



A critical analysis on the socioeconomic problems of divorced women in Purba Medinipur District, West Bengal

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Abstract

Universally speaking marriages are made in heaven and broken on earth. In modern Industrial society of the world, grip of religious institutions is crumbling couples think thousands of times before tying the holy knot of marriage. With increase in education, employments and age of marriage leads rate of divorce in Indian society. In modern Indian society women employment rates increasing both urban and rural. Divorce rates increasing parallel to rate of women employment. Women employment rates are high in urban and divorce rates also high in urban comparison to rural area. The word divorcee in itself is humiliating and painful. The increasing divorce rate could increase loneliness that loneliness could increase suicide rates. In modern world the major problem of every section of society is, everyone talks about rights but no one talks about duties. All phase of human civilization divorce looked as a social evil. On the other hand, in modern society both educated and uneducated class still looks divorce as a social evil. The Present study have attempted to know the Social, Economic, health and psychological problem faced by divorced women of different cast, class, profession and religious category of sangavihar. The study is an exploratory study. It includes both qualitative and quantitative character of data collection and interpretation. The study comprises an in-depth exploration of cases of divorced women in Purba Medinipur of south Purba Medinipuri. The in-depth interviews and execution of questionnaire applied as instruments for collection of primary data.

Keywords: Purba Medinipur, South Purba Medinipuri, Evil, Civilization, Psychological.

Introduction

Universally speaking marriages are made in heaven and broken on earth. In modern Industrial society of the world, grip of religious institutions is crumbling couples think thousands of times before tying the holy knot of marriage. With increase in education, employments and age of marriage leads rate of divorce in Indian society. In modern Indian society women employment



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Life of women turns miserable when she has children. Lots of social agencies and social activists are working towards awareness about the laws and rights available to men and women but no one working towards the duties of husband and wife within family and outside family. Only religious leaders talk about duties and responsibilities of husband and wife over some occasions not frequently. Thus, divorce rate is low in religious community. Lots of cases are available where the law is twisted and turned and misused by both men and women.

As the previous studies shows love marriages are riskier than arranged marriage. According to records, 50 per cent of love unions crack, while only 30 per cent arranged marriages end up in divorce courts(Pooja kashyap, The Times of India City Patan June 03, 2010).

Causes of Divorce:

If the women not treated as equal as by their husbands, such unequal treatments lead to split among couples, such small issues are the major causes of divorce in educated class. Adultery, extra-marital affairs, lack of faith, trust, suspicion, impotency and understanding are other reasons of conflict and divorce among couples. If wife is better placed, it also creates tension among couples due to ego clashes. According to Arvind Tiwari, a lawyer in a family court says women are now not thinking twice before taking up matters to the court. “They know they can demand alimony (one-third of the husband’s property) and then lead a normal peaceful life (Pooja kashyap, The Times of India City Patan June 03, 2010). In 2009, 1,36,000 marriages were solemnized in Purba Medinipuri, out of this figure, 10,000 ended up in divorce courts (Pooja kashyap, The Times of India City Patan June 03, 2010) A large section of women knows certain sections of law favors women. For instance, cases registered under sec 498A IPC dealing with cruelty and torture in a marriage, have become a tool to harass husbands and their family members. “The lawyers hardly try to help. They make things worse,” felt Ajit Kumar, a Patna high court lawyer(Pooja kashyap, The Times of India City Patan June 30, 2010). The Domestic Violence Act, 2008, came into vogue, cases under 498 A have gone down in number. According to him, 80 per cent of the “arranged” marriages have a chance of survival even after a rocking dispute. But in love marriages, there’s very little chance of reconciliation (Pooja kashyap, The Times of India City Patan June 30, 2010) “In a social set up like ours only 10 per cent go for re-marriages and only 5 per cent of the cases get settled through mutual consent (Pooja kashyap, The Times of India City Patan June 30, 2010) rest of the cases go for protracted contests, mostly over alimony. Increasing divorce rate can create major social problems in India.

All religious and community leaders should talk about significance of marriage in life and also discuss the complexities arise after separation. Divorce is the right of all women and men it is provided on different grounds when the marriage life is not happy. It is better to separate from miserable condition of live. In India, law also permits couple to separate on mutual grounds.



Indian constitution permits women to file for divorce, when she feels uneasy with their partner. As the history shows women are ill-treated in our country both in rural and urban. Percentages of women who initiate for separation is very low in our country.

Prevalence of divorce

One of the major threatening issues in Indian society is increasing divorce rate which is laden with major social and economic problems. Holistically Divorce looks like an epidemic in our society that is spreading very quickly in all section of society. After divorce children live with a single parent that's a negative impact on their development.

In developed countries of the world such as the United States, Japan, Korea, Canada, the members of the European Union, the United Kingdom and some other developed Commonwealth countries divorce rates have increased essentially in the last half of the twentieth century and divorce has become common place in them (Divorce - 2004). It is considered that the divorce rate in the USA is the highest in the world and it was primarily caused by the changing role of the husbands and wives in their household, early marriage, infidelity, extra marital affairs, domestic violence, unstable financial situation and psychological incapacity. All this has the negative effect on social stability in the whole and of course, it can be the reason of social change and social conflict among people. That is why divorce problem is also the social problem and the impact of divorce is not limited to couples and families, their actual interactions. The divorce may cause the risks of emotional problems of children, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol addiction, smoking, crime and poverty (Crouch-1999). In India all major religion have their own personal marriage law which govern divorce related matter within their community ex- . Hindus, including Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains, are governed by the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; Christians by the Indian Divorce Act, 1869; Parsis by the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936; and Muslims by the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939, which provides the grounds on which women can obtain a divorce.

Divorce and Children

In the whole world, divorce is the most stressful event in the life of women, men and children that effect family life badly. Children lose their parental love and felt a big loss in his life. The lives of innocent and loved children are now full of anxiety, anger, and sadness. By viewing the hostile nature of parents children himself feel guilty, school work get affected looked unimportant and school performance worsen. When the couple decides to separate, family members of both sides jumped for the adjustment, the main focuses of adjustment rotates towards the future of loved children. After divorce a new kind of development grew among children. If the children are up to five to eight years of age have difficulty in sleeping, irritability and separation anxiety. Adolescence feel insecure and helplessness in society lose their parental love and affection that can't bought in market and any places in the world. Some adolescence engages himself in risk-taking activities like, alcohol, sex and criminal gang joining etc.

Methodology used for the study.



- **Selection of the study area**

The present study is an exploratory study. It includes both qualitative and quantitative character of data collection and interpretation. The study comprises an in-depth exploration of cases of divorced women in Purba Medinipur. The in-depth interviews and execution of questionnaire applied as instruments for collection of primary data. Secondary data is collected from different research available over internet

- **Sample Size and sampling procedure**

In view of the in-depth and exploratory nature of the study sample size has been restricted to 50 respondents of Purba Medinipur. A uniform number of respondents from each category are selected, so as to make the sample fully representatives for all groups. Thus, the total sample size includes working, women in different profession, labourers and house wife. Simple random sampling procedure used for the study. Study covered entire area by choosing different working and non- working class of women from Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities.

Tools used

Several methods can be used to collect primary data. The choice of method depends upon the purpose of the study and the resources available. For the present study Questionnaire, and interviews schedule methods were used in data collection. Questionnaire contains 26 variables. The Questionnaire developed in English in a simple way. The data analysed using Statistical techniques including cross tabulation and correlation analysis. The tools used for such methods are SPSS and Microsoft offices excel 2003. After an introduction as a researcher explaining the purpose of the study, receiving consensus of respondents ready to response then started a detail interview and questionnaire fill up.

Objective of the Study

The main objectives of the study are as follow.

- 1 To know the prevalence of divorce
- 2 To know the Causes of divorce
- 3 To know their relation with family members
- 4 To know their Economic Condition after divorce
- 5 To know the psychological problems after divorce
- 6 To know the health condition after divorce

Analysis of data

The Present study have attempted to know the Social, Economic, health and Psychological problem faced by divorced women of different cast, class, profession and religious category of this district. The study attempted to know the following mentioned problems faced by divorced women in Purba Medinipuri.



Causes of Divorce:

Table No: 1.1

| Religion of the respondent * Reason of divorce | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| Religion of the respondent | | | Reason of divorce | | | Total |
| | | | Differences in thought/Opinion | Dowry | Domestic Violence | |
| Religion of the respondent | Hindu | Count | 13 | 5 | 8 | 26 |
| | | % within Religion of the respondent | 50.0% | 19.2% | 30.8% | 100.0% |
| | | % within Reason of divorce | 65.0% | 71.4% | 34.8% | 52.0% |
| | Sikh | Count | 6 | 1 | 7 | 14 |
| | | % within Religion of the respondent | 42.9% | 7.1% | 50.0% | 100.0% |
| | | % within Reason of divorce | 30.0% | 14.3% | 30.4% | 28.0% |
| | Muslim | Count | 1 | 1 | 8 | 10 |
| | | % within Religion of the respondent | 10.0% | 10.0% | 80.0% | 100.0% |
| | | % within Reason of divorce | 5.0% | 14.3% | 34.8% | 20.0% |
| Total | Count | 20 | 7 | 23 | 50 | |
| | % within Religion of the respondent | 40.0% | 14.0% | 46.0% | 100.0% | |
| | % within Reason of divorce | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | |

The above figure shows the major causes of divorce in Hindu and Sikh community are due to differences in thoughts and opinion of couple. In Hindu community 50% divorce exists due to clashes of ideas among couple, same followed by Sikh 42.9%, but in Muslim community it is lower only 10%. The other evil causes of divorce is dowry which is very much shameful for Indian culture and civilization. In Hindu society 19.2% of separations are due to dowry demand. Among Muslims it is 10% and Sikh 7.1%. Domestic violence is common practices among Indian peninsula. Women from each cast and class are victim of this cause. The Indian government had created strict laws against dowry and domestic violence, despite that 50% women divorced due to domestic violence in Sikh community, Hindus 30.8% and highest among Muslim community 80%. The reason of high divorce rate due to domestic violence among Muslim urban society are lack of education and Islamic knowledge. Thus, domestic conflict is the major reason of divorce among Muslim community in Indian soil.

The study looks divorce rates of past 15 years in all cast class and religion finds, at present divorce rates are higher among all cast, class and religion. The causes of divorce vary from couple to couple, society to society, cast to cast, class to class and religion to religion.

Lack of communication among couples are one of the major causes of divorce specially among working classes of all cast, class and religions. As mentioned above with increase in literacy rate and women employment the divorce rate is increasing simultaneously. It can be strongly say due to work pressure in office couples have less time to share their thought, ideas, happiness and expectations to each other. The present working environment requires updating with new technologies for better work and promotions. Even couple have less time to spend with their kids. Thus, it will not be an exaggeration to say pressure of work leads tension and split.

In Modern society, most of the cases both husband and wife working. The life styles are expensive, large proportion of income spent on buying fashionable things. It is observed that in big shopping malls most of the young couple used to frequently visit for shopping belongs to



working classes. In general perception, goods in shopping malls are costlier than other general shopping market. In modern urban society to visit shopping mall and buying unusable/ fashionable goods are extra burden over the family. For maintaining class standard in society couple always buy lots of goods only for show that cost extra burden and less saving. Such financial pressure also leads tension among couples and most of the time a cause of divorce.

In Indian society, especially among uneducated class, couple abuse each other without any valid reasons. When tension arose among couples they use uncivilized languages for each other.

Most of the time they abuse their parents vice versa. Sexual abuses and abuse to parent are very common practice in rural and among migratory population in urban. Most of the time abuse leads to major tension among couples. Most of the cases panchayat tried to settle the matter at village level. The study observes, most of the divorce in rural are due to domestic abuse. Different kinds of abuse are available in Indian soil and abused in different style, that varies from culture to culture, some abuses are very painful and stressful. All regional and local languages have their own abusing style. The abusive behavior of couple creates a big hole among couples and most of the time leads a cause of divorce.

Adulterous behavior is objectionable at social, moral and religious grounds. Adulterous activities are most commonly seen among upper economic and educated classes. Most of the time conflict arises among couples due to adulterous activity. If anyone of the couple involve in adulterous activities, others not ready to accept, such behavior is unacceptable at moral and religious ground. Particularly in case of women after marriage husband be familiar with her previous adulterous behavior most of the cases husband refused to accept. In case of men, women silent their voice for a moment but could not bear it for a long time. Divorces due to adulterous behavior are commonly seen among upper economic and educated classes.

Table No: 1.2
Problem faced after divorce

| Problem faced after divorce | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| No | 1 | 2.0 |
| Economic | 28 | 56.0 |
| Social | 21 | 42.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 |

Indian society is divided into cast and class. At all level after divorce women faces two major problems, economic and social. The above figure shows 56% women face economic problems and 42% social problems only two percent women have no difficulties after divorce. Social problem is more stressful than economic problems. Lots of comments have to face a divorced woman in her surroundings ex- she is not cooperative nature, ruined the house of other family now burden on parent etc.

Table No: 1.3
Economic consequences:

| Bears expenditure after divorce | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Parents | 32 | 64.0 |
| Others | 18 | 36.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 |



The above figure shows 64% women depend on their parents. All his necessities full filled by her parents and 36% filled by other family members. Life becomes very miserable when women have one or more children. Most of the time women don't get their basic needs like foods, clothing, medicine and shelter for themselves and for their children. For women basic needs of children are more important than her needs, she will not eat good foods but try to eat good food to her children, she will sleep on floor but try her children sleep on bed. Most of the parents are at old age at the time of divorce. The older parents have extra burden. Other family members could not full fill her needs as her parents do. It can be strongly saying, there is great disparity between the economic ramifications of divorce between men and women, men remain unaffected in compare to women. Thus, women are more sufferer than men in all respect.

On the other hand, economically, women are more sufferer than men after divorce. Women left husband house as soon as possible with their children and back to his parental home. Most of the time women depend on their parents if he is alive. If father is not alive his conditions of survival become a big challenge. Spent time in her birth place, not treated as a daughter and sister, most of the time like a domestic worker. Sometime treated worse than slave.

Table No: 1.4
Psychological problems after divorce

| Psychological problem faced | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Mental stress | 36 | 72.0 |
| Future | 14 | 28.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 |

Women pass through plenty of emotions after divorce that constitutes guilt, shame, insecurity, helplessness and depression. They try to hide their feelings, state of sorrow weaknesses and put on a face of bravery. After divorce women lives in a stressful state of life, so many needs and desire not met on time that cause a mental stress and invites different kind of diseases. Human lives are full of hopes, everyone is curious concerning future. The above figure shows, after divorce 72% women passes through mental stress and 28% curious concerning future. After divorce, women lose their confident level and find themselves unable to form a new relationship. It will not be an be an exaggeration to say psychological problems are silent killing of a human being

Table No: 1.5
Relation with family member after divorce

| Relation with family member | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Normal | 36 | 72.0 |
| Good | 6 | 12.0 |
| Not Satisfactory | 8 | 16.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 |

The major challenge for women after divorce is to maintain satisfactory relations with her family members. The above table shows 72% women have normal relationship with her parent. 16% feels her relationship with their parent not better than before marriage. Only 12% feels her



relationship better as usual as before marriage, well cared by family members.

In the era of globalization, divorce is still considered as stigmatized actions which are taken by the couples, both families disturbed, social relations break down for a long Period. Women’s family more disturbed than men. After divorce women are not whole heartedly welcomed by her family members, attitude of family members changed. She doesn’t get respects in the family as she got before separation. Hard attitudes are always witnessed by brother’s wife. She never wants to stay under same roof. It is assumed that presence of divorced women in house may affect the possible marriage of other women in the family and lowered the image of family in society. In my opinion practice of monogamy in Indian society is one of the leading causes of societal problems with divorced women. Where Polygyny is in practice above mentioned problem are rarely witnessed. In India divorce and remarriage are completely legal and polyandry punishable by law. Practice of Polygyny is only solution to save women from depression and unhappy life.

Table No: 1.6
Health after divorce

| Health after divorce | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Good | 49 | 98.0 |
| Not good | 1 | 2.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 |

The universal fact “health is wealth” is the major cause of happiness in human life. Sick women have to always dependent on other family member and relatives if she has no young children. Most of the time divorced women not well cared by her brothers and siblings, if parents not alive. Particularly in case of emergency not well cared by her belongings and siblings. On the other hand, no threat is bigger than ill health in this world. The above figure shows 98% women have better health. Only two percent facing health problem. Health facilities in Purba Medinipuri are better, cheap and well planned. The two well know and cheapest big hospital “All India Institute of medical sciences and safdarjung hospital are available in Purba Medinipuri. Purba Medinipuri government has lots of scheme for BPL citizens.

Table No: 1.7
Want remarry

| Want remarry | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| No | 35 | 70.0 |
| Yes | 15 | 30.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 |

The above figure shows majority of the women doesn’t want to be remarry, social and cultural practice shows widow remarriage are not easy in Indian subcontinent. When women want to be remarried lots of question arises around her. But in case of men, they got easy married. Women got so terrorised in last marriage that she doesn’t want be a victim of patriarchal system again. Viewing above figure the table indicates towards questions why women in Indian society don’t want remarry.

**Finding and conclusion:**

Problem of divorce is not only the problem of Indian women, more painful in developed nation. Divorce affects both side families. Indian society is fully supportive of marriage, majority of the people wants marry once in life, second marriage are considered unfair in society. Unfortunately divorce rate are increasing in Indian society, a different kind of social problems emerged. It is the duty of community leaders to make some laws which can prevent divorce. Social norms should be strictly followed. People of Indian society believe that married couple should be faithful and loyal towards each other and it a life time commitment, people embrace it and support it.

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