

Review article

Divorce: In the Eyes of Public Health

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Abstract

A family's social support is one of the primary ways family positively impacts health. Marriage is associated with physical health, psychological well-being, and low mortality. It was also revealed that divorce has psychological and emotional effects on women's personal and social lives. This review article discovered that divorced women and children experience more social isolation. Divorce women include some psychological and emotional effects like low appetite, reduced physical energy and strength, chest pain, severe pressure in the chest, difficulty in hearing, eye pain, digestive problems, divorce on women.

Keywords: Divorce, marital separation, physical health, family life, relationship

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Introduction

Divorce is associated with significant socioeconomic changes, especially for women, and the impact may be especially severe for minority women who are in a vulnerable financial position before the end of marriage. We have focused on mental health disturbances as well as changes in health behaviors and habits as plausible causal pathways connecting the end of marriage to long-term health risks. Divorce is often considered a significant and stressful life transition. It is a process that begins when the couple is still married and may continue for years after the legal separation. The severity and duration of the negative consequences vary depending on several intra- and inter-personal moderating factors, including socioeconomic, behavioral, and socio-demographic. There are three pathways through which divorce can pose a risk to physical health. First, divorce often negatively affects financial and social resources. Second, after divorce, people tend to engage in more risky behaviors and unhealthy lifestyle habits. All such behaviors are associated with physical health problems. Third, divorce is

related to a heightened risk of ex-partner conflict, constituting a major interpersonal stressor. High levels of stress following marital strains are often accompanied by several changes in the body's organic responses (immune, cardiovascular, and endocrine systems) that may lead to an increased risk for multiple health pathologies.^{1,2}

Depending on the cost of marital dissolution the influence of education can be negative or positive on a divorce women., It is expected that the level of education will be positively associated with divorce in settings where marital dissolution is uncommon and its legal, social, and economic costs are high.³ Islam emphasizes the sanctity of marriage, yet the evolving social landscape raises questions about how cultural shifts influence attitudes toward divorce. Globally economic pressures and financial instability have been identified as contributing factors to rising divorce rates globally. Understanding the causes and effects of divorce on public health is essential for developing desired interventions and support systems to mitigate the

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negative consequences and promote the well-being of individuals and families in the Makkah Al-Mukarramah region. This inquiry into the public health implications of divorce in the region aims to shed light on the multifaceted nature of this societal shift. By examining the interconnectedness of mental, emotional, and physical health within families, addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing divorce and their subsequent effects. Recognizing the interconnected nature of public health, this exploration seeks to go beyond the immediate repercussions of divorce and address the broader societal impact.⁴

Knowing how separation or divorce affects family members in the basic societal unit is fundamental. Divorce leads to many consequences, including relocation and moving of separated spousal partners, stress, emotional impact, breakage, deterioration of parent-child relationships, trust issues, and mental health issues. In addition, divorce leads to depression, engagement of children and parents in risky behaviors, eating disorders, increased resentment of children toward their parents, trouble children adjusting to the new norm of divorce, anger, irritability, and loss of interest. Divorce increases stress, relationship strain, and overall deterioration of health among family members. The leading causes of divorce in the world currently are economic reasons, extra-marital affairs, domestic violence, unrealistic expectations, and addictions. Divorce affects the spouses through separation and aspects of psychological well-being, health, social life, and economic and domestic lives.⁵ Divorced people score less well on the positive dimension of health and wellbeing. Those who have separated or are divorced are less satisfied with their lives and feel less happy. Divorced persons also feel less in control of their environment, display a lower level of self-acceptance, and have fewer purposes in life. Furthermore, they show a worse level of general health and exhibit less positive health behavior. The extent to which one experiences negative consequences of a divorce may be related to one's values and beliefs. The more a divorce goes against the values/beliefs one holds, the greater its negative effect on well-being may be. Divorce often entails that contacts with specific groups of people are severed and that the amount of social support one can rely on is reduced.⁶

Divorce is perceived differently in different cultural groups. Therefore, there are various cultural as well

as psychological consequences of divorce. This study tries to explore cultural, and psychological dimensions and the mental health status of divorce among cross-cultural divorcee couples in Kathmandu, Nepal. Moreover, it can be found in every society, whether customary or legal. It occurs quickly within a more open and industrial society. It is emerging as a form of new sociological events due to the pattern of sociocultural changes by modernization and urbanization. Divorce may give pain to someone and joy to the next one after they dissolve the marriage. "Cultural psychology studies how cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, and transform the human psyche, resulting in less psychic unity for humankind than ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotion. Perceptions and beliefs are also significant factors that contribute to the mental health of divorcees. Different cultures have different beliefs and perceptions, and according to that perception, the way people think and get a sense of something, they act towards the things and accept the existing things as valid whether it is natural for others or not."⁷ Divorce is a profoundly devastating life experience. Divorce of parents mainly impacts students of middle or high school in many ways, including academic performance, psychological well-being, personality, behavior, and negative perspective on people and their future lives. Furthermore, the most commonly identified changes in behavior at middle and high school as a result of the parent's divorce include a decline in academic performance, symptoms of anxiety, higher levels of physical behavior such as being out-of-seat, difficulty concentrating, increased daydreaming, signs of sadness and depression, seeking the teacher's attention, a desire for more physical interaction.⁸

"With Allah, the most detestable of all things permitted is divorce" Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Divorce disintegrates family unity, and therefore, it is a social evil in itself, but sometimes it becomes a necessary evil. Islam has made the provision of divorce so that both of them can lead a better life. Determinants of divorce in the context of Bangladesh are as follows: i. Women's Independence: Indeed, much of Bangladeshi women's increased freedom in their personal lives today is due to their ever-increasing decision-making power and less dependence on their spouses. ii. Impotence & Infertility: A 2011 study has identified impotence; that is, the husband having a problem establishing a sexual relationship was identified as one of the

significant causes of divorce. iii. Physical unfitnes: Many women and men in Bangladesh have given divorce on the grounds of physical unfitnes. iv. Domestic Abuse & Dowry: One of the significant sources of violence against women is dowry. Women, mostly in rural areas, are forced and tortured to bring dowry. There have been 108 cases of physical torture and 126 cases of torture to death for dowry in 2016 in Bangladesh. v. Women's Empowerment: The independence of women has been associated with increased freedom of voice and protest. Women, as before, do not just bear the physical and mental torture. They do what needs to be done. vi. Extra-Marital Affair vii. Alcohol, Drug: Overuse of alcohol, drugs, or gambling are usually all forms of addiction that can ruin relationships. viii. Influence of Social Media: Excessive integration in social media, such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Viber, Integra, etc., causes a distance and communication gap between couples. ix. Husband's Economic incapacity: Financial crisis creates discontent because of unfulfilling the gratifications in conjugal life, which also accelerates the process of separation and divorce. x. Age at Marriage: The incidents of divorce were highest in the 25-29 age groups.⁹

People high in anxiety become *psychologically immersed* in their experiences, and this process is associated with the most significant cardiovascular activity when people reflect on their separation. The research on pre-divorce depression, attachment anxiety, and the effects of expressive writing for ruminators begins to point beyond the study of individual differences to provide some important clues about the potential mechanisms (i.e., psychosocial explanations) linking marital separation to poor outcomes.¹⁰

Family produces young ones and prepares them for the future economic development of a country, but if divorce occurs, it negatively disturbs the whole country's system. Nowadays, this problem is mainly faced by Pakistani society. The majority of women were divorced, and then they depended on each other, and no support was present to help this damaged family. So, the government must make a favorable law supporting the divorced family. Islam also dislikes divorce, but in some situations, Islam allows to divorce. So, divorce is a social problem that destroys society and affects development negatively. Divorce has severe socio-psychological outcomes for stakeholders, particularly children from divorced spouses, who are at worst hit. Parents' separation becomes a reason for the child

not to get attention; their education is also affected. There might be chances in which they can indulge in inappropriate acts, including the use of drugs and alcohol or sexual activities. A research study in Lahore showed that women who were divorced experienced more social interaction anxiety, depression, and higher levels of anger as compared to married women. The findings also showed that the extent of social support predicts depression and loneliness. Other effects include insomnia, loss of appetite, and inability to focus on work. Nowadays, the majority of women try for their due rights while some women raise their hands against Islamic principles and say the slogan, "This is my will, and this is my body, and no one has the right to ask me in this world what am I doing." I am free, and my husband, son, and the other person in the house have no right to ask me what I am doing. Similarly, nowadays, women are held in other countries, but it is good, and those women fight only for their due rights. While in Pakistan, the situation is different, and mostly, they have raised their hand against the Islamic principles.¹¹

This review has focused on identifying vital causes of divorce under specific circumstances: socioeconomic differentiation, occupational status, family background, role conflict, physical defectives, educational differentiation, and legal ground. Pre-divorce familial contradictions arose, as found in this study, which depended on the immaturity of the partners, cruelty, sexual maladjustment, impotence, quarrelsome disposition of the spouses and other family members, barrenness, and economic dependency that leads to divorce at the final stage. Divorce itself is a process that occurs due to different causes, which mainly focus on socio-economic aspects such as a) Separations-which occur within the family when marital relations are socially broken, and a clash begins. It is an informal preliminary step of divorce but is not guaranteed to lead to divorce. It has a probability of reunion between husband and wife; separated couples are not able to remarry b) Desertion-"It is the irresponsible departure from the home on the part of either husband or wife, leaving the family to fend for itself" However, there are different cases of divorce seen in every society either in developed or in underdeveloped, secular or non-secular and in different caste and ethnic groups. Due to the social and cultural complexities, mobility for jobs, the impact of secularism, the global impact of capitalism, emerging legal grounds,

industrialization, and urbanization, changing attitudes on traditional norms and value systems are causing the disintegration of marital relations. Therefore, developed and modern societies have more fertile grounds for divorce. From a functional perspective, divorce, happening in society, is a result of an adaptive process of spouses who belong to different socio-economic backgrounds and inconsistency of their expectations. Divorce is not only a social problem; it happens and is more influenced by the particular socio-economic grounds in which restrictive social norms and values, which may not be well performed, raise high expectations between couples when they marry. This research shows that when a family member has to go far from the house to earn money, he creates a gap between his spouses. At that time, they are expected to satisfy the biological and economic needs but cannot fulfill them. The situation leads to contradictions at different levels, and then divorce occurs. The reasons for divorce in the nuclear family are sexual or social gaps between the spouses due to job distance, problems with cohabitation, freedom, being out of control from their family, equal status and adjustment problems, education, and awareness. “Divorce is relatively high among persons engaged in occupation necessitating frequent absence from home, involving intimate contact with the opposite sex, and controlled relatively little by the community” Research on child marriage conducted by PLAN International (2015) in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia found that the objection of young people to child marriage was considered to cause disharmony, conflicts and domestic violence in marital relations, and sometimes divorce. The divorce rate is higher if spouses have more expectations from each other, face economic hardship, and go far from their residence due to economic achievement. The influence of education on a couple is that the first is the relation of happiness to the extent of education a spouse has, and the second is the difference in educational status between the spouses. Similarly, the research concludes that the educational level between husband and wife is a stimulating factor for divorce.^{12, 13}

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