



IMPACT OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN (With reference to Davanagere in Karnataka)

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ABSTRACT Divorce has become one of the growing concerns of the society. There have been only few studies conducted on the impact of divorce on children. It is high time to analyze the implications of divorce on children and to identify the areas of intervention to reduce the problems related to emotional, psychological and social stress of them.

Through this study the problems in social as well as psychological well-being of the children of divorced. The assumption in this study is "the children of divorced have more psychological problems" descriptive research design was used in this study.

Sampling method was purposive based on age, duration of separation of parent's etc. methods such as interviewing; observations and discussion with expert were used among 40 children who came along with their parents, who approached the family court Davanagere to settle their disputes. Some suggestions have also been made. The major findings of the study are explained as well as.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

Family is "A relationship of indeterminate duration existing between parent(s) and children" (Nimmkoff and Ogburn. 1934). The family is one of the society's main and arguably most important social institutions as it serves to socialize individual to be productive members of the society. Most of us look to our family for guidance, support and a sense of belonging. The family is the most important social institution as it is our first encounter with socialization processes. As with all Institutions, the family has within its boundaries a set of norms, values, status and order which are organised to meet specific goals for overall society as a social system as an entity which consists of various interrelated parts that perform particular functions further family as a system is a part of larger systems which constitutes the society and contributes to its functioning.

Within the family systems the status and roles interact with one another to form a system of relations among the members who hold a specific status and functions a specified role. The operation of a family systems is dependent upon the effectiveness of these status role interactions as a social group the focus is on the individual members of family in question to what each person contributes to the relationships with other individual in the family determines the reality within the family whether we examine the family as an institution, system or group, the interest of people who studies the family begins with a fascination of family entity and the relationships within its boundaries.

One of the big issues or challenges within family studies lies in its definition. Contemporary society is changing rapidly and we have seen many family forms increase in number and some relatively and we have seen many family forms in increase in number and some relatively new forms emerge. The 'Ideal Image' of two biological parents and children in harmony, as with the most ideal types does not present very realistic framework for contemporary society.

DIVORCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS.

Divorce is a legal dissolution of the marriage contract by a court or other body having competent authority. According to Kalter.N (1977) in his study based on helping children avoid immediate and later emotions has divided the divorce process based on its implications. The first stage of the divorce process begins as parents separate and / or a petition for divorce is filed. The fact that parents are seeking to dissolve their marriage becomes public: children now realize that the conflict or emotional distance between their parents is not unreal, a normal part of family life that will continue indefinitely. Changes in the household become apparent as one parent leaves and children begin to sense that their lives will be altered dramatically. For youngsters initially is a time of shock and disbelief: regardless of the amount of parental conflict that had existed, perhaps accompanied by open threats or discussion about divorce, children are neatly universally surprised, frightened and saddened by the knowledge that divorce will occur. This is a wrenching realization for most children who have held onto the belief that their parents would never get divorced. The implicit unspoken promise of parents that the family will always be together is shattered.

Conflict between parents is one of the most serious stressors a child encounters during the immediate crisis of parental divorce. When one or both parents decide to separate, conflict between them is very frequently intense often one parent feels rejected by the other's decision to leave the marriage.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Intimate interactions from early life serve as the basis upon which relationships later in life are formed. Environmental contingencies to which individuals must adopt are rooted in these of complex inter play of forces that reside within the individual human being and the environment by which he or she is surrounded; it can be Proposed that interpersonal Interactions and adaptive measures necessary for coping with the adjustments and transitions that come with the various stages of maturation in one's early life. The mother – child relationship is an important first step in determining how the child will learn to perceive his or her relationships with other people. Early bonding with the mother not only teaches the baby warmth and affection, but it also seems to have a Psychological effect.

The family is place in which children learn to interpret reality. Parents serve as significant interpreters for children of Information about the world and children's abilities.

More than I million children a year experience parental divorce or separation have become increasingly aware of children's reactions to divorce. Social scientists have made many attempts since the 1960 s to study the impact of divorce on children.

It can be stated with some certainty that when compared to children of intact families. Children of divorced parents function on a lower level on various psychological, social and cognitive measures. Situational variables such as socioeconomic support systems, parenting and family relationships account for some of the variables; others are accounted for by the personal characteristics of age, gender, and temperament.

A Childs developmental stage appears to be the most significant single factor among these entire variable in determining the nature of much of his or her response to Parental divorce.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE STUDIES ON CHILDREN

In 1991 Amato and Keith examined the results of 92 studies involving 13,000 children ranging from preschool to young adulthood to deterring what the overall results indicated. The overall result of this analysis was that children from divorced families are on "average" somewhat worse off than children who have lived in intact families these children have more difficulty in school. More behaviour problems more negative self-concepts more problems with peers and more trouble getting along with their parents.

Amato (1994) reminds us that average differences do not mean that all children in divorced families are worse off than all children in divorced

families. In figure 1 (p.145) in the future of children (1994) Amato presents an illustration of how much the children in both groups overlap-thus while there are average differences there are more similarities than differences. Another way to examine this issue is illustrated by findings of Mavis Hetherington (1993). Hetherington, like many others, finds these average differences but she also looked at some of her measures and examined the degree to which children in divorced and intact families were more severely impaired. Here we find some important variations, on a measure of behavioural problems Hetherington(1993) reports that 90% of adolescent boys and girls in intact families were in within the normal range on problems and 10% had serious problems that we would generally require some type of help. The percentages for divorced families were 74% of the boys and 66% of the girls in the normal range and 26% of the boys and 34% of the girls were in the problematic range.

Even after controlling for Income children of unwed mothers are two and a half times more likely to develop conduct disorders than other children (Cohen and others 1989).

Children from disrupted marriages experience greater risk of injury. Asthma, headaches and speech defects than children from intact families, children living with formerly married professional help for emotional or behavioural problems (Dr.Deborah 1985). 18-22 year olds from disrupted families was found twice as likely to have poor relationships with their mothers and fathers, to high level of emotional distress or problem behaviour and to have received psychological help (Zill 1955)

Fatherless children are much more likely to develop psychiatric problems, boys three times as likely girls four times (Krma Moilanen, Paula, Rantakallio 1988) both teens in single parent families and teens in step families are three times more likely to have needed psychological help (Peter Hill 1993).

Children of divorce have more difficulty in following the commands of the parents than the parents of intact families (Journal of legal studies 1993). Studies show that children of discovered even after six years after the breakup of their parents marriage were impulsive, irritable and socially withdrawn and tended to be "lonely, unhappy and insecure" Dr. Waller stein; 1980)

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the psychological impact of divorce on children.
2. To study the social Impact of divorce on children.

ASSUMPTIONS:

The children of divorced have more psycho-social problems than others.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher used descriptive design to study the impact of divorce on children.

UNIVERSE

The whole population out of which the samples are selected in the technical phraseology of research is known as universe. Here in the study "Impact of divorce on children" the researcher's universe is the entire family court Davanagere.

SAMPLE SIZE

Depending upon the accessibility and convenience 40 children were selected from the universe for in depth interview.

SAMPLING METHOD

Census sampling method was used to collect the data with the permission of the magistrate concerned.

METHODS AND TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION INTERVIEWING

The interview schedule was revised and restructured. The schedule was prepared to record the psychological and social problems of the children of divorced to record social problems questions were set based on four indicators which included personal relationships, obeying authorities, entertainment and ability to complete social obligations the indicators used to record psychological problems include psycho somatic disorders, anxiety, general physical health and depression.

The researcher got the opportunity to observe the respondents' verbs as well as nonverbal communications the researcher also met their parents and observed their attitude and approach towards their children as well as their spouse.

DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNSELORS AND LAWYERS

Researcher discussed with senior lawyers and contacted their offices for valuable suggestions as well as to identify cases regarding divorce.

PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted in family court Davanagere by the researcher. Researcher contacted the concerned magistrate, Principal Counsellor of the court, Social workers in the field of family counselling and some lawyers dealing with the cases of divorce in order to develop a clear picture of the problem and also to find out the viability of the study. Through pilot study the researcher was able to understand the scope and feasibility of the study.

PRE-TEST

Pre-test was conducted to see whether the questionnaire would elicit the required information. Pre-test was done in 10 children necessary modifications were made after chat.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Some parents accompanying the children were suspicious towards the researcher and mistook to be the representative from the court and were reluctant to leave the child with the researcher to speak.
- There were only few children who came along with their parents who approached court relating to divorce cases hence the universe was small.
- The study was confined to only one court i.e., Family court, Davanagere.
- The factors contributing to divorce was not considered in this study.

DATA ANALYSIS:

The impact of divorce on children leads to problems in social and psychological functioning, situational variables such as socio-economic status, support systems, parenting and family relationships account for some of the variables others are accounted for by the personal characteristics of age, gender, religion and temperament in determining the nature of their response to parental divorce.

FINDINGS

The turmoil and shock of the first stage gives way to a deeming recognition of the realities of divorce. The legal process of negotiation and /or adversarial conflict between spouses finally yields a divorce decree during this time. Patterns of economic support, custody and visiting schedules set down in the initial period of the separation become routine.

Although adult children are often able to finally escape the day-to-day tensions and the shuffling from house to house (some escape by moving for away) they still experience considerable pain around holidays and special events the children also continue to have to struggle with how to share their time with expanded families who often still harbour much anger at one another. In other words, in most families, the pain never totally goes away.

Children often feel they are at fault. They may feel that something the child or said caused a parent to leave sometimes children or teens feel they have to "take care of" one or both of their parents. Giving up one's child hood to care for emotionally troubled parents is a widespread characteristic in children of divorce. They also grieve. Divorce is a major loss in the lives of children and them to mourning a death. They may also experience conflicts of loyalty.

In this study it was found that significant number of children of divorced has difficulty in maintaining relationship (92.5%). Fulfilling social obligations (90%) obeying authorities (85%), enjoying entertainment (70%). The most affected area in social functioning is maintaining relationships and this can lead to the feeling of the lack of close supportive friends.

The changes in coping patterns between both the gender is very noticeable. Though both the gender suffers from the social as well as psychological problems, the disparity between the impact of divorce

on boys and girls cannot be neglected. Gender differences play a major role in the way they adjust with social as well as psychological situations.

Girls (61%) cope better than boys (81%) in case of psychological problems. In terms of personal relationships, obeying authorities and completing social obligations girls come better. While in case of enjoying recreational activities boys come better.

Almost three fourth of the respondents suffer from psychological problems the most affected area is problems relating to general physical health (GPH) and depression from anxiety (77.5%) and psychosomatic disorders (60%).

In this study it was found that irrespective of any religion. The children of divorced has similar problems. Influence of religion on impact of divorce is irrelevant.

It was found that though children are able to come with the situation. They have difficulties in facing problems that arise towards the later stage of life and there might be a re-emergence or emergence of problematic behaviour in children.

SUGGESTIONS

No single factor has a greater impact on the health of all family members. Parents locked in marital conflict expose their children to chronic tension, as abusive environment, constant sabotage of parenting, and the direct. Research repeatedly demonstrates the children and their parent develop significant emotional and medical symptoms in this "toxic" family.

Parent's being good role models is necessary to make the upbringing process successful. When the parent offers the contradictory example, they underline all what they advised the taught to their children.

Grandparents, friends, religious affiliations, parent support group, and individual counselling are resources many parents and children find helpful during this difficult time of divorce transition. The very first thing parents and other adults who come home to help youngsters come effectively with divorce-related stresses need to know is the critical importance of being able to communicate constructively with children. This is the cornerstone of assisting all children who are faced with stress.

There has to be pre divorce as well as part divorce counselling of parents and the children to help the parents understand their child, resolve the negative/hurt feelings towards their spouse, to come with the situation and help them to understand the importance to act in a manner which is constructive rather than destructive for their children and to work with them.

Counselling for children will help them to overcome their psychological and social problems to some extent. It helps them to understand why their parents are separated and how they have to deal with the situation it also helps them to speak with their parents more openly about their own problems.

It is always better to avoid divorce savings people from divorce means saving a family. Hence there has to be a propagation of the importance of parents being together. The people has to be sensitized about the emotional distress the children of divorced suffer information regarding better communication pattern and adjustment behaviours in family life has to be provided to people through pre marriage and out marriage courses.

Teacher in schools have to be trained to deal with such children. They have to be able to understand these children's needs and provide support psychologically as well as help them to adjust socially.

CONCLUSION

Divorce is a legal discontinuation of marriage by a court and the study based on helping the children. The emotional distance and conflict between their parents of family life. The children are universally surprised and frightened by the knowledge the divorce will occur. The children never understand and need for divorce.

The child socializes and learns from the family first, it has a major role in meeting the psycho-social needs of the child, in some families

separated or divorced it affects the child and this situation can make problematic children to the society. So it is always good to avoid divorce and proper understanding between the couple.

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