it possible to have a close intimate relationship with a number of the opposite sex. In addition, the case for early marriage lies in the fact that the nature of each spouse is such that it gives rise to a congenial relationship between husband and wife unlike in the case of late marriages when the man and woman will have developed set

attitudes. But from the physiological point of view Velde (1976) maintains that marriage is the permanent form of monogamous erotic relationship.

Sexual urges can't be ignored from marriage. It is one of the marital and duties. Like marriage, divorce is a universal phenomenon. It is a socially sanctioned arrangement whereby marriage is formally terminated and the family group dissolved (Bertrand, 1967). It is practiced in most societies but varies in the conditions that must be met, the sanctions it if's, the frequency with which it is used. The disposition of and responsibility for the care of children, the disposition if family property and effects, the status assigned to divorced persons, and the rituals, procedure and ceremonies that legalize it. The magnitude and trends of divorce may also differ from one society to another and from one religion to another religion. And also, the perceptions of divorce are not similar in many Countries. For example, in countries like United States, Australia and some European countries, the rates of divorce are high as

compared with other countries. The problem of divorce is much more seven in those countries. In fact, marital bonds in those countries are not generally strong. Moreover, the sacramental aspects of marriage are not found in those western countries.

For this study, women divorced are defined as any women who are taking legal help in women welfare organizations for problem in their marital relationships. They mainly come to the lawyers for legal support on conjugal problems involving separation, refusal to financially support the family, divorce without paying polygamy, women's and child's property rights. The effects of divorce on women can be devastating. The stressful effects of divorce can leave women feeling rejected, insecure and depressed. As a result of rejection, they lose their self-esteem. Divorce can be most devastating for women in traditional marriages who lose their identities as well as their financial security, with the loss of a husband. Mental health is an integral component of health. The WHO constitution states- "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." An important aspect of this definition is that mental health is described as more than the absence of mental disorders or disabilities.

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. In a society like Bangalore city women in general are constrained. It is obvious that the divorced and abandoned women are in worse condition. The exact nature of the mental health problems of the women in divorced. Then many government and non-government organizations provide legal, social, financial and other welfare services to the women divorced. However, currently there are no or very few social services provided by these organizations to these women. This knowledge can be used to pursue different organizations working in this field to include appropriate social services along with their other services.

#### **Statement of The Problem:**

The divorce cases are increasing in the family courts in Bangalore continuously. In all 43527 cases have been registered between 1987-2011. 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.

Divorce is most prevalent between the age of 20-30. Globally divorce statistics reveal that Sri Lanka 1.5 percent, Japan 1.9 percent, Italy 10 percent, Canada 37 percent, France 38.3 percent, United Kingdom 42.6 percent, Russia 43.3 percent, Denmark 44.5 percent, united nations 54.8 percent, Sweden 54.9 percent etc. In India the rate is very low, only 1.1 percent but the divorce cases are in an increasing trend among IT professionals at Bangalore.

#### **Objectives of The Study**

The main objective is to know the health conditions of divorced women.

1. To understand the physical, mental and social health problems of divorced women
2. To examine the alienation status of divorced women.

#### **Study Area**

Bengaluru (Silicon Valley of India) metropolitan in the southern part of Karnataka, India and covers an area geographical area of 741 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 5.8 million (census 2001). Today as a large city and growing metropolis, Bangalore 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 defence organizations are located in the city. Most of the women population in Bangalore depend on homebased assignments and garments. Bengaluru is well known for information technology, Capital Bio technology, Capital. Service industry center, Education center for medicine, Engineering, Rapid Infrastructure Development, Overcrowding Infrastructure, City struggling to cope.

#### **Methodology**

The Data was gathered through the use of structured questionnaires and oral interview collected from select 150 divorced women at Bangalore city was randomly selected. One hundred and fifty 150 copies of questionnaires were administered the questionnaires covered the among other things the

study focuses on the women divorced was asked to describe different aspects of their functional area physical, emotional, behavioral, social, occupational and sexual previous and current mental health state, their early life and personal history of their marital relationship from the beginning to present time. Data collected thus had been processed through SPSS software. Apart from primary data, information and data had been collected from a wide variety secondary resource like, newspaper clippings, data available in the internet etc.

**Results And Discussion**

This study was among the participants, ITOs and BPOs teachers, business, literates, social welfare officers and other public servants were living independently. In all 150 women divorced were interviewed. As many as 70 or 47percent among them were in age range of 25 to 35 years and another 42 (28 percent in 36to 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.

**Table 1. The participants in terms of different functional areas.**

Physical, mental and social health problems	Female 150
Weakness and tiredness	11
Headache	9
Sleeping disturbance	7
Low appetite	7
Reduced physical energy and strength	5
Chest pain	4
Severe pressure in chest	3
Difficulty in hearing	3
Eye pain	2
Digestive problem	2
Lower abdomen pain	1
Back pain	1
Brain stroke	1
Felt paralyzed	1
Weight loss	1
Suffocated	1

Physical condition was very worse	1
Numbness	1
Neck pain	1
Heart disease	1
Low pressure	1
Felt heavy	1
senseless	1
Head becomes hot while thinking	1
Fever	1

**Table .2. The participants Occupational**

Occupational	Female 150
Low interest	8
Unable to take responsibility	6
Could not do anything	5
Decreased previous level of Energy strength and capacity	5
No support from any sources	3
Felt pressure	3
Dependent on others	2
Lost skill	2
Reduced the level of passion	2
No capacity to maintain the family	2
Everything seemed to be problematic	1
No capacity to take decision	1

**Table 3. The participants Social**

Social	Female 150
Avoid gossiping or social gathering	6
No pleasure from gossiping	4
Did not share feeling	4
With anybody	4
Social functional level reduced	3
Felt uneasy	2
Felt embarrassed	2
Isolated	2
Could not tolerate other people's happiness	2
Lost their faith on people	1
Did not want to keep relation with others	1

### Conclusion

Divorce is a reality as it is also a general solution of marital conflict but people still look down upon it. The present study shows that people do not properly treat divorced women. In Hindu religion, though divorce is permitted according to law the people generally look down upon it. Divorced women and their children are becoming vulnerable within vulnerable in our society. The need of hour is to protect peace, harmony, understanding etc. In this light, divorce should not be encouraged and desirable. It is the responsibility of every conscious citizen of the country to do his or her level best to protect the marital bond at any cost. This should be a message to the people at the end.

### Recommendations

The psychological conditions of divorced women are not good which is revealed from the study. Women are divorced status are having somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction and depression. A majority of divorced women have a sense of alienation. It may be because of social stigma of divorce. The need of the hour is to regain their earlier life, accept the reality and give a better life. Specific family counseling provision can help them properly. In this regard, the government and non-government organizations should come forward to set-up more and more counseling centre for divorced women. The duty of counselor will be to bring the divorced women into reality. Human beings particularly divorced women and family members of divorced women should accept the reality. Counseling should start from this point of view. Moreover, counseling is needed not only to the divorced women but also to the family members of the divorced women.

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