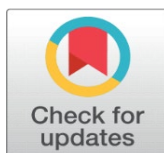


MARITAL DISSOLUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN FAMILIES: PARENTING CHALLENGES, INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

This research will observe the complex effect of marital dissolution on Indian families, which focuses on parenting challenging situations, interpersonal relationships, and person well-being. Using qualitative and quantitative studies, the research discovers the socio-cultural suggestions of divorce within the Indian context, highlighting each partner's and their children's reports. Special attention is given to legal frameworks such as the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) and Special Marriage Act (1954), identifying existing gaps and proposing improvements in support systems. Outcomes representation that post-divorce parenting in India is broadly shaped by societal judgment, regularly key to emotional and economic problems for unmarried mothers and fathers and creating difficult circumstances for children. Interpersonal relationships, particularly with extended families, are strained, contributing to social separation and stigma. In addition, the lack of social support combined with the economic insecurity of divorced women emphasizes the alarming gap in custodial and mental health services. The study calls for more comprehensive reforms at the criminal level, increased community support initiatives, and more active efforts to reduce divorce-related discrimination and foster familial integration post-divorce.

Keywords: Divorce, Parenting Challenges, Social Stigma, Indian Families, Legal Frameworks



1. INTRODUCTION

Divorce in India is far less common than in Western societies. However, it is becoming increasingly common due to socio-economic factors and changing cultural perceptions. Marriage, in an Indian's traditional way of life, is a sacred covenant which is to be honored, respected, and regarded as a lifelong commitment¹. It also brings to mind family honor, societal expectations, and even status in the community. For couples, marriage carries profound socio-cultural significance, often influencing the financial security of the entire family. This has been a societal framework supporting a low divorce rate. The stigma of divorce compels couples to undergo dissatisfied marriages instead of being socially ostracized. The landscape, however, is shifting. Economic independence among ladies, urbanisation, and more focus on men's or women's rights have empowered many to challenge traditional norms. Legal reforms such as the *Hindu Marriage Act (1955)* and *Special Marriage Act (1954)* have also made the process of legal separation more accessible². These modifications, coupled with evolving attitudes toward gender equality and personal freedom, have contributed to a constant upward push in divorce fees throughout city and rural settings.

¹ Thadathil, A., & Sriram, S. (2020). Divorce, families and adolescents in India: A review of research. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 61(1), 1-21.

² Menski, W., & Solanki, G. (2019). Hindu law: marriage. In *Routledge Handbook of Religious Laws* (pp. 263-278). Routledge.

Despite this shift, the societal judgment associated with divorce remains profound, specifically for women, who often face social exclusion and constrained assist. The implications of this stigma amplify past the couple, affecting kids, extended households, and network relationships. As divorce prices boom, knowing its socio-cultural effects and addressing the gaps in aid structures becomes important. This study is to find out those dimensions, specialising in parenting challenges, interpersonal relationships, and men and women within the precise cultural context of Indian society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, divorce is widely regarded as a significant life occasion that profoundly influences the dynamics of a relative's dynamics, emotional well-being, and societal relationships. Research from Western international locations, mainly America and Europe, highlights a growing attractiveness of marital dissolution as a private choice pushed by way of incompatibility, financial independence, and evolving gender roles³. In contrast, Indian society stays deeply rooted in conventional norms, where marriage is visible as a lifelong dedication and divorce is stigmatised. Studies imply that despite criminal advancements, which include the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) and Special Marriage Act (1954), the decision to separate continues to be fraught with societal judgment and familial pressure⁴. Scholarly works propose that divorce in India now not only affects the couple but also extends its repercussions to the prolonged own family of family and individuals due to the collectivist nature of Indian society. Family systems in India undergo substantial modifications after divorce, regularly resulting in fragmented relationships with the legal guidelines and community members. Research shows that unmarried-parent families face heightened monetary and social challenges, with women bearing the brunt of societal grievance⁵. Furthermore, custody disputes are commonplace, with Indian courts traditionally favouring maternal custody based on cultural biases. Landmark cases such as *Gith Hariharan vs. Reserve Bank of India (1999)*⁶ and *Roxann Sharma vs. Arun Sharma (2015)*⁷ have highlighted the evolving judicial stance on shared parenting and fathers' rights, yet societal acceptance remains limited.

Parenting demanding situations post-divorce are magnified in Indian society because of cultural expectancies of familial cohesion. Co-parenting is frequently strained using societal judgments and the prolonged circle of the extended family in infant-rearing decisions. Research indicates that children of divorced parents in India generally tend to experience emotional instability, social stigma, and educational demanding situations⁸. Furthermore, felony battles for custody and child support frequently extend emotional distress for both the father and the mother and the children. Indian regulation, whilst recognising joint custody in principle, nevertheless lacks sturdy mechanisms to enforce truthful co-parenting arrangements, regularly disadvantaging non-custodial mother and father. Interpersonal relationships after divorce regularly become worse, no longer the best among the couple, but also with other family members. Social isolation is a commonplace outcome, particularly for women who face more scrutiny and restricted social mobility post-divorce. Studies have stated that divorced women in India are frequently marginalised, limiting their opportunities for remarriage or community integration⁹. Community-driven stigma additionally affects intellectual fitness, contributing to tension, melancholy, and societal withdrawal.

Divorce's impact on a person's well-being is profound, affecting emotional, psychological, and economic balance. Women, especially, face heightened vulnerability because of societal expectations of monetary dependency. Studies display that divorced girls frequently battle to secure housing, stable earnings, and social acceptance. Economic challenges are exacerbated by the lack of institutional assistance, and prison proceedings for alimony and child support are frequently prolonged and contentious¹⁰. Policy implications in India reflect an evolving recognition of the need for

³Adaki, A. Y., & Wajim, J. (2024). Cultural Adaptation and Marriage Dissolution. *Vejoh-Veritas Journal of Humanities*, 5(1).

⁴Dam, D. (2024). Uniform Civil Code and Application of New Criminal Laws in India: An Analysis. *Issue 4 Int'l J. L. Mgmt. & Human.*, 7, 568.

⁵Patton Monterrosa, A. E. (2021). *Black Women's Perceptions of the Impact of Mass Incarceration on Their Romantic Relationships and Intimate Partner Violence* (Doctoral dissertation, UC Riverside).

⁶IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA W.P. Nos. 489 of 1995 and 1016 of 1991 Decided On: 17.02.1999 Githa Hariharan and Ors. Vs. Reserve Bank of India and Ors.

⁷Supreme Court of India, Digital Supreme Court Reports, The Official Law Report Fortnightly ISSN: 3048-4839 (Online)

⁸Thodukayil, F. S. O., Raseena, R. S., Palaniswamy, U., Panneer, S., & Parammal, S. (2024). Structural Violations of Mental Health Equity among Divorced Women: Challenges and Policy Implications. *Social Work & Society*, 22(1).

⁹Ottakkam Thodukayil, F. S., Palaniswamy, U., & Kunjumon, A. (2025). The Causes of Divorce and Its Effects on Women: A Systematic Review. *Marriage & Family Review*, 1-36.

¹⁰Murphy, J. C. (2019). Rethinking the role of courts in resolving family conflicts. *Cardozo J. Conflict Resol.*, 21, 625.

stronger legal and social support for divorced families. Key legal frameworks include the *Hindu Marriage Act (1955)*, *Special Marriage Act (1954)*, and recent amendments to ensure fair maintenance and custody settlements. However, significant gaps remain, particularly in enforcement and societal acceptance of legal rights. Prominent case laws such as *Danial Latifi vs. Union of India (2001)*¹¹ and *Shayara Bano vs. Union of India (2017)*¹² highlight judicial strides towards gender equality, yet practical challenges persist. Scholarly discourse emphasises the need for community-based support systems and enhanced legal mechanisms to address post-divorce vulnerabilities effectively.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs a combined-technique method, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather insights from divorced individuals across various socio-economic backgrounds in India. Data analysis identifies patterns in parenting challenges, social changes, and personal well-being. This study uses purposive sampling because participants have been selected specifically based on their involvement in divorce proceedings. The primary data sources for this research include judges, advocates, and family court personnel, as well as divorcees from Jaipur's family courts. The researcher's aim of collecting unique knowledge from specially qualified subjects makes purposive sampling an appropriate approach¹³. The research method enables investigators to obtain data that directly addresses issues and maintains its relevance to the field.

3.1. THE GOAL POPULATION CONSISTS OF

- Court judges from family divisions who managed divorce lawsuits over the past five years shape the target population.
- Lawyers specializing in divorce under the Hindu Marriage Act constitute advocates.
- The members encompass clients who filed for divorce in the course of the past two years due to the fact they're without delay familiar with divorce tactics.

Research participants will be decided on until information saturation approves their recruitment without introducing a recent difficulty count number. The research has considered the answers by selected participants who are mostly lawyers (30-40 members) who will undergo with Google questionnaire to gain diverse views.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION

The research will gather records through surveys as its most important series of methods. The semi-structured interview approach with key stakeholders will allow members to share their private studies concerning divorce techniques. The interviews will probe diverse subjects that affect parents for the duration of divorce, such as courtroom delays and emotional outcomes, in addition to parental dating troubles.

The established survey method will verify divorce method periods and frequency of delays and gadget interventions for family courts. The accumulated information will serve as the premise for studying the systemic problems in family courts throughout Jaipur through statistical evaluation.

3.3. DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers will use thematic analysis techniques to analyses qualitative data, including developing categories from key themes, including emotional distress, legal inefficiency, and parenting difficulties. According to research¹⁴, thematic analysis is essential to extract intricate, detailed information while studying divorce's emotional and social complexities. The statistical analysis of quantitative information will use descriptive statistics to measure the extent of

¹¹ SCR Citation: [2001] Supp. (3) S.C.R. 419, 2001 INSC 468

¹² [2017] 9 S.C.R. 797, 2017 INSC 785

¹³ Mweshi, G. K., & Sakyi, K. (2020). Application of sampling methods for the research design. *Archives of Business Review-Vol, 8*(11), 180-193.

¹⁴ Mohamadian, H., Rezaei, M., & Kordzanganeh, J. (2024). A comprehensive exploration of divorce factors: Insights from women, family counselors, and judges.

delay-related problems, together with procedural inefficiencies. Analysis of collected data will merge to present a complete understanding of divorce procedures and their effects on people.

This study also utilises secondary research to analyse the impact of marital dissolution on Indian families. Secondary research involves collecting and synthesising existing literature, legal case studies, government reports, and scholarly articles exploring divorce-related challenges in the Indian socio-cultural context. Key legal frameworks such as the **Hindu Marriage Act (1955)** and **Special Marriage Act (1954)** are examined to understand legislative provisions and their implications on custody, alimony, and property division.

The literature review draws from previous empirical studies that explore the effects of divorce on parenting dynamics, child well-being, and individual psychological health. Research findings from both Indian and global perspectives are compared to contextualise the unique cultural stigma associated with divorce in India. Secondary data from national family health surveys, legal archives, and sociological studies contribute to identifying gaps in policy implementation and community support systems. This structured analysis through secondary research enables identifying key challenges and proposing evidence-based recommendations for legal and social reform.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. ANALYSIS OF DIVORCE EFFECTS ON COUPLES

When two partners divorce, their combined emotional and psychological health deteriorates, while emotional distress appears as a primary immediate response. Multiple divorcees in Jaipur express a collection of emotions that include loss while undergoing or recovering from a divorce process. Researchers¹⁵ explains that such emotional responses become typical for individuals who lose marital connection and social identity. According to research¹⁶ Indian society views divorce as a societal scandal, which causes women to experience social isolation after divorce. The public perception of divorce compounds emotional suffering for women since people tend to blame and criticize them for changing marital expectations in Indian society.

Men typically find relief at the end of a troubled marriage, yet face guilt as well as financial strain and new responsibilities related to their family. Researcher¹⁷ points out that although men might find some relief, men face elevated emotional difficulty because of the costs of maintaining independent households and adjusting their family lives. Parents who are dealing with divorced lives feel extreme guilt when they have kids, since many adults from both sexes express fears about being suitable guardians after the divorce happens.

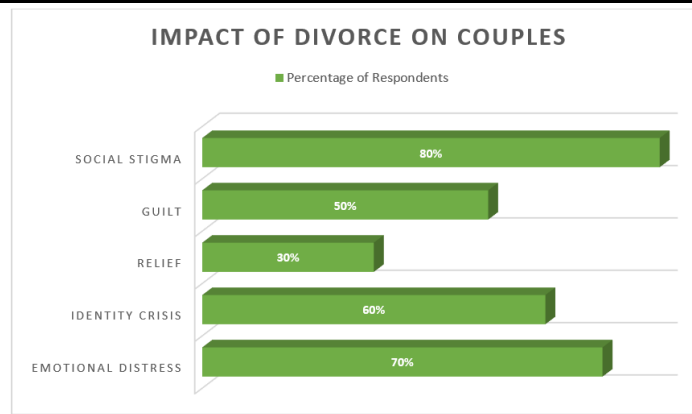
The psychological consequences of divorce go farther than the emotional response experienced at first. Indulging in long-term divorce stresses people while leading to depression and occasionally driving them to think about suicide in severe cases. The study participants talked about their struggles to develop strong self-esteem following divorce while they tried to create unique definitions separate from their former marital identities. According to study¹⁸, most people who divorce begin an identity reconstruction process, which needs multiple years to complete. The emotional and psychological rearrangement process proves most challenging to those who financially and emotionally rely on their partners.

¹⁵ Haslam, C., Steffens, N. K., Branscombe, N. R., Haslam, S. A., Cruwys, T., Lam, B. C., ... & Yang, J. (2019). The importance of social groups for retirement adjustment: Evidence, application, and policy implications of the social identity model of identity change. *Social issues and policy review*, 13(1), 93-124.

¹⁶ Chakrabarti, A., Rahman, K. M., & Ghosh, S. (2022). Of Marriage, Divorce and Criminalization: Reflections on the Triple Talaq Judgement in India. *Journal of Legal Anthropology*, 6(1), 24-48.

¹⁷ Reeves, R. V. (2022). *Of boys and men: Why the modern male is struggling, why it matters, and what to do about it*. Brookings Institution Press.

¹⁸ Harris, S. M., Fenske, S. R., Baer, S., Dick, M., Katovich, J., Osterbauer, M., ... & Roberts, K. R. (2022). The Impact of Identity on Divorce Decision-Making: A Grounded Theory Study. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 63(6), 464-481.



Graph 1: Impact of Divorce on Couples (Emotional and Psychological Effects)
(Source: Google forms survey)

The Bar Chart demonstrates that emotional distress and identity crisis affect many people, yet social stigma impacts women extensively, therefore requiring societal changes in divorce practices.

5. IMPACT ON PARENTING

Child custody arrangements, along with co-parenting policies and child emotional stability, emerge as the core impacts that divorce creates for parents. Survey results show that dispute-related divorces between parents increase their conflict levels, which leads to unstable conditions for their children. According to study¹⁹, the breakdown of family structure causes children to feel multiple emotions, including anxiety and sadness, with confusion included. Many divorced parents, along with fathers, put their children's meaningful bonding at the forefront of their main concerns. Double the number of parents viewed their struggle with joint custody arrangements as their main concern, according to two separate studies.

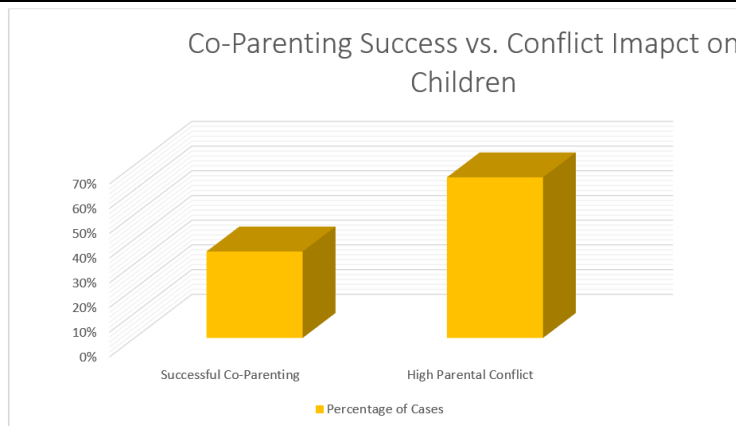
The study also found that when parents split up, children face attachment problems, especially when one parent fails to participate in child development. According to Saxena (2022), emotional distress in children reaches peak levels when parents fail to collaborate, thus creating a situation of separation from one parental figure. Research participants observed how maternal alienation of children from fathers resulted in enduring emotional issues for the children. Men experienced challenges in sustaining regular contact with their children, particularly when the court gave the mother full control of custodial rights. Researcher stated that divorce parents succeed in co-parenting through their combined cooperation and transparent communication practices²⁰.

The outcomes for children involved in co-parenting relationships that incorporated respect and cooperation reached substantial positive levels. When divorced couples used family court mediators and counsellors to build good relationships, their emotional problems decreased for parents, along with their children. The degree of post-divorce cooperation between parents is the leading factor that determines child well-being²¹. Children face enduring psychological issues when parents maintain intense conflicts, specifically about custody arrangements.

¹⁹ Mphaphuli, L. K. (2023). The impact of dysfunctional families on the mental health of children. In *Parenting in Modern Societies*. IntechOpen.

²⁰ Wan, A., Abu Bakar, Z. A., & Wan, P. M. (2025). From Single Motherhood to Co-parenthood: The Islamic Perspective on Amicable Divorce, Co-parenting, and Post-Divorce Harmony. In *Muslim Women's Lived Experiences and Intersectional Identities: A Global Perspective* (pp. 239-258). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

²¹ Ferraro, A. J., Petren, R. E., & Pasley, K. (2019). Patterns of parental interactions after divorce and individual well-being. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28, 1413-1424.



Graph 2: Co-Parenting Success vs. Conflict Impact on Children

(Source: Google forms survey)

The Graph signifies that co-parenting poses significant difficulties with a strong emphasis on parental conflicts. A successful co-parenting situation depends on effective communication, while parents need to commit to conflict reduction, but these conditions are frequently impossible after divorce ends.

6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this research is primarily targeted round information on the multifaceted impact of marital dissolution on Indian households. It comprehensively explores three critical dimensions: parenting demanding situations, interpersonal relationships, and person well-being. Given the precise socio-cultural fabric of India, where marriage is traditionally considered a lifelong dedication, the results of divorce are profound and amplify far beyond the immediately couple, affecting youngsters, the extended family of relatives, and network relationships.

7. PARENTING CHALLENGES

One of the number one regions of consciousness is the good-sized challenges confronted by mothers and fathers post-divorce, specifically within the Indian context. Custody battles are frequently extended and complex because of societal biases and criminal constraints. Indian courts have traditionally favoured maternal custody, as observed in landmark instances like *Gith Hariharan vs. Reserve Bank of India (1999)* and *Roxann Sharma vs. Arun Sharma (2015)*. This analysis focuses on the goals to comprehend the impacts that these criminal scaffolding structures have on the parenting, economic, and psychosocial health of custodial and non-custodial parents. It also looks at how societal stigma compounds the problems surrounding parenting and the psychological and emotional well-being of children. It also looks at co-parenting and the role of extended families in child-rearing after divorce in the context of post-separation family life with a view towards more comprehensive and supportive community-based frameworks.

7.1. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL STIGMA

The study additionally delves into how divorce reshapes interpersonal relationships within the circle of relatives and the broader network. Indian society's deep-rooted cultural expectations regularly bring about social isolation and stigmatisation of divorced people, particularly girls. This research examines how relationships with prolonged own family individuals are strained, affecting not only the divorced couple but also youngsters who are stuck among conflicting familial expectancies. Community-pushed stigma contributes to mental health challenges, restricting opportunities for social reintegration and remarriage. They have a look at targets to focus on those relational shifts and recommend pathways to lessen societal prejudice via policy intervention and community recognition.

7.2. INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING

Marital dissolution notably affects a person's well-being, impacting emotional, psychological, and economic balance. The research article looks at the serious vulnerabilities faced by divorced women in India, who are regularly financially depending on their spouses. It also explores the emotional toll of divorce, which is heightened by using societal judgment and limited institutional help. Prolonged prison battles for alimony, property disputes, and child support further compound the misery of divorced individuals. By studying the emotional and psychological adjustments required to rebuild self-identification and monetary independence post-divorce, the study ambitions to underscore the need for mental health support and economic rehabilitation programs.

7.3. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

The scope of this research also includes a crucial evaluation of present legal frameworks governing divorce in India, basically the *Hindu Marriage Act (1955)* and the *Special Marriage Act (1954)*. The studies identify significant gaps in felony safety, especially concerning custody rights, monetary support for unmarried parents, and network-based help. Through the lens of outstanding case legal guidelines, along with *DanialLatifi vs. Union of India (2001)* and *ShayaraBano vs. Union of India (2017)*,

The research evaluates judicial responses to divorce and gender equality. Recommendations for legal reform are proposed, geared in the direction of ensuring fairer custody resolutions, monetary protection, and intellectual health services for divorced people. Overall, the scope of this has a look at is expansive, focusing no longer best on the prison and economic ramifications of divorce however also on its social and emotional outcomes. By situating the analysis in the socio-cultural context of India, the look at gives a nuanced expertise of the way marital dissolution affects circle of relative's systems, relationships, and character well-being. The results are meant to update policymakers, legal practitioners, and social businesses about the necessity for more powerful guide organisations and prison improvements to alleviate the adverse significances of divorce on Indian family circle.

8. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the profound effect of marital dissolution on Indian households, emphasizing the interweaved challenges of parenting, interpersonal relationships, and character. Notwithstanding custodial frameworks like the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) and Special Marriage Act (1954), collective stigma maintains to persuade post-divorce reports, especially for girls and youngsters. Custody disagreements, monetary vulnerabilities, and social isolation are expected, highlighting the need for stronger jail protections and network support mechanisms. The study underlines the significance of reforming legal rules to ensure honest custody arrangements, economic safety for single mother and father, and an intellectual health manual. Additionally, fostering community popularity can help reduce stigma and promote healthy, stable circle of relatives. Addressing those problems holistically can contribute to greater equitable consequences for divorced people and their children, improving their potential to reconstruct their lives with self-possession and equilibrium.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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