

Divorce as an Outcome of Cultural Non Adjustment in Traditional Society of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

The research study aims at findings the association of divorce with cultural non adjustment of female. The study universe comprised of Darul Aman Malakand division (abode) where most of divorced women from surrounding areas were residing. A total of 210 respondents (divorced women) was taken randomly selected for in-depth interview. Chi square test was used to test the association among variables. Moreover, reliability analysis was also carried out and overall reliability coefficient was explored between 0.6 and 0.8 respectively. Further, disputes over dowry, ugliness of women, patrilocal residence and social stigma to either gender were the causes of divorcelitigation between couple, pushing women for living in patrilocal residence. The study further explored that love marriage had no acceptance in cultural dynamics of the study while controlling marriage type. Illiteracy had high level of effects leading to divorce, but culturally the literate had the acknowledgement of the effects of divorce on women folk in the study area. Provision of literacy with special package to both genders admonishing early age marriage were some of the recommendations in light of the present study.

Keywords: Divorce, Culture, Non adjustment, Women, Malakand division

Introduction

Cultural perspectives with regards to women subordinate status had also led her vulnerable to share in property and provision of

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Haq-e-Mahar at the point of dissolution of marriage, along with indecision over children bringing up and provision of education and meeting out other basic amenities of life. Historical background of divorce is still at large. However, some sound evidences leading to biblical ground with the main cause of adultery i.e. sexual association with unpermitted persons and death have been even recorded as the eminent punishment with profane.¹ With the passage of time marriage took a number of shifts even in the most traditional society. Women subordinate position was retaken in the preview of division of labor. In the civilized societies the marital union was mostly interpreted in life of couple contract, which resulted into diminishing of restriction associated to this bond. Moreover, cruelty and injustice was declared immoral and illegal to this bond and thus marriages got respect, however, with dichotomous obligations based on investment, affection and faithfulness.² Western societies suffered with huge stress in the form of two big wars which left to the everlasting effects on marriages due to loss of partners, long separation and infrequency of communication left to the sharp rate in the divorce. The rise of this trend considered with the rise of feminist movement also increased gender equality, brought a widen varieties of options for women. Both gender started discarding the old roles and replacing them with a difficult period of readjustment which initiated a stressful environment for the couple. However, this dynamic shape also dividend, carry the function of the children where most of the happiness of the young offspring associated to the family. Cultural growth with emphasis of autonomy and independence weakened the marital union.³ Today it is even considered a non-serious act of adulthood. It is no longer a social obligation with loss of power of the families and their affairs. Arranged marriage is still prevalent in societies, particularly in South Asia and Middle East to some extent. Such marriages have deep roots in royal and aristocratic families around the world. The cultural evidence of arranging marriage is rooted in economic reasons of safeguarding property and inheritance for not getting from the familial land.⁴ State has taken the responsibility for preventing abuse and neglecting insurance of property maintenance. This ease of burden on families has taken both partners into the corner of relaxed milieu. It has shifted the sense of responsibility once to be owned by the parents to the state machinery and thus the cultural traits of self-respect, egoistic considerations and social stigma associated to this breaking has been completely struck with enlighten. Moreover, huge amount is spent, while feeding the community with the sole

purpose of making it public. In addition, the shape of divorce witnessed between the co marrying families, which usually took both to an endless enmity and litigation as this breakup is a cultural and social stigma for not only the married couple but for relative families also.

Materials and methods

The present study was carried out in Malakand Division to study cultural effects of divorce on women in traditional society. The domain of the study was limited to the cultural effects of divorce. The total divorced cases which were registered with family court and sponsored by Social welfare (Darul Aman) Swat were 395. According to Sekaran⁵, 2003 for 395 population a sample size of 210 was required. Furthermore, this sample size was divided on proportional allocation method ($n_1 = K \cdot n/N$). For collecting primary data a well thought out and comprehensive interview schedule were designed, encompassing all the basic aspects of the study. The data were collected by the researcher and trained female workers under the supervision of the researcher. The collected data were coded and entered in to SPSS software (20th version) for its analysis. Uni – Vriate or simple percentage test were carried out to check the answers on frequency and percentage basis. Bi-variate analysis were carried out to measure the association between independent and dependent variable (cultural aspect and effects of divorce). For this purpose chi-square (χ^2) test was used to test the hypothetical association between independent and dependent variables. To calculate chi-square the procedure outlined by Tai were used. To determine the spuriousness or non-spuriousness of the relationship among independent and independent variables at bi variate level through (χ^2) test statistics multi variate analysis were carried out. The dependent variable was indexed to get the desired degree of the responses. The Cronbach alpha test was used to indicate the underlying dimensions of the items consisting of an index. Most of the coefficient was stood 0.7, therefore the data were found to be internally consistent.

Results and Discussion

Respondents Attitude towards Cultural Aspect

Table 1 enumerated that majority i.e. 88.6% of the respondent did not marry as swara while most of the respondents i.e. 60.5% divorce cases were due to dispute over dowry from parents' side. Economic importance of marriage has been eminent from the

findings, thus cultural basis could be assumed as getting weaker. These findings were in consonance to the findings of Rajaraman⁶ that paying bride dowry is mandatory to compensate the bride groom in new home. Dowry strengthen the daughter position in bride home is there marital relationship and making it difficult to dissolve the marriage⁷ with a fear of returning it to bride groom family in case of separation.⁸ Ugliness and stigma associated to divorce were discovered and found that majority of the respondents i.e. 69.5% stated that ugliness was responsible for their divorce. The 66.7% argued that social stigma was associated with wife. While, 59.5% respondents said that social stigma was associated with husbands. Moreover, 54.5% respondents had divorced due to litigation between husband and wife. This honor had to be kept high on part of both gender by avoiding in indulging any unethical and immoral activities. Moreover, facility for bridegroom with submission to the power and authority of husband could lead to a stable relationship as deduced for these findings. These findings could easily be supported from Bradshaw⁹; Cherlin¹⁰; Benokraitis¹¹; and Whiteman¹² that ugliness, infighting between marrying couple, litigation and social stigma to either gender could end the marital life at divorce. Territorial biasness is also a factor of separation. Majority i.e. 66.2% of the respondents believed that territorial biasness was involved in their marriage bond termination. Moreover, 70 % respondents' marriages had been dissolved by giving preference to patrilocal residence. While, 74.3% respondents had divorced that they were struggling for independent household. Thus some other demographic features had been affecting the marital bonds in the study area as well. Joint family system was the major cultural symptom of the area but nowadays it is declining due to modernization, industrialization, urbanization and overpopulation in the area. In case of failure they depart from each other for ever especially on wife's demand with a consistent bust for an independent household.¹³ Notwithstanding (50.5%) respondents had been influenced from western media. It had been one of the influencing functions in molding the behavior of the locals due to cultural assimilation. Western cultural little bothers for separation and divorce etc. media is one of the factor being blamed for marriage dissolution in west.¹⁴ Where in any romantic and sex oriented facet have been associated to any social, cultural and economic obligation.¹⁵ Moreover, (80%) respondents said that production of children is a responsible factor for divorce. The (93%) said if a wife fails to bear a male child husband does not divorce her. After marriage child bearing is conceal

responsibility of both genders, failing to deliver to deliver on these lines leads to culmination of these relationship. Male child is considered a security both in terms of finance and physical strength as well. Any couple fails to produce male child had higher probability of getting divorce. In many places and cultures of the world, there seems to be a preference for the male child. This preference is still largely the case in Muslim Northern Nigeria. A woman who is unable to bear a male child has diminished status. This has been one of the factors that lead some men into a polygamous marriage. The preference for the male child is also ostensibly linked to competition over inheritance as the male child's share of inheritance is double that of a female.¹⁶

Table 1: Respondents attitude towards cultural aspect

Cultural Aspect (statements)	Response		Total
	Yes	No	
You were married as swara.	24(11.4)	186(88.6)	210(100)
There were dowry issue between you and your husband.	127(60.5)	82(39.0)	210(100)
Ugliness as a case to either one of you.	146(69.5)	64(30.5)	210(100)
Any stigma associated with you.	140(66.7)	70(33.3)	210(100)
Any stigma associated with your husband.	124(59.0)	86(41.0)	210(100)
Litigation between you and your husband.	115(54.8)	95(45.2)	210(100)
Territorial bias was one of the cause of yours divorce.	139(66.2)	71(33.8)	210(100)
Patrilocal residence dispute on your part led to your divorce	147(70.0)	36(30.0)	210(100)
Struggling for independent household led to your divorce	156(74.3)	54(25.7)	210(100)
Influence of western culture through media (Net, TV, etc).	106(50.5)	104(49.5)	210(100)
Non production of any child.	160(80)	50(20)	210(100)
No male child.	15(7)	195(93)	210(100)

Association between cultural aspect and effects of divorce on women

As depicted in Table 2, a non-significant relationship was explored between swara marriage and effects of divorce. The concept of swara is common in the tribal areas. In such marriages a female is always suffered because she gets the punishment of another person who has been committed a crime. This custom is now in declining

position in the study area. It could be attributed to true religious preaching and awareness about the permanent settlement of disputes through formal courts. These findings were similar to Khawaja¹⁷ conclusions on swara marriage, this custom was practiced nearly in every part of Pakistan. But it is mostly in Pathan tribes. Its main theme is to resolve the severe disputes; the main victim of this tradition was woman in such compensation she had no chance of escaping from the recipient family. A non-significant relationship was found between dowry and effects of divorce (Table 2). That female who has having no or less dowry is considered as a labor in the house. Most of the parents compensate her parental property share in dowry which is illegal and unlawful. Therefore, she gives preference to separation rather than being a labor in husband house and compensation of her inheritance share in dowry however, in Pakhtun culture, the practice of dowry is not given so much importance with other subcultures of Pakistani society. The obvious reason could be the endogamy. However, Ahmed¹⁸ said that majority divorce cases accused of unpaid or inability to pay (extra) dowries as the main cause of separation in their conjugal life.¹⁹ Moreover, a non-significant relationship was disclosed between ugliness and effects of divorce while also non-significant relationship was found between stigmas on part of wife or husband with effects of divorce (Table 2). It was due to the prevalence close and intimate relationship of the marrying families, where is such acts even existed are kept confidential just to avoid public shame and stigma. Michael and Massoglia²⁰ and Lopoo et al²¹, have found that most of the marriages in Asian society are arranged. Husband and wife see each other after marriage. Then they come to know about the beauty and other sudden feelings as any stigma association with either husband or wife. Due to divorce, women are very prone to live under the disguise of social stigma than men in the society while, it is more difficult to live with husband i.e. stigma associated either one of them, so it is avoided at all cost.²² Moreover, a significant ($P < 0.05$) association was found between litigation of husband and wife and effects of divorce (Table 2). When husband and wife both are in trial with each other on an issue like property, Maher, alimony often weakens the bond of marriage. Furthermore, disturbance had some eminent effects on children in the form of anxiety, loneliness and depression as well. Similarly, British council report²³ declared that in non-*khul'* judicial divorce, the wife must offer sufficient proof to support her underlying grounds for seeking divorce. Ill-treatment, abuse, or non-provision of maintenance are some of the

usual grounds of divorce which forces a women for litigation. On the other hand Ahmad²⁴ declared that women do not enjoy equal participation with men in all the processes of ADR (alternative dispute resolution) and they are not allowed to express their views as freely or as often as they wish. But in extreme situation they go to court and start litigation. A non-significant relationship was existed between territorial disputes and the effects of divorce due to mobility on either side i.e. male or female. A rural and urban composition with mismatching social and psychological traits usually ends at dissolution of marriage. These process of dissolution have been explained by Zaroff²⁵ explained how marriages in Bangladesh (Four Phase Theory of Divorce) come to an end. The theory compresses four general phases: deliberation; litigation; transition: and post-divorce or redirection. These processes totally suffer the wife and also affect her after separation. Furthermore, a significant ($P < 0.05$) association was found between patrilocal residence disputes on part of woman and the effects of divorce (Table 2). Patrilocal residence is customary in the area. It could be attributed to enjoying more time in isolation as couple. However, being patriarchal where rules of living life ought to be obeyed by the newly couple often had to discontent and anxiety due to non- expression of freedom including availability of little time for cohabitation. Manning²⁶ has also showed that majority marriages are associated with higher divorce rate, due to little time of cohabitation. Evidence suggests that this is partly due to selection (people more likely to divorce being more likely to cohabit, and cohabiting couples being more likely to marry with low levels of commitment) as well as the effect of cohabitation itself on the marital union. Unlike the above, a non-significant relationship was found between struggles of woman for independent household and influence of western culture through media along with enhancement in literacy has stated of this traditional scenario. This situation has led to the population emergence of nuclear family as a cherished desire. These findings are in similarity to Mosher (2002 that demand for nuclear family has increased the divorce rate across the traditional societies. Moreover, the concept of globalization and impacts of modernization with desire to enjoy maximum basic amenities of life had negatively affected the traditional structure of the family.²⁷ Contrary to the above a significant ($P < 0.05$) relationship was existed between non productions of male child and the effects of divorce on women. A male child issue is the very demand of the marrying couple in traditional societies like study area, son is

consider as gun in the prevalent culture. A son is demand to carry on the family name and take over as substitute to his father after his denies. A woman unable to produce a male child after successive birth had the high chance to getting divorce as declared sinister or facing a second marriage by his husband just to produce male child. Morgan, Lye, and Condran²⁸ have calculated 9% reduction chances in divorce for couple which had produced a male child. Being issueless in most of the Islamic world has higher chances of getting divorce for women.²⁹

Table 2: Association between cultural aspect and effects of divorce on women

Independent variables	Dependent variable	Statistic
You were married as <i>swara</i> .	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 0.063(0.802)$
There were dowry issue between you and your husband.	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 1.202(0.548)$
Ugliness as a case to either one of you.	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 0.056(0.813)$
Any stigma associated with you.	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 0.048(0.827)$
Any stigma associated with your husband.	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 0.101(0.751)$
Litigation between you and your husband.	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 3.999(0.040)$
Territorial bias was one of the causes of yours divorce.	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 0.034(0.854)$
Patrilocal residence dispute on your part led to your divorce	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 4.330(0.038)$
Struggling for independent household led to your divorce	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 1.679(0.195)$
Influence of western culture through media (Net, TV, etc).	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 2.299(0.129)$
Non production of any child.	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 6.745(0.009)$
No male child.	Effect of divorce	$\chi^2 = 0.989(0.320)$

*Association between cultural aspect and effects of divorce
(controlling type of marriage)*

A non-significant relationship was found between cultural attribute in arrange marriage with effects of divorce on women. Arrange marriages in all spheres of Pakhtun society, therefore has more chances of success. Its divorce is also treated as arranged divorce and put no effects on women after divorce. Furthermore, the association between above mentioned variables with love marriage was found significant ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, elopement marriage with the aforementioned had a non-significant association. The results of the arrange marriages and elopement marriages indicated spurious relationship between cultural aspect with relation to the effects of divorce on women, while it was non-spurious in love marriage as indicated by the respective level of significance at bi variate level. Findings of the present study suggested that love marriages had high tendency to divorce in traditional pakhtun society while those who married as arranged and elopement had less affected. Berger³⁰ states that those marriages which take place in traditional culture and their focus is always on their personal or individual set up are less successful while those spouses which endorse traditional norms about marital establishment most family scholars would predict that adherents of such marriages are more likely to divorce. In the words of Coontz:

*“Marriage has become more joyful, more loving, and more satisfying for many couples than ever before in history. At the same time it has become optional and more brittle. These two strands of change cannot be disentangled”.*³¹

Children and mutual aid might serve as barriers to divorce but in case of divorce the problem is pushed to courts which upset both the spouses after divorce. These reasons might lead end of marriage which consequences are felt after divorce.³²

Table 3: Association between cultural aspect and effects of divorce (controlling type of marriage)

Controlling variable	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Statistics
Arrange	Cultural aspect	Effects of divorce	$\chi^2 = 0.710(0.400)$
Love	Cultural aspect	Effects of divorce	$\chi^2 = 15.259(0.000)$

Elopement	Cultural aspect	Effects of divorce	$\chi^2 = 0.296(0.586)$
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Association between cultural aspect and effects of divorce (controlling literacy)

The association of literate respondents on cultural causes and effects of divorce on women was found significant ($P < 0.05$) (Table 4). Moreover, a non-significant relationship was existed between the above variables which controlling literacy. The results indicated a non-spurious relationship in literate respondents' responses, while showed a spurious relationship in illiterate respondents' responses. Literate people can preserve the best ways of living while those who are not literate could make it difficult while miscalculating the effects on cultural grounds. For society family is must while for family proper marriage and its permanence is essential. Therefore literacy is a key factor for the restoration and preservation of family and discouraging divorce without any reason. UNESCO³³ report stated that decrease of illiteracy rate of the world of marginalization (cultural impacts or leaving one culture and not fully entered to the new culture i.e. marginalized people) increases in the midst of transition, with individuals brusquely (harshly) exposed to external influences, the risk of cultural disorder is apparent. Social problems such as alcoholism, divorce, suicide, neurosis, and juvenile delinquency are increasing. With this the marriage destabilization occurs.

Table 4: Association between cultural aspect and effects of divorce (controlling literacy)

Controlling variables	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Statistics
Literate	Cultural aspect	Effects of divorce	$\chi^2 = 9.247(0.002)$
Illiterate	Cultural aspect	Effects of divorce	$\chi^2 = 1.505(0.220)$

Conclusions and recommendations

The main objective of paper was the effects of cultural non adjustment divorced women in traditional societies of Malakand division, KP, Pakistan. The role of cultural effects was assessed upon the dependent variable (effects of divorce). The study

concluded with uni-variate, bi-variate and multivariate level findings that women as compensation, ugliness and social stigma to either spouse or no male child were some of the attributing factors to women divorce. Moreover, litigation between married couples, dis-likeness for living in patrilocal residence and sterility were the causes have strong association with effects of divorce. Types of marriage like arranged, love and elopement were other variable, influencing the effects of women in divorce. Love marriage had no acceptance in cultural dynamics of the study area. Moreover, at family level, love marriage had little recognition over arranged marriage, which is indicating a strong preference for arranged marriage over love or elopement which had brought miseries to women's stature in the study area. Controlling literacy, the study concluded that, illiterate people had no acceptance to divorce as a cultural endorsement amongst literates. In light of the above conclusions it is recommended to control the phenomena of early age marriages the relevant law, though exists, but need to be vibrated with letter and spirit. The special focus needs to be given to rise in literacy with conspicuous concentration on women's education. Allocations of resources within the greater ambit of the joint and extended families of the marrying couple could reduce the trends of breaking up amongst the newly married couple

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