

Pre and Post Divorce Experiences of Men.....

Running Head: PRE AND POST DIVORCE EXPERIENCES OF MEN....

Pre and Post-divorce Experience of Men Who have Taken Child Custody in Addis Ababa

Afomia Debebe

A Thesis Submitted to the school of social work, Addis Ababa University

In partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Social Work

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Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for all my success in life, for giving me spiritual strength and courage and helping me to do what I believe in. And second, I would like to thank my family, for their unconditional love and unlimited support.

I am indebted to Dr. wassie Kebede, my advisor. He has supported me in every way possible, guiding me to the right directions, appreciating my performance and giving me relevant feedback on time. Without his support, finalizing this work would have been difficult. I would also like to thank Ato Biruk Tilahun for all the support he extended to me in identifying research participants and in the process of data collection. And last but not least, I would like to forward my sincere thanks to all the participants for providing me with ample information about their lived experiences and for making the research possible.

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to understand how divorced men perceive and explain their pre and post-divorce family life experiences. The methodology followed is qualitative research

with specific method of phenomenology that helped the researcher to understand the lived experience of research participants. The participants have been purposively selected from the concluded divorce cases at Lideta Supreme Court. Data has been gathered through face-to-face in-depth interview and analyzed by applying a rigorous data analysis procedure. The findings revealed that, the divorced men have experienced social, economic, emotional, and psychological problems. After the divorce, adjustment to the new status, raising children, social participation, assuming new role in the family have been found to be among the major challenging experience of participants. Men had no easy life after divorce and that has to be the focus of research and program intervention. The coping mechanisms used included personal determination to work hard and overcome the problems, religion and hope about the future, mobilizing support from the environment, optimism about making things better for the children, and the belief and commitment that they can raise the children alone. Based on the findings, it has been able to forward recommendations that professional social work practice is needed at micro and mezzo levels apart from establishing a policy direction at macro level that guides social work practice down the road. Family stability and reduction of divorce could be promoted by wider community awareness and family education programs at the three levels of social work intervention. Further research with a wider scope and coverage should also be conducted on this area in order to have a better understanding about the issue and help families avoid divorce or to help families cope with the impact of divorce and see a better society.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Universally, divorce is believed to be a social problem that alters the normal structural functioning of a family system. Since it's a global problem, it has grasped the attention of different researchers from different backgrounds all over the world. Even though its definition varies with contextual differences, in most studies, it is defined as, the dissolution of marriage (Walsh, 1993; Beaman, 2005; and Amato, 2003).

The unique feature of divorce is that, it not only affects the husband and wife but also the family as a whole (Harkonen, 2013). Since ancient times, divorce has been practiced in many cultures and societies but it was not accepted by many people as it appears in the contemporary world. In the present time, its magnitude has increased as a result of many reasons. Some reasons may be related to the fact that people have started to believe that divorce is normal and has to be accepted as a solution to end dysfunctional marriage. In addition, divorce is being accepted by the law in almost all countries, and women have secured the right to earn their own income which makes them to be financially secured and they no longer need to depend on men (Ahrons, 2006).

Studies conducted in different countries revealed that, the outcome of divorce has been found to have an impact on all members of the family but with more emphasis on women and children considering their vulnerability to multiple situations in society (Fagan & Churchill, 2012). Ethiopia is no exception from the rest of the world, particularly the developing countries regarding to the disadvantaged position of women. Since women have lived for many years deprived of their rights in terms of education, social participation, employment, and the like, they are believed to be more affected by the divorce compared to men. This might have motivated different researchers to conduct a study on women and children to learn about their post-divorce experiences.

The situation is not, however, the same for divorced men with regards to attracting researchers' probably because of the position they hold in society compared to women. Thus, there is little attention given to produce knowledge on men's post-divorce experience. This has captured my attention and motivated me to conduct an exploratory research in order to understand how men experience divorce and how it affects their parental responsibility.

Statement of the Problem

Since antiquity, the concept of family has existed, but how it is defined has continued to change along with the continuously changing environment and the development of society. From leading life as hunter and gatherer, to residing in one area and by marital ties, people began to live under one roof to form a family, and then a group of families expanded to form a tribe, a village, and a society at large. This is what makes a family to be called traditionally as a base for the survival of a society, despite going through change processes throughout human history (Robertson, 1986; Seccombe & Warner, 2004). Marriage is a stepping stone for forming a family. But, be it customary or civil, marriage by itself does not guarantee happy endings because internal and external factors contribute for couple's disagreement that will lead to divorce.

Divorce is a common term that we hear in our daily lives without the exception of geographic location, culture, society, religion, and governing system which makes it a global phenomenon. It is a process that takes place after marriage and family is formed through the ceremony of marriage (civil or customary). Beaman (2005), has studied about the history of divorce, the reason for divorce, and its impact on children in the United States of America (U.S.A) and has found that, in the U.S.A people started to practice divorce since 1600's, in the colonial era. As Doherty (2002), stated, when people feel their marriage is not satisfactory, they

will try alternative options either to improve their marriage or end it by considering divorce as a solution. Walsh (1993), and Landucci (2008), have found that, in the 1970's and early 1980's, the highest divorce rates were recorded in the history of U.S.A. Even though we cannot generalize to other parts of the world, the above finding show how the practice of divorce goes back in time and has been a concern starting from the earliest times and has continued in the contemporary world as well.

The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology (2007), defines divorce as a termination of marriage. Most scholar's define divorce as a dissolution of marriage (Beaman, 2005; Ahrons, 2006; Kraynak, 2006; & Harkonen, 2013). Divorce could be held officially under the court order or informally through traditional practices. Not all process of marriage dissolutions are similar, it differs in accordance with one's country' law and cultural practices. Marriage couples sometimes stay separated temporarily, but if the separation becomes permanent, it could also be called divorce. Knowing the risk factors for divorce, even though it may or may not avoid divorce, temporary separation will help couples as a precaution to understand their problems.

Doherty (2005), and Rodrigues, Hall, and Fincham (2004), have found some risk factors for divorce: marriage at young age, less education, less income, premarital cohabitation, premarital childbearing and pregnancy, no religious affiliation, parental divorce, and feeling of insecurity. Multiple pushing factors influence couples to end their marriage. Even though the reason of divorce for one couple differs from the other, common problems are found that become reasons for divorce. Wolcott and Hughes (1999), have found that the major reason for marriage breakdown or for divorced among Australians are, domestic violence towards spouse or children, and the interference of in-laws. Lack of common interest, sexual incompatibility, financial instability, substance abuse, lack of communication skills and misunderstanding are other causal

factors contributing for divorce. Supporting this idea, Amato and Preuiti (2003), have also studied about the reasons for divorce in the U.S.A and have found that, people's specific reasons for divorce varies in relation to gender, social class, the life course, and adjustment. There are different reasons for getting a divorce and the following were mentioned by most researchers, infidelity, growing apart, substance abuse, and incompatibility.

Rediet (2008), has studied about the relationship of early marriage and divorce in Ethiopia, specifically in Amhara region and found that, lack of education, abuse, and lack of communication skills and misunderstanding are found to be the major reasons for divorce. Financial instability and extra-marital sexual engagement of the husband are also other factors. Culturally, parents used to arrange marriage for their children at younger age as well as highly interfere in the ending of their children's marriage until they started to be aware of its negative impact on their children. Various scholar's such as, Doherty (2005), Wolcott and Hughes (1999), and Amato and Preuiti (2003), in their study reports have confirmed that, the reasons for divorce are contextual in different cultures and societies but some common reasons are found such as, infidelity, abuse, and the interference of in-laws.

Divorce is a social problem that prevails without the limit of geographic boundary, cultural diversity, religious belief system, and has existed since early times. It's not a problem that only affects the husband and wife but also the whole people around them including their children, the in-laws, and the society as whole. Divorce disrupts the normal functioning of the whole family system even if the result of divorce may bring positive or negative outcomes for the couple. Fagan and Churchill (2012), stated that, divorce will not only cause an irreparable harm to all involved, but it will also damage the society as well. The impact of divorce could also extend to intergeneration. As Wijckmans and Bavel's (2010), finding show, it is customary to

witness intergenerational family support and role exchange as cultural necessity and expression of affection. Divorce tends to weaken the supportive ties between the parents and the adult-child generation. Supporting this idea, Hewitt, Skribs, and Weatern (2005), have found that, there is a high possibility for children of divorced parents to get divorced when they get married and this shows the intergenerational transmission of divorce effect. Jonsson, Niardvik, Olafsdottir and Gretarsson (2000), have found that, children of divorced parents show the following behaviors as they get older; become sexually active at younger age, use substance abuse, delay to have family of their own, become socially, emotionally, and psychologically challenged, experience, academic failure, and display behavior that is socially unacceptable.

Concerning the impact of divorce on family members, women and children are considered as primary victims of the problem (Fagan & Churchill, 2012; Giolito & Delpiano, 2008; Wallwe & Peters, 2007). The level of the impact of divorce on women or children will depend on different circumstantial factors such as, gender, age at the time of divorce, the socio-economic status of the custodial household, race, religion, remarriage, environmental changes, support system, and others (Canada Department of Justice, 1997). It will not be possible to predict how and to what extent any particular child will be affected by divorce as circumstances change in due time and place. But, the above are found to be the major factors that will influence the level of adjustment for children and women in the post-divorce situation.

Supporting the above idea, Kelly (2000), and Landucci (2008), stated that, children of divorced parents may have greater risk of adjusting in areas of social relationships, education, self-concept, behavior, and psychological well-being. Parents will face anxiety, exhaustion, and stress after the divorce resulting in the decline of the assistance they give to their children in terms of affections, language stimulation, academic support, emotional support, financial

assistance, and support in social maturity. Apart from that, divorced mothers tend to discipline their children more harshly, and will become less communicative and affectionate (Fagan & Churchill, 2012). Delpiano and Giolito (2008), have found that, compared to men, women will struggle more in terms of economic stability after divorce and they will find it very difficult to support their children and so, some mothers will even give their children for institutional care.

In Ethiopia, it is generally presumed that, the mother would be the primary care taker after the divorce and the father has a minor role in rearing children. Without taking in to consideration about the psychological functioning of the parents, the quality of parenting, the child's preference, and the history and nature of parent-child relationship, people believe that the best interest for the child is to live with the mother. Particularly in our country, due to cultural influence, women's major role is believed to be a mother and care giver. Therefore, researchers tend to focus their attention on women and children when studying about divorce (Rediet, 2008 & Serkalem, 2006). Hence to my knowledge, there is no study conducted in Addis Ababa to learn about the experiences of divorced men who are primary care takers of their own children. The absence of studies on the experience of divorced men may have led us to miss empirical data-based knowledge that informs policy and the design of social work intervention with families.

The above statements inform the existing knowledge gap about divorced men's experience. Therefore, this study suggests how essential it is to understand the effect of divorce not only from women's but also from men's perspective. Unless systematic research is done, we cannot totally relay on culture, myth, or other knowledge bases and assume that divorced men will not face problems as divorced women. This is why I have become interested and conducted a study on the lived experience of divorced men and their child rearing experience from their

own perspective.

Objective of the study

General Objective

- The overall objective of the research is to understand how divorced men who have assumed the responsibility of child custody perceive and explain the pre and post-divorce experience of family life.

Specific objectives

- To understand how divorced men who are rearing their children describe their lived experience regarding to the psychological, social, and economic effects of divorce and pre-divorce family relationships.
- To understand the challenges of divorced men in rearing their children after divorce.
- To identify post divorce coping mechanisms of divorced men in rearing children and managing family life.

Significance of the Study

This study is insightful in terms of shedding light on identifying how divorce is experienced and interpreted by men who are taking care of their children. Since the study is conducted using qualitative design, the divorced men have narrated their stories and interpreted their lives themselves. This will provide credible information to the readers; academicians and practitioners and it will also gives an insight for those who are interested to engage in further research on the subject matter. As divorce is among the growing problems of families in our society, the result of the study can serve as an input to design and strengthen intervention programs that addresses children and families in line with the draft social protection policy

(SPP). Apart from that, it will generate knowledge that is helpful for contextualizing social work intervention with families in Addis Ababa.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Every marriage has its own distinct quality that separates it from the rest but may share common characteristics by forming a family at the end. Family is the basic unit of society and divorce is one of the many reasons that affect its normal functioning. When we talk about divorce or permanent separation, we have to take in-to account both the nature of the marriage as an institution within a given social, cultural, and religious contexts as well as the meaning it gives for the people involved (Wolcott & Hughes, 1999). Not all marriages have happy endings because every individual have a unique life experience that shapes the persons attitude daily. This will eventually opens up an opportunity for disagreement in the marriage which leads to divorce.

In contemporary world, most societies see divorce as a solution for unhappy and unfulfilling marriage while divorce disrupts the fundamental unit of society (Askalemariam & Minwagaw, 2013). People living in unhappy marriage may tend to compromise their unhappiness for the sake of their children but at the end, will fulfill their own interest rather than to stay committed and work out their marriage. The emotional processing in getting a divorce and the decision making process may take longer period because the life after the divorce will change the lives of the divorcees. Some people may benefit from the divorce, some may be affected for a short period of time and others may not recover, at all, from the effects of divorce.

Marriage and Family

Why do people get married?

In former societies where culture used to have a major influence in the lives of people, marriage was considered as an act that occurs between a man and a woman. But later in time, along with civilization and individualism, the concept of marriage has began to change from being an instrumental one which is grounded in the belief of the societies, to a more emotional or affective one that takes place in private (Furtado, Marcen, & Sevilla-Sanz, 2010). In these developed and developing societies, marriage is been held out of the ordinary such like, between same sexes. But, in this particular study, I am only focusing on heterosexual marriage.

As described by Askalemariam and Minwagaw (2013), marriage is defined as a union between people that unites them sexually, socially, and economically that is relatively consistent over time and that gives each person certain agreed up on right. According to the Kenya marriage Act (2014), marriage is defined as a voluntary union between a man and a woman whether in a monogamous or polygamous union where both parties have equal rights and obligations at the time of marriage, during the marriage, and at the dissolution of the marriage. The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology defines marriage as a way of identifying some particular kinds of ties between two, sometimes more, individuals and is always something more than the characteristics of the individual who compose it.

Marriage will not necessarily be important in the same way across different societies or different individuals within these societies even though it is generally considered as a stepping stone to forming a family, for securing their future and wanting stability in their lives. In every society, it is generally assumed that, the major motivating factor for people to get married is because they love each other but love is not the only reason that inspires people to get married. According to Doherty (2002), Rodrigues, Hall, and Fincham (2004), people may get married due to various circumstantial factors such as for financial stability, because of unplanned pregnancy,

and for the sake of their parents happiness. This idea is also supported by Askalemariam and Minwagaw (2013), stating that people may get married to legitimize and sanctify their relationship, to get citizenship, because of religious factors and some may get abducted and forcefully marry which in our country is currently seen as a harmful tradition. This shows that, even though it is generally assumed that people get married mainly because of love, other major motivating factors also exist in terms of improving social status, financial stability and extension of wealth, power, and the like.

According to Earnest (2003), there are six types of marriage; (a) the loving marriage: couples love each other, communicate directly with respect, enjoy their togetherness and success;- (b) the antagonistic marriage: couples refer to each other as an object, they are pessimist about the rewards of marriage and stay married out of exhaustion and fear of making another relationship;- (c) the friendly marriage: it is mostly done among people of high income, couples stay married because it is convenient and the marriage has social, economic and sexual advantages;- (d) the static marriage: couples are relatively compatible and need each other, may doubt the marriage but suppress their discontent and assume a defined role for each other and consistently try to maintain the behavior appropriate to that role;- (e) the cyclical marriage: mostly they are strongly tempered and passionate individuals who seek excitement in the intensity of marital battle, grow in love but at a fair price of personal distress because they will go through a period of fighting and argument but they will make up by understanding each other's vulnerabilities;- and (f) the romantic marriage: this is the classical love-at-first-sight union, full of happiness but shortly after the honeymoon, one will blame the other for having fooled him/her in to the marriage. According to the Transitional Government of Ethiopia Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission (1991), there are six forms of marriage in

Ethiopia; ceremonial marriage, religious marriage, civil marriage, marriage preceded by the provision of labor, paid labor marriage, and marriage by abduction. And according to the Revised Family Code of Ethiopia marriage could take the following forms; marriage concluded before an officer of civil status, religious marriage, marriage according to custom, and marriage celebrated abroad. Hence, abduction is not acknowledged by the code as a form of marriage rather it is considered illegal act.

People may find themselves in one or more of the above types of marriages. And when a researcher focuses on divorce and its causal factors and impacts, the type of marriage that people are in could be seen as one contributing factor. As Earnest (2003) stated, the way a husband and wife communicate, their role and power in their house, as well as how they treat each other and how one thinks of the other, can somehow show what kind of marriage they are in and could also determine what might result from such kind of marriage.

Religion

For many people who have strong ties to a personal faith and a religious group, marriage often has a sacred component. For them, marriage is not just a vow with your spouse, but also a covenant with God. Because couples can feel like God is a part of their union, approving it and sanctifying it, when these marriages dissolve, feelings of spiritual failure, guilt, and a broken relationship with God sometimes arise. This is even stronger when individuals feel responsible for the breakup of a marital union. Divorcing individuals may therefore feel cut off from a dimension of their life that gave them access to sacred, spiritual feelings. Some will even go so far as to feel that they deserve to be cut off from God or their religious friends, feeling that they were not as good or loving or forgiving or patient as they should have been. This kind of sacred loss is linked to higher rates of depression.

When one spouse feels that the other has purposely violated sacred covenants, their marriage, which was once regarded as sacred, may now seem desecrated—something which was precious to them is now “dirty” and defiled—and this leads to even greater anger compared to other kinds of loss. Sometimes, those with religious backgrounds may feel that their spouse could have violated such a sacred thing only if he or she were under the influence of evil forces. This outlook can cause a parent to guard the children from the ex-spouse, and has potential for long-lasting conflict after the divorce is over. Spouses with strong religious convictions also may be vulnerable to “using” God in a manipulative way in their conflicts. They may try to convince the other spouse that God is on their side. Sometimes spouses may seek for help from God in prayer but avoid directly communicating with each other.

In many cases, adults (and children) end up leaving or switching their religious group as a consequence of divorce. Some may feel embarrassment or resentment; others may feel that they are spiritual failures or outcasts. They may feel that they either deserve to be cut off or are not worthy to participate in worship services. Many families move to different neighbourhoods or cities with a divorce, which may necessitate switching familiar congregations. But for many, religious beliefs and activities can be a powerful support to help families deal with the challenges that they are facing.

As the above studies show, most research reports cover the impact of divorce and they have found that, compared to men, women and children are found to be more affected by the negative consequences of divorce. Nielsen (1999), has stated that, much less attention has been given to divorced fathers and there is a misconception that after divorce, fathers get most if not everything of the asset and mothers are leaved with the children with little asset, and even the children will develop negative views of their father. This is why it is very essential to do a scientific research

on the lived experience of divorced men and their child rearing practice in order to understand how they will be impacted by this alarmingly growing social problem.

Family and its Importance

The existence of different forms of families across time and cultures makes it challenging to give one precise definition to what family is and what it constitutes. Despite its complex concept, traditionally family is defined as a husband, wife and their children (Smith, Hamon, Ingoldsby, & Miller, 2009). The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology defines family as an adaptive system which takes responsibility for a particular range of tasks; reproduction, socialization, and maintenance of members and exercise social control and transmission of culture. The U.S. census bureau defines family as two or more people living together who are related by birth, marriage, affection, and/ or adoption.

Smith, Hamon, Ingoldsby, and Miller (2009), have identified three broad types of families which are, however, commonly stated by many researchers for their advantage of bringing diverse categories into common terrains. They include: (a) open family: family members are bound by love and respect, there is flexibility and consensus and the right of the family members is protected and interaction with outsiders is permitted, (b) random family: there is almost no boundaries, no rules exist and members are seen as disengaged and social problem is common, and (c) closed family: family members are overly involved in each other's lives, there is limited interaction with outsiders, individual identities are not allowed and no privacy which may cause emotional illness.

The importance of families is discussed, in many literatures, in view of their function to individual members and the society at large. White (2009), has stated that, family has four different essential functions; (a) sexual: sexual behavior is understood as socially acceptable and

preferable for staying healthy, (b), reproduction: children born within families are socially preferred and privileged in terms of getting acceptance, inheritance, and the like, (c) socialization: within the family system, there are rules, boundaries, roles, power difference and in addition to that, children will grow up learning adult tasks and adopt the values appropriate by their particular culture, and (d) economic: refers to the division of labor by gender, division of responsibilities according to their capacity.

Traditionally, family was perceived as constituting a husband and wife and their biological child. But in contemporary world, people adopt a child and see him/her as a family member, people of the same sex get married and either use a surrogate mother and have a child, and some may have a child without getting married, some live with extended families and relatives as well as people who they are not related with blood but still, they call them family. Thus, such structural changes have impacted the conceptualization of families in modern societies. The essential functions identified by White above, that have been considered instrumental for maintaining the family system and continuation of society throughout generations are now contested with the emergence of other institutions that assumed the tasks of the family in modern society and the continuous change of the family structure. So, for this particular study, a family is understood to constitute a man and woman who are recognized as husband and wife by means of legal, customary, or religious laws and have biological or adopted children of their own.

Family, as it is the fundamental unit of society, has a social, economic, and political functions. Socially, it is the first place that teaches children about how to adapt with their environment, the values, and norms of the society, what is accepted by the society and what is forbidden and seen as deviant behavior. Economically, family's financial earnings and

employment in different sectors contributed to the growth of a society, and in general to one's country, and politically, marriage joins two different families and serve as a way of ensuring intergenerational continuity (Walsh, 1999).

In Ethiopia, there are about 11million families and the majority is believed to be healthy (Habtamu, 1999). Healthy family is characterized as follows; which does well for the society, which supports the family members economically and which tries to fulfill the needs of the family members, which raise the children well and according to their culture, which lives by respecting the law of the land as well as norms and values of the society, where the family members respect one another and communicate openly and support one another, where there is some kind of religious belief and where the members are in some way relevant for the society, and where there is a unforced and agreed up on sexual relation between the husband and wife (Habtamu, 1999).

Having defined the family, at least as applied in this research, and understood its common functions, some of which are now taken away by social institutions such as education, it is important to learn about the factors that disturb family's normal functioning and relegate it to eventual divorce. Previous studies as shortly presented in the introduction part have produced explanations about the dissolution of marriage. Quite many factors were attributed for married couples to end up in divorce irrespective of the length of time lived in a legally or traditionally bound by union as husband and wife. Before going in to further exploration of literature about the factors affecting the family, let us see what divorce is all about.

What do we understand about divorce?

The Dictionary definition states divorce as "*the legal dissolution of a marriage relation*" (Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary, 2007).

Divorce is a social problem that does not only affect the husband and the wife but also all the people around them either directly or indirectly. It is not something that occurs when some marital problem occurs rather it is a process of problematic events that occurs during the marital relation leading to a perceived solution, the solution be the divorce. Since divorce is a process, it even continues to affect the intergenerational family system.

Kiernan and Mueller (1998), have found that divorce has six phases; (a) Emotional divorce: the positive feeling of love and affection are replaced by feeling of anger and resentment and betrayal and the characteristic that attracted the couples to each other will fade away. (b) Legal divorce: involved the legal process and documentations that states the couples are no longer married. (c) Economic divorce: when it comes to money and property that the couples accumulated during the marriage, the emotions will become high and usually they cannot negotiate a fair property and asset settlement so the court will be involved to settle the matter. (d) Co-parental divorce: this deals with custody, single-parent homes and visitations and is a very emotional process. Habitually, women are given the children automatically but currently, the court decides who is suitable for the best interest of the child. (e) Community divorce: may involve changing living environment, friends, work, and their previous socialization. And (f) Psychic divorce: refers to the divorced person's living adjustment, which is alone, in terms of decision making in their daily activities.

Some of the phases may take several years to complete and some people pass through all the phases while others struggle and never adjust to pass some phases. And if children are involved, they will pass through the stages along with their parents.

Reasons for getting a divorce

As there are different reasons for people to get married, so are there multiple grounds for

them to get a divorce. Contemporary marriages and formation of a family is not as it used to be in the past generations because it is now maintained in an environment where there is a possibility for greater choices. That is, as it was decades ago, in most communities, divorce is no longer seen as a taboo or divorcee people will no longer be victims to social stigma and even in most developed societies, women who divorce are seen as empowered and self-reliant (Reniers, 2003). In contemporary society, where the right of women is guaranteed, women have started to earn income for themselves, experience independence and become freed from depending on their husband. Particularly in our country, a similar trend is taking place as women have started to be free from the deeply rooted social belief that men are providers and women are care givers so, they started formal education, began to decide on their lives. Studies show, in the United States, that mostly women initiate the separation themselves as they give more attention to the relationship they are in and monitor their interaction closely. So, they will become more aware of problems sooner and raise a discussion topic with their partners but mostly men tend to be reactive and even avoid discussions and as a last resort, the women will initiate the divorce (Kiernan & Mueller, 1998). This shows that, the dissolution of marriage is a process, a series of events and behavior that is showed by one or both of spouses through some period of marital life.

Doherty (2002), has found some risk factors that help married couples understand the reasons for their disagreement which help the couples improve or end the marriage. That is, people who marry at young age will lack maturity in making marriage decisions and facing challenges, illiteracy will contribute for disagreement in marriage, low income will increase tension and stress, premarital childbearing and pregnancy prior to marriage will affect future commitment for one another, and not having religious affiliation, parental divorce, and feeling of insecurity about one's self-worthiness are also additional factors. Seccombe and Warner (2004)

and Earnest (2003), have also stated that, internal or external factors could contribute to marriage dissolution such as, lack of emotional support, unemployment (structural) or pressure from friends and in-laws.

Multiple perspectives have been raised in previous studies about the reasons for peoples divorce one of which is women's empowerment and proactive evaluation of the relationship with their partners (Kiernan & Mueller, 1998) or the risk factors illuminated by Doherty can be taken depending up on circumstances. However, despite sharing similarities, there is no one blue print that can be attributed to all cultures because not all divorced people experience similar causal factors that led to the dissolution of their marriage. It is also viewed that, people's reason for divorcing could be seen at micro level as well as at structural/ macro level (Amato & Previti 2003). The married couples could be influenced by their own personal insecurity or the current structure may fail the couples to stay married. That is, the primary reason be poverty, at macro level, unemployment in once country may increase, job payment and the living condition may not balance, the instability of demand and supply, and the like. In addition, factors such as age at marriage, longitude of the marriage and the presence of the number of children also highly matters in getting a divorce.

According to Amato and Previti (2003), people's specific reasons for divorcing varied with gender, social class, and life course variables. They have found that, problem with financial instability will irritate the couples and will eventually decrease their emotional support for one another; lack of communication will cause the couples not to share similar interests and values in life and increase the tendency of being self-centeredness; and early marriage is also a factor due to the couples psychological immaturity and economic instability and having no sense of family and difficulty in settling down. Supporting this idea, Wolcott and Hughes (1999), have found

that poor communication, lose of love and incompatibility, infidelity, mental illness or emotional problems, role conflict between the man and the women, and the personality traits of the couple are some causal factors. Marital dissolution will be highest when the spouses have opportunities for developing alternative relationships. The couples will begin to define certain behavior as problems when they start to give up on their marriages and want a break up. There are multiple factors that motivate married people to get a divorce and different researchers studied the causes from diverse perspectives but their findings show there are commonalities of factors that cause divorce. Stewart and Brentano (2006) and Doherty (2002), also found that substance abuse, lack of preparation for marriage, loss of interest in each other, the life history of the individual, financial independence of women, and domestic violence, add up to the above findings.

Adegoke (2010) has found that in Nigeria, the increase in formal education and urbanization has increased the rate of divorce. The more the women are educated, the more they become independent and choose a marriage they desire. Cultural factors also contribute such like religion, ethnicity, childlessness and traditional family. In traditional family, the man has the power to make all the household decisions and is seen as the provider and the women is expected to stay home and do domestic chores which eventually causes conflict among spouses, especially in contemporary society. Umoh and Adeyemi (2000), have found that, in the urban area of Nigeria, the rate of divorce has increased because civilization and urbanization has challenged the traditional society and weakens its social control on the marriage. And they have found major causal factors; barrenness, religious difference, repeated sickness, extra-marital relationships and adultery.

According to the revised family code of Ethiopia (2000) Article 74, dissolution of marriage could be caused by death of a spouse, declaration of absence by court order due to

violations of essential conditions of marriage, and divorce. Bereket (2012) has found that in Ethiopia, age at marriage, childlessness or number of children, level of education and type of religion are some of the contributing factors for marital instability. Supporting this idea, Larsen and Tilson (2000), have found that in Ethiopia, early marriage is highly practiced and the sexual intercourse will result in physical damage to the girl's reproductive organs causing difficulty in child birth. This, in the long run, will contribute to divorce by resulting in loss of interest, childlessness, homesickness, and immaturity. Askalemariam and Minwagaw (2013), Tilson and Larsen (2000), and Serkalem (2006), have also found that, even though cultural and traditional influences are high in the Ethiopian society, attitudes of people towards divorce has changed which opens an opportunity for the married couples to look for alternatives for their unfulfilling marriage lives. Supporting the above findings, Rediet (2008) and Habtamu (1999), have also stated that, large difference in age, level of education, childlessness, maltreatment, physical abuse, substance abuse, communication problem, extravagancy, forced intercourse, adultery and not keeping the house neat are found to be causal factors.

Effects of divorce

Before deciding to get a divorce, either formally or informally, people may try to arbitrate in their marriage in order to help them stay married. Arbitration is done by a neutral party who is empowered to decide on the issue. According to Amuda (2007), in Nigeria, the elders are responsible for the reconciliation and mediation of any problem within the family, as well as within the society. During marital conflict, the elders will mediate to reshape and restore affection and love between the spouses. They have unchallenged rights in terms of expressing their feelings and are expected to be free from any form of partiality and injustice. In Ethiopia, even though there is lack of awareness about getting professional marriage counseling, not to

mention unavailability of the service itself, people have been accustomed to a similar kind of service for generations through the traditional ways. Marriage counseling is traditionally called *shimglina* (*though the mechanism serves for dealing with other type of conflicts as well*). Its aim is to resolve marital problems and avoid divorce and maintain the family structure. Since majority of the Ethiopian population are found in the rural part of Ethiopia, most marital and other problematic issues are solved through *shimglina* (Habtamu, 1999). If the legal or traditional marriage counseling doesn't work out for the spouses, then they will file for divorce.

Divorce signifies the loss of intimate relationship for the divorcees that may bring a sense of security and independence or a feeling of loss of dreams and failure in life. But divorce is not a social problem that only affects those who are intimately involved (the husband and the wife) but also all the people around them (Bramlett & Mosher, 2001). This is because, through marriage, the structure of family is formed and through divorce the structure of family is shattered. That is, during the marriage, children, the in-laws, extended families are involved and the impact could also extend for generations. Wijckmans and Bavel (2010), have found that, divorce weakens the tie between the adult and the child generation and notably the exchange of support (emotional or physical) in both directions. The dissolution of the marriage thus, will affect all the systems that surrounds the family and who are directly or indirectly related to the marriage. The above paragraphs have evidenced that threats of divorce to the healthy functioning of a family have been viewed from different angles by different studies that is, from cultural, economical, social, political, and biblical dimensions.

As seen in different studies, how divorce affects a family will be efficiently understood if studies compare the divorced family with that of the intact family. Different studies show, the magnitude and the effect of divorce differs in relation to multiple factors such as, duration of the

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marriage, number of children, social status, age at the time of divorce, gender, religion, and others (Carlson, 2009). How a person adjusts to the impact of divorce also depends on the way the divorcees handle the pre and post divorce events. Different researchers have found that, mainly women and children are highly influenced by the negative impact of divorce (Carlson, 2009; Landucci, 2008; Ellington, 2003; & Reilly, 2009).

According to Amato (2003), the child's age and gender as well as the child's history of stress and coping capacity largely determines how the divorce is perceived. Even if the child is resilient, if the stressful situations outweigh the protective factors, the child may develop a problem. Fitzpatrick-Strand (2002), has also found that, mostly mothers get the custody so boys are more at risk because they will grow up without having a male role model which will have a negative influence in their self-concept later in life. Most of the time, fathers will not visit their children often which will negatively affect the quality of attachment with their children later in life. Mostly it is assumed that, the younger the child is, he/she will experience short-term effects such like anger, sadness, non-compliance, lower academic achievement, increased dependency, lower parental supervision, and less consistent discipline. Fitzpatrick-Strand further described that if the child is in the adolescence stage, the risk will most likely be long-term such as experiencing a fear of betrayal and rejection, low life satisfaction, reduction in psychological well-being, fear of commitment and intimacy, likely become sexually active at early age; particularly girls will experience early pregnancy, and less trust in their future spouse and boys will show delinquent attitudes.

Expanding the above idea, Fitzpatrick-Strand (2002) has found that child's coping skills, family functioning and stability, pre-and-post divorce conditions, and external support systems contribute to the level of the impact of divorce and how fast the child could adjust to the

changes. In relation to gender, girls are said to experience teen pregnancy and challenge in academic performance and boys in addition to academic difficulty, will show behavioral problems both at school and at home. In the process of custody, having raised by same-sex parent will either positively or negatively influence the long-term self concept of the child, and in this arena mostly the girls benefit from this custodial process because children are mostly given to the mother. If children are involved in the marriage, then they will be the ones to be more devastated by the divorce. But Wallenstein (2000) has found that despite the beliefs, most children are found to be strong and resilient to the effects of divorce and will adjust to the problem in short period of time. Often children of divorce begin to experience the problems before the divorce happens because of conflict between parents, lack of attention from parents, seeing their parents depressed and stressed, seeing their friends parents happily married, and other factors.

Ellington (2003) has stated that mostly, compared to the man, the living standard of the woman will decrease dramatically immediately after the divorce and will face difficulty in terms of economic stability. And custody is usually assured to the mother indicating that, the children will face financial problems and lower standard of living along with their mother. Ellington (2003) and Fitzpatrick-Strand (2002), have shown in their studies that girls better adjust to the effect of divorce because they are given more emotional support and attention by the custodial parent after the divorce, and this is because traditionally the society puts restrictions on men in terms of expressing their emotions. Such beliefs will expose boys to experience a sense of rejection, especially by their father and will face difficulty in terms of adjustment. Ellington (2003), has also tried to see the impact of divorce from the developmental perspective and has found that, children found within the age range of 3-6, will experience fear of separation and

abandonment; from age 6-8, will feel guilt, sleep difficulty, intense sadness and headache, and numbness; from age 9-12, anger, worry about financial need, grief; and at teen age, the child will feel a deep sense of emptiness, nightmares, diminished concentration and lack of interest in education, and depression. The above findings show how the level of the impact of divorce could intensify according to different age ranges.

Jaarsveld (2007) have tried to explain the impact of divorce on children found in middle childhood phase (from age six to twelve). The findings show that, children should not be rushed to complete the developmental stages. This is because the traumatic experiences they face due to the negative impact of divorce will affect their ability to succeed later in life. Divorce stress children because they fear of the changes that will come out of it such as, changes in roles and responsibilities in the household, joining new family, loss of attachment with parents, siblings, pets, and friends, taking sides in custodial battle and feeling of losing one parent. Different changes in their lives will expose children to feel guilty, show sadistic behavior and depression will follow. As Landucci (2008) stated, some children will ignore their parents as a way of showing their frustration or anxiety. Amato and Keith (2003), and Landucci (2008), have also found that, children will face difficulties in their social relationships, educational achievement, psychological adjustment, physical well-being, and self-concept.

According to Ernest (2003), divorce is accompanied by a period of uncertainty, insecurity, and disorientation especially for the children. Depending on their age and gender, some children will find it very difficult to adjust to the negative impact of divorce because of their lack of intellectual development, and cognitive skills. As a result they will show, difficulty in concentration and academic performance, high dependency on parent, blaming oneself and feeling guilt.

Landucci (2008), stated that divorce also negatively affects the divorcees, emotionally as a result of unhealthy communication, abusive relationship (verbal) and physical aggression towards one another, and this in return will make the divorcee to develop psychologically, a feeling of not belonging, as well as, when they become overwhelmed with failure, loneliness, being depressed and develop a sense of failure in life. As Avis (2000) stated, it is easy for newly divorced individuals, particularly those with fewer resources, to be preoccupied with the immediate stresses of life following divorce. When just getting through today's problems seems so overwhelming, it's hard to do big-picture thinking and embrace long-term change. Worn down by day-to-day efforts just to get by, some divorced people become brittle and easy to break. They sink into a sense of failure, purposelessness, or depression, and sometimes make things even worse by abusing alcohol or drugs. For some, divorce seems to set in motion a process in which they end up losing everything—jobs, homes, children, and self-esteem. This does not necessarily mean that divorced adults have rebuilt happy lives after a few years, however, even when they eventually manage to rebuild a functional new life, some find little joy and satisfaction in that new life.

Tilson and Larsen (2000) have found that, particularly in the rural parts of Ethiopia, divorce will result in the dropping of the social and economic status of the women, losing of land, income and labor of the husband. Often after divorce, women do not receive a fair share of household assets and will go back to their families with little or nothing of their property. In urban areas, divorced women will face economic difficulties in terms of affording school fees, medical expenses, food insecurity, paying for house rents and lacking money for clothing and household items. Bogale (2008), and Askalemariam and Minwagaw (2013), have also found that, psychological, social, and economic problems will occur as a result of divorce. In addition to the

above findings, some children will leave their home and engage in the act of prostitution and drug abuse, will end up on the street, and will attempt suicide. Serkalem (2006), also supports the above findings in that, divorce compared to men, will have a negative influence on the women economically because, not until recently, women have started to join higher education, began to earn incomes and become economically more independent. Children mostly stay with their mother after the divorce so; they will also be victims to the low social and economic deprivations that resulted from the divorce. As Rediet's (2008) findings indicated, in some parts of Ethiopia, still early marriage is highly practiced which most of it result in divorce and deprive the girls of their psychological stability, physical well-being, and social networking.

Coping mechanism

According to Mosher and Handal (1997), people who possess the ability to respond positively to negative life consequences and stress, adapt more positively to large stressors like divorce. Moreover, individuals tend to adjust better to divorce if they have more personal resources, such as higher income, education level, or family. Children of divorced parents often experience psychological, social, and academic impediments (Elizabetz, 2002). Furthermore, the child's internal locus of control, high self-esteem, positive responses to stressors, availability of social resources, and adaptability with post-divorce adjustment are the major things that help children to adjust to trauma and stress.

Various studies show the positive effect of religion on the negative life consequences such as psychological distress and general stressors (Mosher & Handal, 1997). And it is believed that, lower religiosity correlates with higher distress and lower adjustment levels in adolescents. For many people who have strong ties to a personal faith and a religious group, marriage often has a sacred component and when these marriages dissolve, feelings of spiritual failure, guilt,

and a broken relationship with God sometimes arise. This is even stronger when individuals feel responsible for the breakup of a marital union. This kind of sacred loss is linked to higher rates of stress and depression. Some people may feel guilt and stay far from their religion but many people use religious beliefs and activities as a powerful support to help their families and themselves deal with the challenges they are facing due to divorce.

Theoretical Framework

There are different theories and perspectives in social work that try to explain family and their problems from different angles. For this specific problem family systems theory and family stress theory will be used in order to understand the impact of divorce.

Family Systems Theory

The basic assumption of family systems theory is the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008). A family is not just a collection of individuals who live together; the individuals are related to each other and as a natural social system, it possesses its own characteristics, rules, roles, communication patterns, and power structure. If a problem occurs within a family, one person will not be blamed but all family members as a whole because no behavior can be understood in isolation and all behaviors are considered to be part of ongoing, interactive, and recurring events (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009). A family system delineates its boundaries from other family systems by having its own covert and overt rules; members enact certain gender roles, and maintain a certain standard of job performance. When a person deviates from these rules, in order to keep the homeostasis, the family will either use negative feedback to that behavior or will use positive feedback for important adjustments if the individual's deviation is caused by dysfunctional family rules. Family's adaptability to new things or to stressful situations is essential. Unless a family is flexible in terms of changing the

rules, roles, and patterns of communication, being rigid will create conflict and misunderstanding among the members (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009).

Family Stress Theory

The family stress theory used in this study is the Double ABC-X model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982) which is based on the traditional stress theory that assumes a linear cause and effect relationship between the stressor event and the crisis. The Double ABC-X model basis itself in the stress theory however assumes that a single stressor event cannot lead a family to the point of crisis rather multiple encounters play important role. Hence, responses should not only target the crisis alone but also to the events preceding the crisis and following the family's adjustment struggle since other stressors evolve in the process. Accordingly, McCubbin and Patterson (1982, as cited in Smith, et al., 2009) have identified three components: Double A factor: which refers to the stressors that emerge as a result of attempting to cope with the initial stressor that caused the crisis; the Double B factor: which refers to the fact that when the initial resources mobilized for the crisis are not enough to cope with new emerging stressors, the family has to seek for another resource; and finally the Double C factor, that explains the family's perception and belief about the stressor as well as to the way it attempted to respond to the crisis situation or how it views its ability in responding to the crisis.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework expresses how the researcher plans to proceed with the study. I have chosen two theories: family systems theory and family stress theory in order to have a better understanding about the issue of divorce. I have used the family systems theory to help me understand about the integration of family and how divorce affects it. Family is viewed as an integrated whole in which the impact on any part of the subsystems also affects the whole

functioning of the family. And I have used family stress theory to help me understand how divorce affects the family system and the family's adjustment mechanism using the Double ABC-X model. For this specific study, post-divorce refers to the exact time after the marriage ended. And child-rearing specifically refers to the experiences of those divorced men who have got child custody and are raising their children after their marriage ended.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to understand the experience of divorced men who have taken the responsibility of rearing their children after divorce. Experiences can be better understood by listening to research participants' narrations while they are in their natural environment and social contexts. As Kruger and Newman (2004), stated, qualitative research will allow the researcher to explore the identified social problem in its social context and to find new things along the way. For this reason, I have adopted an exploratory qualitative research design that helped me to gather in-depth information about participants' experiences (Engel & Schutt, 2009).

According to Kruger and Newman (2004), qualitative research has four unique characteristics which are also in line with my interest for gathering rich information; first, it allowed me to explore new environment to conduct the study, understand that new environment and interpret the gathered data using a language that the target population can understand. Second, it allowed me collect information in the form of soft data: impressions, words, and sentences rather than putting the gathered data in the form of numbers. Third, it uses non-linear form of data gathering which benefited me to collect new information and get new insight about

the problem throughout the research process. And lastly, because the target population and sample size are going to be small in number and I rarely know about their major concerns, qualitative method has allowed me to develop open ended questions and probe the participants in order to understand them from their own perspective and lived experiences.

Specific Research Method

The qualitative research method specifically used for this research is phenomenology which, I believe, is in line with my personal stance as a researcher and appropriate to the type of information I am looking for in this particular study. As a researcher, I believe reality is constructed and subjectively experienced by individuals. Creswell (1998), states that the focus of phenomenological study is the meaning that the participants' give to their lived experiences about a social problem or phenomena and researchers have to understand the experience by setting aside their personal and professional prejudice. Hence, phenomenological study is useful to understand research participants' interpretation of their reality and how they give meaning to their lived experience. Accordingly, I have been able to obtain each research participant's narration about the essence of being a divorced father who is striving to rear a child or children after divorce.

Sampling and Selection of Participants

The units of analysis for this study are divorced men. They have been selected through purposive sampling method in collaboration with the Registrar of Lideta Sub-city Family Supreme Court. Criterion sampling strategy has been used since all participants should have similar experience about the problem (Creswell, 1998). And in this case, being a divorced man who is in charge of child custody after divorce. In addition, among the many divorced men whose cases are closed in the Family Court, I have chosen those who elapsed at least two years

and above with an arbitrary assumption that they may probably have more to say if they rear children for that length of time and with an assumption that they may probably begin to come up with mechanisms to adjust to the post-divorce experience in rearing their children. Finally, among the major criteria for selection is willingness to participate in the study, and this is ensured by signing a consent form.

Data Collection

The major data collection method for the research is one-to-one in-depth interview with participants. Writers such as Duke (1984) and Riemen (1986) as cited in Creswell (1998, p.122) have recommended from 3-10 in-depth interviewee for a phenomenological study and the same have been applied in this research. For the interview guide, open-ended questions have been prepared ahead of the field work. This has allowed me to probe and get additional information from the informants. The interview have been held in a private place that the participants find comfortable; some preferred in their home which gave me the opportunity for a systematic observation of their situation contextually and I have interviewed some at their work environment. This was not possible for two participants so, the gate keeper at Lideta Supreme Court who was my classmate in undergraduate study and currently working with the capacity of family social worker at the court have prepared a safe and furnished interview room in their office compound and the interview was held there. On average, the interview has taken two hours for a participant and the interview sessions have been tape recorded based on the willingness of the research participants and stored in a safe place so that retrieving the data will be possible during data analysis.

The initial process of getting in touch with Lideta Supreme Court officials was very smooth as the gatekeeper for this research was my class mate during undergraduate study. First

of all, in order to work at Lideta Supreme Court, I have gone to the family Supreme Court director to get permission. After that, in order to choose the participants that fulfill the set criteria, I have checked the court files with the Gate keeper then took their phones from their files.

The process of getting research participants was so challenging, which I have never anticipated during the field work plan. The only means I have to contact research participants that were identified from the files was through telephone call. I have went back and forth to the court, just to select the qualified interviewees because, when I call and ask them, many of them refused, some have moved to the regions after the divorce and cannot come just for the sake of the interview, some refused to take part in the interview after they came, and some have even had appointment with me and didn't show up. Apart from that, I had to wait convenient time for the gatekeeper as I was not allowed to search in the archives without someone who is an employee in the Court. Hence, in order to obtain seven interviewees, I had to make several visits, search for quite a lot of files in the archive, identify and contact twenty five people.

Data Analysis

This study is a cross-sectional study, that is, data have been gathered at one point in time. Data collected from the field through in-depth interviews and observations have been transcribed verbatim to create a textual material. The wide ranges of textual material have been repeatedly read to identify initial open codes and notes for key concepts and statements. Following that, I have described the meaning that the concepts give me as a researcher and further classified the open coding. Then, the meaning statements that individual research participants give to their experiences have been described and further similarities of group statements have been brought together into meaning units as a process of reducing the data and forming categories . Finally, I

read and reread the identified categories thoroughly and found out themes for discussion.

Limitation of the Study

Some participants were not willing to be interviewed at their home, which forbid me from making an observation of their experiences in their natural setting which could have helped to get additional information to enrich the field data. This study is also limited to the lived experience of divorced men by leaving out the women's perspective about the situation and hence we may have missed important knowledge that could have been obtained from the women. Asking the ex-wives of research participants could have been one means of verifying the statements of the men particularly about the marital relationships while they were together.

Ethical Consideration

According to Kruger and Newmann (2006), it is essential to consider the ethical principles such as informed and voluntary participation, privacy, anonymity, as well as, the possibility of feedback. Accordingly, before beginning the process of research, there are necessary steps that I have taken as a researcher. First, before engaging in the study, the participants have been informed about the purpose of the study, the potential risks and benefits of the research, their right to withdraw or pass the question they don't want to answer, whether incentives are given to the participants or not, and the issue of confidentiality and anonymity. Most of all, I have made at most care that participants have engaged in the research voluntarily and they have confirmed that by signing a consent form. Accordingly, I had encountered an incident where by, in the middle of the interview, two of the participants cried and the interview was stopped until the participants felt comfortable to speak again. One participant even delayed the interview and asked to come back the next day because he felt hurt talking about his past so the interview was held on the next day.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDING

Introduction

The finding is divided into two parts. The first part deals with presenting a summary of the essences of the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of each research participant. It is presented with the intention of identifying the unique experiences of each participant and the coping strategies used within the family and from the environment in providing support to the family. The second part of the finding brings together the common features of the participants as group members who share similar experiences of rearing children after divorce. These common features are presented in the form of themes such as; family economy, marriage, post-divorce experience of men and the coping mechanism they used. The essence of participants' collective experience makes the hallmark of the discussion that is covered in the next chapter.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Profile and Housing Condition

Code	Age	Family size	Education level	Housing condition	Occupation	Marital status	Ethnicity	Religion
01	44	6	College degree	Owner	Wood workshop owner	Divorced	Amhara	Muslim

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02	42	2	12complete	Rental	Airlines	Divorced	Amhara	Orthodox Christian
03	58	3	12complete	Rental	Taxi driver	Divorced	Oromo	Orthodox Christian
04	38	2	College degree	Kebele	Carpenter	Divorced	Ahmara	Orthodox Christian
05	56	2	12complete	Rental	Driver	Divorced	Gurage	Orthodox Christian
06	50	5	University graduate	Owner	NGO staff	Divorced	Oromo	Orthodox Christian
07	35	2	University graduate	Rental	NGO staff	Divorced	Oromo	Orthodox Christian

Individual Lived Experience and Coping Mechanism

Participant 01

Participant 01 is a 44years old divorcee. He is from the Amhara ethnic group and a follower of Muslim religion. He has college degree and currently he is engaged in his own workshop business. He has been married for 11 years and has 5children. It has been two and a half years since his divorce and he got child custody for four of his children. Currently, he is living with his children, his mother and the maid in his house.

The starting point of the interview that participants were asked to briefly explain was premarital and marital experiences since the information paves the way to step up into their post divorce situation. Thus, participant 01 narrated that he met his wife at a place of worship and got married through Church ceremony. She was then became a house wife as she doesn't have employment before. But soon he realized that she is not good in managing the house and stated that "she was careless of household management; she didn't care if things get wasted and sleeps leaving everything to the maids". He was unhappy about his wife's negligence but reported that "I keep silent because if I talk, it will burn like a flame".

As he described his economic performance, he opened a business for his wife and a workshop for himself with the aim of generating more income for his family. He used to invest some of his money in to his wife's shop and dispense the rest for household expense while his wife doesn't make any useful contribution for her home. After his wife started to generate income, he said "her eyes started to be open to look for a better person than I". She started to claim her shop as her own property; she began telling her husband that he looks like her guard and tells him not to come to her shop since his appearance will push away her customers. The participant's narrations revealed that hearing such words was painful to him and later in life. According to him, his job makes his cloth dirty and he doesn't look good even if he wears something because he is thin but she wants him to be a smart dresser. As he stated, he learned later in life that he should have been a little greedy since his wife took everything and left him.

By the time they had their fifth child, their business was doing well but the love and the patience they had for one another was gone. And her family also used to ask him why he didn't build a house and buy a car having a business. He believed her family worshiped money because they even tried to marry off their daughter to a wealthy man but they failed because she was a

mother of five children and she couldn't live two different lives simultaneously.

When he stated how his wife's behaviour started to turn around he said that, even though he never had a serious fight with his wife, one time she took everything and left for her parents home until she came back through the mediation of elders. But shortly then, she started telling him she doesn't need her children or him but her freedom. He stated that "since she was trying hard to comfort herself, in comparison with me, people used to ask that: does she eat with his hands in addition to hers?"

When asked about how he tries to meet the interests of his wife, his answers made it clear that he doesn't make much because of his religion: he doesn't spend time with her and never take her to a cinema or other places and he entertains himself by reading books and playing with his children at home. One time he got into a detention centre (suspected of aggression by the name of religious practices) for three months. At that time, he used to have bank deposit of birr 120,000 in his wife's account that was saved to avoid worrying for family expenses in case he stayed longer in prison. But when he got out after only three months, she finished the money without even paying the children's school fee apart from weakening his business.

Experience after the divorce

The other question participants asked was how they dealt with family economy after the divorce. Accordingly, participant 01 states that:

I tried hard for the divorce not to happen anticipating its impact in reducing the family income, but could not succeed to escape it. As I suspected, she took almost everything and a massive share of our common properties including money. Following that, my business capital was significantly reduced and I had to reorganize it again. Thinking of

the situation today, I feel that I should have been a little greedy that time. However, the participant states that, despite the problems with his wife and the consequent divorce, his business didn't throw him into economic crisis. He soon recuperated through reorganizing the business, working hard and mobilizing whatever resource he personally had without seeking the financial support of friends or other people.

As he stated that after the divorce, the most challenging experience for him was the time the house maid left. He has to do everything himself: he bakes Injera, cooks food, washes his children's cloth, tutor them, pack their lunch and take them to school, take care of his elderly mother, and go to work and lived such routine life for months.

With regards to the psychological impact of the divorce and rearing children alone, he described that it was something that created anxiety, distress and depression on him. He says: "it was too much stressful" and continued that "following the crisis of divorce, shouldering the responsibility of re-establishing my business taxed me a lot not to mention the care of children and management of the household chore." The participant was struggling to control his emotion when staggering to talk how he felt about the situation. "I was betrayed psychologically hurt, and frustrated as my wife didn't have a firm reason to leave me...her abusive and humiliating words still bounce in my head...I did everything I can to keep her stay with me."

According to his description, his older child was hurt because he used to observe and sometimes see when his parents nag each other. In fact the participant believes that the child's educational performance and social interaction is not affected because of the parents' divorce. Overall, he emphasizes that he loves his children but also understands that they are not happy about their mother leaving. That has put pressure on him to negotiate with and arrange a program for the children to go and visit their mother but on the contrary, as he reported she used to tell

him “I will make the children you love the most, your enemies.”

Recently, he reconciled with his wife through religious elders, as he stated, to make his children happy but if she wants to live with him again, she has to agree with the precondition he set for her such as that; she will not go out with male or female friends and he will fulfil her needs while she stay at home.

The way he overcomes the difficulties to reinvigorate his business and family life even in the absence of his wife seem pretty interesting. He stated “I live for my children and pay any sacrifice to maintain their wellbeing and happiness.” Moreover, he has the opinion that he was struggling not to be a failure in raising the children because of the absence of their mother and that gave him the determination to bear all the burden of caring for children and managing business. He said “she will not see me failing.”

Participant 02

Participant two is a 42years old divorcee. He is a follower of Orthodox Christian religion and from Amhara ethnicity. He completed 12 grade and works in Ethiopian Airlines. He has been married for 7years and has two children. It has been three years since his divorce and he is now living in a rental house with his daughter and a maid.

He was asked to explain in detail about his pre-marital and marital life to understand better about his current condition. He narrated that, he met his wife through friends and after they started going out, she got pregnant unexpectedly and were forced to proceed to unplanned marriage despite unstable financial situation of the research participant. But, as per his explanation, they didn't take much time after the birth of the child to enter into conflict in the relationship. He states that “seven months after the child was born, she became very eager to leave to and work in the Gulf State. She left, accordingly, and worked there for five years.” The

emotional distance, communication breakdown, lack of trust and conflict continued after she came back particularly with regards to contributing finance to the family economy. His statement is evidence of this situation: “she came back from the gulf state with one TV set and 20 thousand birr at hand so I have to contribute 50 thousand birr to buy a Taxi to establish a stable means of income for the family.”

The relationship that has been tried to re-establish between the couple didn't last longer. She asked him to open a bar with a pretext that the taxi business is not profitable. He says “how can I open a bar for her, she is my wife and the mother of my children. It is tantamount to allowing her to prostitute.” But eventually, he learned that without letting him knew about it, his wife was found to have opened a bar and restaurant at another corner of the City; which was another source of major conflict. But in between, they had another child.

Description of the participant's story reveal that even after his wife came back from the Gulf States, their marital relationship was full of conflict with eventual divorce when she demanded to go to the Gulf States once again. His refusal to accept her demand led her to abandon the family as he said “one time when I came home, she almost took everything including my children and left home. For over fifteen days, I was not able to see the children and that made me almost crazy.” After fifteen days, he got his children, and learned that she and her sisters were misinforming the children as if their father is cruel, dislikes his children and will kill them if they go back to him. His wife believed in witchcrafts and he never took lunch to work because he didn't know what she thought of doing to him and he believes that he used to hear her talk like the devil sometimes. After the divorce, he was stabbed by his neighbour one day when he was returning home from work place at night and believes that it was planned and facilitated by his wife.

Experience after the divorce

The economic crisis for the participant was noticeable after the divorce. He was forced to relocate his residence and live in his sister's house with his child. As per his explanation, he didn't have blanket to wear, no house equipments and had to go to the extent of selling his work uniform and shoes to support his child and himself. So his sisters were supporting him financially to manage the crisis situation that followed the divorce. Apart from that, he was expected to repay the money he borrowed from his employer organization when he was living with his wife. Bearing the child's educational expenses such as school fee, exercise books, other scholastic materials, transportation fee, paying the maid's monthly salary has been another economic strain on the participant.

Regarding his psychological and emotional wellbeing, he explained that, he was hurt emotionally because after his divorce, he found out that his ex-wife was very secretive to the level that she had opened a bar while she was still living with him. He used to feel stressed and had anxiety problems which later on exposed him to nose bleeding illness. He states;

I was too late to learn about the devilish behavior of my wife. I understand that she is difficult but never suspected of such immoral things as trying to kill me, starting business behind my back, and fabricating bad things about me and trying to misguide my children.

The psychological impact of the divorce included feeling of dependency on his sisters to care for his family, anxiety and stress as a result of assuming double burden of finding means of income alongside managing the family. The first stressful experience of the participant began when the mother first left to the Gulf State. He says: "as the baby was not breast fed, she used to get sick all the time. I had to carry her on my back and take her from hospital to hospital. I raised the child with the help of a maid for five years and that was a shocking moment."

Pre and Post Divorce Experiences of Men.....

Regarding remarriage, he stated that, because his wife was a liar and deceived him, he doesn't hope for marriage again. And still now, their case about child custody is ongoing and complained about the delay for verdict and he hopes to be reunited with his daughter in the future because his ex-wife appealed again. He doesn't want his child to be raised with her mother because she already started to take her to her bar.

The energy for participant 2 that helped him to do away with the problem of being child custody after the divorce and associated challenges is the love he has to his children. He believes that his children should not be punished for the situation they are not responsible for. Moreover, he attributes successful coping to the help of God through his persistent and continuous prayer and communication with him. "I left everything to God, to help me recover and to bless my children."

Participant 03

Participant 03 is a 58years old divorcee. He is Oromo and a follower of Orthodox Christian religion. He finished 12grade and he is working as a taxi driver. He stayed married for almost six years and has two children. It has been more than 5years since his divorce and currently, he is living with his children in a rental house.

The premarital and marital experience of participant 3 was explained in such a way that a woman he knew at his business place and very close to him introduced with her daughter who later became his wife. In fact he states that "she was not interested to marry me from the outset but her mother encouraged me believing that I can gradually attract her to change her mind." Any ways the marriage was concluded with the pressure of the mother on her daughter. Despite giving money to his would be wife's mother for the ceremony, the wedding didn't take place and they just started to live together unofficially.

According to his description, they gave birth to two children as they live together but his wife was not willing to breast feed the children and to raise them with him. He stated that:

The first child didn't breast milk after two months and the second child after four months and this is because my wife goes to her family leaving her children. I never thought of raising the children alone as I don't have the knowledge and skills. So I took the children to her at her mother's house and began to support financially until my sister in-law told me to take them back after few months as my wife was not taking care of them. Truly, I found the children in bad condition.

As a mechanism for managing the crisis, he rented his business car and resorted to caring his young children. Soon, learned how to cook, wash their body, wash their cloth and providing parental care for the children that eventually enhanced their attachment, as he explained. But he couldn't resist the children's demand to bring their mother which compelled him to negotiate with her mother and brought her back to home.

However, the relationship after she came back got worse accompanied by continuous nagging, insulting, verbal abuse and physical fights. He revealed that, "we were fighting every day until the day she disappeared with the children while I was at the work place. I again negotiated to get back my children but in the mean time got serious car accident and hospitalized." According to his story, while he was in the hospital unconscious for about three months there was no one who visited him thinking that he will die. She returned to their home and with her mother appealed for a divorce alone, took the children and all the money that was found in their home, sold the car, and froze the bank account.

He was asked how he was affected by the divorce psychologically and he described that, after he got out of the hospital he went home but couldn't find anyone then people told him his

wife divorced him, took everything along with his children and left. He states:

Hearing that, and finding myself with nothing at hand, I was unable to control myself and fall unconscious. Later when I became conscious after some days, I found myself living on the street (crying). Then I went to treat myself with holy water at one of the Orthodox church located at the outskirts of Addis Ababa where I lived for over two years without anyone knowing me and my whereabouts. I returned back after two years, and learned that my wife has gone to the Gulf State leaving the children to her mother.

When he was asked about how the divorce affected his children he talked about them by crying and described that when he found them, they were in a very bad condition physically and mentally. His children told him that their mother used to starve them and she didn't buy them cloth. As he stated, his ex-wife made his son quit school and he wasn't learning when he found him and he was almost dead inside and the girl got very weak in her education.

He explained his after divorce financial state in that, he didn't have any money and because he couldn't afford a better place; he was living in a one room dwelling with both of his children. Then to earn money, he got hired as a taxi driver and got his son in to a public school. As he explained it, the most challenging time for him was raising his children without earning enough money. He didn't have time in the day so after he got off work, even though his body is exhausted he will come home and give food for his children, tutor them and then he will get up at night and wash their uniform, cook food and pack lunch for them and himself, clean the house and sleeps together with his children in one mattress because they don't have a bed. Because he didn't have family or friends, no one helped him get through his difficult situation.

The participant was physically, economically and psychologically hurt severely. He has also developed negative attitude towards marriage and married life. In his own words: "I feel that

marriage is a fake theatre and married people are living a lie and that marriage is a hell.” He further reports that, he is now in a healthy psychological state and he believes that true love is what his children give him and seeing them together satisfies him and they are also doing great in their education. The thing that he believes got him through his problem was God. He stated that, he was someone that gave up in life and waiting for his death because he thought he will rest if he died, but believing in God gave him hope and strength to live again for his children. In the future, he has a plan to become a teacher and build a house for his children and himself.

Participant 04

Participant 04 is a 38years old divorcee. He is from Amhara tribe and a follower of Orthodox Christian. He has college degree and currently working in America Embassy. He has been married for 16years and has two children. It has been almost five years since his divorce and currently he is living in a rental house with his daughter because his son is deceased. Participant 04 explained, he met his wife and started to live together without having formal marriage contract. He had two children but his son died. According to him, he is a very hard worker and owned a workshop with 35employees but his wife was a housewife so, he got her to manage his workshop so that she wouldn't feel depressed by staying at home. Besides, she has also learned professional cooking and graduated.

As he stated, that “this was a turning point for my wife's change of behavior. She began staying late night by saying she is at work”. Finally he learned that she has an affair with many men including one of his close friend and at other time with one of the employee in his own company. That led him to decide divorcing his wife.

After his divorce, he explained how he was affected psychologically in that, he used to feel deceived and hurt because, people told him that immediately after their divorce, she got in to

a bar, even though he begged her to stop working there, she refused. He used to feel stressed because according to him, “everything happened so quickly and even if I won in court and got child custody, breaking up the family was not winning. Seeing the mother of my children reduced to the status of a commercial sex worker hurt me psychologically.”

His financial situation after the divorce, as he stated, got much weakened. He said that “the judges blindly believed the statements of my wife (as she was crying while talking in the court), and gave me deaf ear. The first judge ordered me to leave the workshop and give her everything she wanted, immediately, without formally passing a verdict on the case. I did so and she took most of the common property.” So, his ex-wife got the support of the judge to temporarily close the workshop and that relegated him to the status of unemployed. In the mean time, as he narrated, his wife got the opportunity to grab his money before the divorce is concluded. So, he lost everything including the savings and starved with his child.

However, he tried to hide his financial problem and starvation to outsiders who knew him while he was better off believing that anyone including his ex-wife must not be pleased by his current situation. He states: “I usually come and sit in front of my shop to pretend that still it is active and belongs to me but in the afternoon, I go to Merkato (far from his living place where people can’t recognize him) and work as a daily laborer to earn money for the family so that I can buy food for my child.” He states the magnitude of his financial problem in such a way that “as I cannot earn money enough to feed me and my child three times a day, I used to jump lunch many times.” As he explained, the court decision delayed for long period of time and he continued to starve. But finally, he got employment at one of the embassies in Addis Ababa in the capacity of a Carpenter (maintenance officer) and was able to get relatively sustained source of income as his means of livelihood (the wood workshop) was closed by a court order.

About seven judges handled the case until it was finally decided by a female judge who made a fair trial of the case, in the participants view. The evidences his ex-wife produced before the court found to be false and finally the workshop was returned back to him. He regained the previous work and started with small scale (with only five workers). The participant narrates his experience bitterly:

Up on the temporary closure of the workshop and the loss of my savings, I was empty not only in terms of money but also mentally. I lost all the previous pride and just pretended as if I am still strong, friends shy away from staying with me, I failed to pay the weekly contribution for Iddir and was excluded from membership, and I felt as if everything turned against me. Only few unexpected people materially and financially helped me to survive at least for some time.

The psychological impact of the divorce has not only hurt him but also his daughter. She was about to collapse because of the stress caused anxiety problem and he stayed with her for months at church until she got healed. Then after, she got very weak in her education and she even started to fight at school when students teased her saying that, “your father divorced your Mom because she is a prostitute”. This used to hurt her feelings and now she doesn’t want to see her mother when she comes to visit her sometimes.

The thing he mentioned as a challenge was the time he started raising his child with no money or no support, he cooked, cleaned, took his child to school, and worked. And the thing that he believed helped him to cope with the challenge was to make himself believe in his capacity that he can live without his wife. He decided to forget about her and never to hear anything concerning her and get back straight in to his work to keep his mind occupied and forget about the divorce. This helped him to be focused and raise his child in peace.

Participant 05

Participant 05 is a 56years old divorcee. He is Gurage and a follower of Orthodox Christian. He graduated from high school and works as a driver in NGO. He stayed married for three years and has one child. It has been four years and a half since his divorce and currently he is living with his daughter in a rental house.

According to the participant, he felt like his marriage was a sham because it was done quickly and he regrets about the hasty decision since he learned that her true behavior started to reveal soon after he marriage; self-centered and lazy. Even though she was a house wife, she almost does nothing for her house and he stated:

My home never felt like a home to me; it was not warm and welcoming and my marriage was not like the usual type of marriage because my wife neither took care of me as a husband nor managed her home as her own. There are countless days that I come from work and do household chores while she sit's and watch me. And unlike most people, I am not interested to celebrate holydays because our house will be empty and cold and my wife will go to her parent's house to celebrate and since I don't feel comfortable, I go out with my friends who are bachelor to spend the day.

Moreover, he wasn't comfortable in his house since his mother in-law comes often and his sister in-law tries to seduce him sexually when his wife was not around. Even if he tried to show indications to his wife about her sister's misbehavior, she didn't believe him rather consider it that he is acting irrationally by wrongfully accusing her family since he has no family of his own. According to him, after his wife gave birth, her misbehavior has gotten worse; she didn't want to breast feed and she even gets disgusted to change her child's diaper and most of the time, she will go her parent's house without consulting with him. The participant stated:

On the third month of our child's birth, my wife disappeared and when I ask her mother where she went, she told me she wouldn't tell me even if she knew because she is better off than staying with a rootless guy like me. Adding to my problems, her response makes me very sad and I returned home crying like a women and thinking what I would do with my child.

The participant explained that after running away from home, his wife filed for divorce with quite a lot of fabricated reasons such as "he doesn't give me money for family expenses regularly, doesn't spend time with the family, comes home late in the evening intoxicated and disturbs me....etc" and demanded that the only option is divorce.

The divorce took place and shared whatever property and money they have. It was difficult for him to describe how he was affected by the divorce financially because, as he stated, everything happened instantly and the court granted him child custody and was left him with the responsibility of raising his child. He was granted the child custody, since in court his wife presented evidence that states she is psychologically unstable and unfit to raise a child, which in his eyes is false evidence because he knew her.

He didn't have adequate money to manage a family and because he didn't have anyone else, for the sake of his child, he put aside his pride and went to his ex-wife to loan him money and he said "I can still hear her laughter in my ears when I asked her to lend me money, after all we were married once but it was then that I truly found out how heartless she was". The last option he took was asking his work colleagues for money. "my friends didn't let me down, they contributed money, bought household materials and food, visited me at home to handover the material and to give me the remaining amount in cash." That is how he was rescued from further crisis following the divorce. At that moment, he stated that he knew God was watching over

him. Since he couldn't afford to hire a babysitter, he had to quit job and started to do a freelance consultancy at his house using personal networking.

As he described, he has found raising a child to be very challenging. He never thought a man could ever raise a child without the support of a women and he didn't have the knowledge or the skills of raising a child either. He stated:

My neighbor who used to observe my situation started to teach me how to raise a child starting from holding my child in my back, cooking, washing her body, feeding her, changing her diaper, and managing my house. And in due time, I became familiarized with parenting alone and started to raise my child by being like a father and a mother.

The thing that worry's him was his child's health situation. She used to get sick most of the time and when he went to doctors, he was told it was because she wasn't breastfed and that make her weak which cannot do anything about it. He said" I used to be tensioned every time she cries or when she sleeps for long hours because I thought she didn't have resistance and she will die".

The divorce, according to the participant has affected him psychologically in that, within no time, he lost everything and has found it difficult to adjust to the new life. He explained that, "Feeling of loneliness, distress, and anxiety were my day to day experiences as I was torn apart between caring for my daughter and thinking about the uncertainties of family livelihood". In general, quitting his job and staying at home makes him feel depressed and thinking about how he could live alone with his child used to make him feel stressed.

He described his current situation in that, he is in a better situation; got his child in pre-school and living a better life and for that, he thanks God every day. Believing in God gave him the strength to overcome his challenges and furthermore, forgiving his wife for her sins and

forgetting her gave him a peace of mind and helped him not to linger in his past and focus on his future.

Participant 06

Participant 06 is a 50years old divorcee. He is Oromo and a follower of Orthodox Christian. He has stayed married for 13years and has three children. He is a university graduate and working in NGO. It has been four years since his divorce and currently, he is living with his children in the house he built.

He stated that, his mother lives outside Addis where he occasionally goes to visit her. He describes that he met his ex-wife during one of those visits made to his mother, and got married through the customary way of engagement and wedding. He remembers spending in thousands due to her family's request for a wedding ceremony. He brought her to Addis and since she was a house wife, she used to complain staying alone at home so she will bring her relatives and spend the day with them by eating and drinking; everyday was like a feast. He stated that,

She doesn't know how hard I work to earn the money so she spends extravagantly with her relatives and asks for more. Even though I wasn't happy about how she manages the family resource, as we were about to have the second birth who were later found to be identical twins, I was not able to say anything. After that, she hired two nannies for the children, and another maid for washing clothes on outreach service arrangements and the household expense escalated. In the mean time, from the first identical twins the younger one fall into persistent illness such as drinking too much water, frequently urinating and asking for food now and then. And when clinically investigated he was found to be diabetic.

The participant stated that the situation became worse in the family; "I was stressed and

frequently cry by asking God, why you gave me this type of life?

As the participant was working outside home in a highly competitive business, the wife was the one who has time and takes the child to Tikur Anbesa Hospital for diabetes treatment. The research participant explains that this became another source of conflict between the couples. She took the impression that the husband doesn't give attention to the children other than his business, leaving the burden of following the health of the diabetes child and the other three children at home. He states that she persistently criticizes him by saying: "having sexual intercourse with me, getting children, and bringing money to the family doesn't make you a husband unless you share household responsibilities." He further remarks that above all what made him hopeless with his marriage is that his wife didn't have the slightest respect to his relatives, including to his biological mother, while she is the opposite for her relatives; excessively caring and lavishly supporting them financially and materially. He says "after the diabetes of the child is diagnosed, she emotionally shutdown herself from any form of communication with me." When he talked about the decision he made to divorce, "One day, my mom came to see her grand children, but my wife openly told her not to come any more and she has to return back. Even she didn't allow her to stay at home until I come. Seeing that was painful and hard to bear; after all I have no other relative than my mom and the children". That brought him to end the marriage, as he described. She went to her parents with the diabetes child, and the participant stayed at home with the three children.

The most challenging part of raising his children was as he described, his wife has spoiled his children and she set their standard high at early age. Most of all, she used to give them pocket money and taught them not to socialize with children that they think are below their social status. Unfortunately, after losing most of his money, he was unable to keep treating his

children with luxury as his ex-wife did. He changed their school because it was too expensive then his children lost interest to learn and their academic performance has decreased and they don't socialize with children at their school either. He stated that:

Furthermore, his children couldn't adjust to the new life easily and hated him because he has changed their life style which they were accustomed with. This was emotionally very damaging to him because his children were his closest family and he only wanted what was best for them but they couldn't analyze that and understand him at their age. And this used to make him feel stressed and at time depressed and as a result, he was exposed to hypertension.

When he described about how he adjusted to his crisis, he stated that God helped him; gave him strength. He used to pray for his children to have good behaviour, to be better in their education, and be healthy. He even got his children in to Sunday school at church to help them behave in good manners and to help them socialize with children found at normal social status. At times, he didn't know how to manage his home or communicate with his children so he used to read books related to children, advised experts, and even shared his experience with people who have children. As he described, even if it took time, recently he is living happily with his children, and his children have turned out to be good mannered and clever students and he couldn't ask for more.

Participant 07

Participant 07 is a 35years old divorcee. He is a follower of Orthodox Christian religion and from Oromo tribe. He stayed married for almost two years and a half and has one child. He is a university graduate and works in NGO. It has been three years since his divorce and currently he is living in a rental house with his child.

According to the participant, he married his wife within few months in order to fulfil his dying

mother's wish and his wife agreed since he was rich and she wanted a man that can take care of her. After they started living together, she was very careless, she doesn't get up early in the morning to prepare food and as he stated, there are many times that he went to work with an empty stomach. Before they got married, she convinced him to rent a house around bars by saying it will be good area for business since many people will come for entertainment, then without his desire he rented a house she wanted and after they got married, because she does nothing all day, he opened a shop for her around liquor stores and bars.

She became successful in the business but other than wearing expensive cloths and jewelry, she doesn't contribute useful things for her household and as an excuse she will tell him she is investing it in her shop and also she is a woman and have many needs but later on he found out that she was investing it on men. He stated that, his friends used to see her with other men and tell him and when he confronts her, she will cry and make him feel guilty instead, so he stopped listening to people. The participant said "When we lived together, other than her laziness and carelessness for her house and me, I haven't observed any other behavior that I couldn't tolerate to keep my marriage". After they had a child, they hired a maid because she gets disgusted to change diaper, she doesn't have the knowledge of raising a child so, after few months she started her business again but began to stay out late saying she's working, she doesn't check on her child and start to tell him she regrets getting married at young age. He stated:

One time, I got sick and the doctor advised me to have general check up, now that I think about it, it was God's way of revealing the truth because I don't like to go to a hospital.

The result came and by chance, the doctor makes me ready and told me that I am infertile and can't have children. I didn't believe him because by that time, I had a child who was

around a year and a half. I left the hospital but my mind couldn't rest so, another time, I went to four doctors for check up but the results were similar. I was in shock and I still didn't want to believe what I heard so, I sat in church compound for hours and went to my wife's shop to confront her. Because she didn't expect such question, she mumbled and I didn't want to see her face so I went home but she didn't come home that night.

After he started to suspect his wife, he started to ask people about her and what people told him was unbearable; she goes out with many men. His friends even told him that they pray for him not to catch disease so he got a check up and became HIV/AIDS negative. She came after a week and until then I couldn't face my child, then she came with some guy to collect her stuffs and told him she doesn't know whose child it is so she wouldn't care even if he gives him up to an institutional care. He stated that, watching his wife behave like a heartless prostitute broke his heart at instant but she already filed for divorce.

Experience after divorce

According to the participant, for few months, he was in disbelief of what has happened in his life. He started drinking and comes home late at night in order to forget about his family problems and he started to hate his home. He left every child responsibility for the maid and he didn't have the moral to check on his child. In addition to his problems, behaving in a manner he doesn't like also gets him in to another stress so he returned to his religion. He began to go to church and started to come back to his sense. Still, it was difficult for him to believe and raise the child as his own but on the other hand, he has raised him for over two years and giving him up was unthinkable and inhumane. Through his prayer he started to calm his attitude towards the child and started to make himself believe that, since he is infertile, it was God's way of giving him a family, a child and he stated:

I hated my wife, I hated her and wished her death because she betrayed me, and she makes me look like a fool. Because of what she did to me, I was ashamed to face my friends and I isolated myself from people because if I meet with people, they will discuss about me and sympathize and that will increase my pain. And even if it was for a short period of time, she makes me distance myself from my child but the reality was the child has nothing to do with the sins that his mother committed. It was hurtful especially because I wanted to get over my problems on my own.

In terms of raising a child, the thing he has found very hard was since he was a man, he never imagined he would be a single parent and bear the responsibility of the mother on his own and raise a child. He didn't have the knowledge of nurturing a child but he got support from his maid and started to learn. It was very difficult but he took full responsibility of parenthood and as he said "I gave priority for my child and got myself ready to get through any obstacles on the way".

He stated that he wasn't that much affected economically but since his wife took some money and house materials, he started to work two jobs so that he could change his living environment because it was not suitable for raising a child. He also stopped drinking and eating at a hotel to provide for household expenses.

The thing that got him through his problems was to believe in God. He stated that, it was God that helped him to confront his problems even if it didn't make him comfortable and that gave him a stable mine in due time. By trying to substitute his problems with something constructive such as working hard, he began to adjust to his new life. And he started to believe that, what happened to him was God's way of giving him a family and as he became a single-parent and started to raise his child, he became more attached to him and started to love him as

his own blood and he doesn't want to be separated from his child by any means. He also went to court and legalized his guardianship and now he is living a happy life with his son and has stated that, he will never get married again.

Finding two: Essence of Experience as A Group

1. Family economy or means of livelihood

Concerning economic performance, the respondents have described their experience before, during, and after their divorce in order to compare the level of the impact it has on them. Before marriage, the participants had either their own business or were employees in different sectors while the wives of the six participants were housewives and only one participant's wife used to work in one of the Gulf States. Engagement in economic activities doesn't seem to have changed much after marriage for the research participants but they have made significant stride in finding self-employment business activities for their wives. Here is where the challenge comes as participants narrated about the change in the behavior of their wives. Almost all of the participants who found small business activities for their wives complained that as the income of the women increased, the women distanced themselves from their husbands. That is, they showed reluctance to tell about the amount of money they earn, refused to contribute for household expenses as it is expected of them and leaving it for the husbands to bear the burden as it was before they started business, and to inform their husbands how they manage the money they earn as well as about the money they receive from their husbands for household expenses.

This perception seems to have come from participants' interpretation of their wives statements. For example, respondent 07 states that when he asked her to know about her income she told him *"I am a women and I have needs."* Similarly, respondent 02 said *"my wife opened a bar while we were living together without my knowledge but she used to tell me she has no*

money”. Most of the participant’s wives were housewives and it seemed like as they began to earn money, their behavior began to change as respondent 01 said “*when she started earning a good sum of money, she felt that her eyes opened to look for a better person than I.*” According to the participants, staying outside of home, interaction to quite a lot of people at the business place, and earning money led their wives to acquire unhealthy relational interaction and behavior with their husband. Wrong interpretation of personal freedom and independence in making decisions about financial matters along with bad friends have contributed for the women to look family relationship and marital union down and for a reduced commitment to their family. The statement of participant 01 substantiates this view of the husbands’ as he said that his wife used to tell him bluntly; “I want my freedom and am fed up of living neither with you nor with the children.”

The paragraphs above portrayed the participants’ view about family economy and means of livelihood before the divorce and their interpretation about the wives behavioral change following their engagement in income generating activities. The narrations further revealed that, after their divorce, the men fall into economic crisis because their wives took their money, their house property, and the business. Statements directly taken from participants narrations are evidences of this: “I used to have 35 employees who are working in my business but now the business shrunk to have only 5” (participant 04). Another participant stated “I used to be a business man but now, I am a taxi driver because she frozen the money I have at bank, she sold my car and one of the car damaged because of accident” (participant 03). As they described their situation, most of them lost all their money, their house, and their business as the result of their divorce.

The underlying factors that participants attributed to the problem are the high value and

commitment the men had to marital relationship, unrestricted trust they had on their wives in addition to their interest for economic prosperity by establishing a two earner family. They feel that such betrayals wouldn't have happened had the women stayed at home. However, I as a researcher couldn't get the opportunity to cross check this view since the major interest of this study is about post divorce lived experiences of divorced men who are caring for their children. I asked them about their marital life as an introduction before stepping up into the post divorce experiences.

2. Family Belief System

According to the view of the participants, their belief system, whether it is religious or not, had helped them to get through their problems before and especially after their divorce. Mostly, as the participants revealed, what they believed in was related to their religious view in terms of trying to cope with their problems, they mentioned how God or Allah helped them or gave them the strength to get through the problems they faced. For example, participant 02 said, "my wife got me stabbed and tried to kill me but God spared my life..." As the participants stated, the believe that some higher power is looking after them when they felt like they had no one to turn to, gave them the strength and hope to live again and try to become someone. Moreover, as most participants (02, 04, 05, and 07) revealed, it is their children who gave them the strength to fight their problems because thinking about their children, who are entirely dependent on them, gave them the wisdom and courage that life has many other alternatives. Children have lives who are at the mercy of their father's support and who will end up in the dark otherwise. All of the participants described that this view about their children, more than own personal interest for

life, was an impetus to struggle hard against the challenges of divorce.

3. Marriage

The participants revealed that marriage is a passage way that led them to form family. They stated that, the reason behind for them to get married was; love, extended family influence, and unexpected circumstances such as pregnancy: “I got into marriage because she was pregnant (02).” This information of participants revealed that, some of them had interest of getting married while others did so having been compelled by emerging situations in the relationship. As participant 07 said, “I got married to fulfill my dying mother’s wish because she wanted to see me settle down”. Regarding to the process, some got married with ceremonies while others began to live together; some took adequate time, in their view, to get acquainted to each other while others rushed in to marriage which, as they said, resulted to be a regrettable thing to do later on in their life. Participant 05’s opinion substantiates the later view about the marriage process: “if I knew her true behavior before, I would not have married her.” Moreover, participants (02, 03, 06, and 05,) asserted that, their wives’ families expected them to cover for all their wedding expenses and even took money from them to cover the few commitments they were expected to bear for the wedding and hence, they have spent in thousands for marriage expenses and things related to it.

3.1 Marital Relationship

The initial marital relationship between the couple was a happy one. Hence, without waiting much longer, and in the pursuit of a better economic life for the family through the engagement of the wives into income generating activities, some participants exerted the family energy and resources for establishing small business activities for their wives (01, 04, 05, and 07). But, the result that participants received from their wives was the opposite from what they

expected. As the participants revealed, the perception they had on marriage and family was distorted by their wives behavior and experienced a life different from their expectation.

Research participants have also raised important issues of their families that call for a healthy interaction among members for the normal development and stability of their respective families. The findings in this regard constitute the sub-theme and are presented here below:

3.1.2 Sharing family responsibilities

Household management

In view of the interviewee, household management refers to cooking and feeding family members, cleaning the house, taking care of children and their husbands, buying consumption goods, employing and monitoring housemaids, and monthly family budget management.

Participants stated that, in our country, especially in a marital life, it is expected that the wife has the major role of taking care of household activities even if she is engaged in other paid occupations while, the husband is considered to be the provider. However, their experience is different from this common knowledge about women's role in the family as they claimed that they were the ones' who do much of the household activities. They stated that, their wives' behaviors were contrary to what is expected from women in the Ethiopian family in that: they do not get up early in the morning to cook for them, do not show interest for managing their home leaving the burden on their husbands. And some wives used to leave every household chore to their maids without caring whether or not things got wasted or damaged. Statements taken from participants verbatim reveal this view of the husband: "my wife is lazy and I used to go to work with an empty stomach" (07); "I used to come from work and cook, clean, and wash the dishes" (05). Hence, it seems like the husbands were left with the responsibility of managing their house and covering for household expenses.

Childrearing role

The average time that the women deserted their husbands is 18 months ranging from three month to three years; following the birth of a child or children. In this regard, a good example could be the statement of participant 05: “My wife disappeared leaving a three month old child on me”. The finding in the following few paragraphs will illuminate how the participants responded to the behavior of their wives narrated above.

According to the participants’ point of view, the mother’s responsibility to her children is expressed through playing the role of a mother as nurturer and care giver for her child or children; breast feeding, washing their body, changing diaper, giving food, teaching them to behave in good manner and loving their children unconditionally. If a mother refrains from such responsibilities, the participants concluded, it can be said that the mother do not have a healthy relationship with her child or children. Having to believe in such conclusion, what the participants experienced with their wives led them to believe that their wives didn’t have a healthy mother-child relationship with their child or children since they; did not breast feed their children, used to make their children work beyond their capacity, used to hit their children in ruthless manner, used to starve their children, not buying them close, not washing their children’s diaper and cook for them and most of all, they didn’t use to set a good examples for their children, (my wife used to take her child to the man’s house she used to have affair with and make her wait for her until she finishes her business with the man, participant, 04). And the participant found this behavior to be very sickening and unthinkable to do. Participant 02 said, “my wife packed her child rice for lunch and intentionally added a smashed glass in the rice and my child’s tongue was cut when she ate it”. From the above statement, it can be understood that, the participants used to observe their wives behavior towards their children. To their view, the

behavior their wives used to demonstrate towards their children could be taken as a good example of erroneous motherhood.

Maintaining Family Stability

According to the participants', what they know about the major responsibility of the husband is to play the role of provider for his family, that is, supporting his family with money while the wife manages the money for household expenses. Other than this, the men involving themselves in household chores, buying their wives and their children materials and extra activities they did for their family, for them, was an indication of their commitment to their family.

According to the above paragraph, the participants revealed that, they were committed to their family and they were a loving husband to their wives. In their opinion, they have done beyond what was expected of them as a husband to keep their family intact. Participant 01's report substantiates the above statement; I have done everything I could to maintain my family together and tried to avoid divorce from happening because I was aware of its consequences. Supporting this idea, participant 02, 03, 04, and 05 have said, they begged their wives through friends and elders to avoid divorce but their attempt failed and they got divorce at last. From the participants lived experience and revealed statements, what can be understood is that, it was their wives who were the once who initiated the divorce and who were not committed enough to keep their marriage.

To convey their commitment to their marriage, the participants also added, according to what they used to understand while they were married, giving their wives what they asked for, giving them space to make their own decisions and letting them do the job that their wives preferred and not checking their day to day activities. For them, such form of relationship was a

way of expressing their love to their wives so as to help their wives develop assertiveness and let them be free to make their own decisions. It was also their believe that it will ultimately benefit the family as a whole. Unfortunately, according to the participants, their wives did not fully comprehend their husbands' intentions rather used it as an opportunity to distance their husbands from what they believed is their personal affairs. And it became a major reason that created gap in their marital relationship.

3.1.3 Change in behavior

According to the participants, the longer they lived with their wives, the more they began to learn about their behavior. Most of them stated that, their wives behavior started to change after they were engaged in business and started to earn money. Contrary to this, participant 03 had to say that his wife didn't accept him from the outset as she was introduced to him by her mother in a kind of arranged marriage. She was not interested to live with him as husband and wife and this premarital arrangement might have led her to eventually opt for divorce. The behavior of their wives that are considered unacceptable by the research participants included; staying late after work hours in the name of spending more time at work, going to their parents' house whenever they please without informing their husbands, giving more space for their parents and making decisions on family issues with parents consultation, showing too much love to money to the extent of worshiping, and generally demonstrating normlessness by making individual decisions at the neglect of communication with their family particularly the husbands. Few of them also reported to have seen apart from hearing from people about the marital infidelity of their wives.

3.1.4 Poor Family Communication

Among the family issues identified from participants' narrations is communication and

the behavioral changes of their wives are revealed through their manners of communication. As the women distanced themselves from interacting with their husbands they also retreated from discussing important family issues. Verbal and non-verbal communication styles of the women gradually became embarrassing for the men. And yet research participants try to attribute the poor communication that steadily appeared with their wives to the women's wish and consequent action for economic independence. The participants stated that, their wives began to disrespect them and started saying hurtful things that negatively impacts their feelings. For example, participant 01 said that his wife looks him down and tells him as if she feels to have lived with a person who deserves to be her guard and regrets marrying a poor guy like him. He said that her statement is belittling and she had never dared to say that, had she been committed to her marriage and family. Adding to this idea, participant 06 stated that his wife used to insult him in front of people and his children. It seemed like, the participants wives started to communicate with their husbands in unhealthy manner because they were beginning to lose interest in their marriage and in their husbands. As participant 06 said, "my wife used to tell me she can live a better life without me and my children".

1. Extended Family Influence

According to the participants, the level of extended family meddling on their marriage depended on the level of attachment that their wives used to have with their families. In their view, extended family is said to be intrusive in marriage, to the level of affecting the healthy functioning of the family; if the woman chooses to stay at her family's house without consulting with her husband, if the woman makes decisions that involves family matters being advised by her parents without the knowledge of her husband, and if the woman's extended families stay at the couples house to the level of affecting privacy and disrespecting the husbands. As the

participants revealed, they have experienced the intrusion of extended families from their wives side that affected their marriage in a negative way. Supporting the above statement, participant 05 said “after the divorce, my wife’s mother told me that her daughter is better off than staying with a rootless guy like me”.

The participants stated that, they used to treat their wives families with respect as a way of showing respect for their wives but, their wives didn’t have respect for their side of the family. Supporting this statement, participant 06 said, “When my mother comes to visit her grandchildren, my wife will leave the house by taking the children with her, tells my mother not to come and/or leaves my mother alone with the maids, then my mother stopped visiting”. Some participants also revealed that, they used to fight with their relatives because their wives used to misinform them about their families on purpose. Participant 04 substantiates the above statement; “my wife told me my relatives were in some way responsible for the death of my son and I stopped contacting them, but I regretted for what I did when I knew the truth”.

2. Post-divorce experience of men

According to the participants, their after-divorce experience includes the following aspects: social relationship, financial stability, and psychological stability, and visitation and their collective views as group with similar experiences are presented below:

Social relationship

According to some participants, their divorce negatively affected their social relationship with people. As they described it, people will make their own judgments about them in relation to their divorce, up to the point of blaming them for breaking up their family and will change their attitudes towards them without even hearing their side of the story. Supporting this idea, participant 04 said, I have lost the respect I had with people and I was excluded from Idir as a

result”. Whereas other participants stated that they had good relationship with people after their divorce because when people see their situation, they used to sympathize for them and used to be kind to them. Participant 05 validates this statement: “my neighbor used to show me how to raise a child and we became like the family my wife or her family ever wore to me.”

Family economy

According to the participants, they have faced a serious economic crisis as a result of their divorce. They tried to justify their opinion by pointing out what their wives did to them after their divorce and according to them; their wives took almost all their money, took almost all of the house property or sold their property, and took the business they opened for them.

Participant 02 supports the above paragraph by saying” my wife tried everything she could to finish my money, she took everything I had, sold my car, and froze my bank account”.

According to the view of the participants, as a result of facing financial problem, few of them became victims of starvation, they didn’t have bed or blanket to wear, they didn’t have a pan to cook or a glass for drinking water. Revival from the economic crisis has taken time as they didn’t have money in their hands and even to eat food and provide things for their children, they used to sell their cloth and shoes, work as daily laborers, and ask people for money. Participant 04 supports the above statement by saying “I used to jump my lunch because I couldn’t afford to eat three meals a day”.

Challenge of rearing children

participants revealed that, they were very challenged in raising their children because, they never thought they would raise their children alone , they didn’t have the knowledge of raising children and they also didn’t have the skills because this is how they were raised from childhood. Participant 05 said, “I am a man, I didn’t have the knowledge or the skills of raising a

child. The participants have also stated that, they faced the challenges because among other reasons, they were not psychologically ready to raise a child alone because, according to them, they grow up seeing the mother raising her child, and what they know is, it is the women who is considered to be a nurturer and caregiver. But in their case, they stated that, they were expected to play the women's role of being the nurturer and caregiver. According to them; they carried their children on their back and raised them, they cook, wash cloths, clean house, feed, and have done what they believe a mother would do for her children. It seems like, as the result of their challenge, the participants were psychologically affected. "I used to have nose bleeding problem that resulted from my stress and anger, p.02). Participant 06 also said, I used to be stressed and I got diagnosed with hypertension.

Visitation

According to the participants, their wives wanted to visit their children after their divorce; some have arranged a program for their children to visit their mother's, some allowed their mother's to come and see their children, while some used to come and visit their children without consulting with their ex-husbands. According to participant 04, his wife used to visit his child in secret after she saw her beauty and talent. The participants stated that, even after their divorce, their ex-wives still plan to sabotage their lives through their children. Participant 01 said "my wife used to tell me she will make the children I love the most, my enemies". As the participants revealed, some of their ex-wives used to visit their children regularly while for most, the visitation period didn't last long. Participants have the fear that, even if they come to visit, they work hard to misinform the children to develop a negative attitude towards their fathers.

"I told my ex-wife never to call me or the children again because she visited them once in two years and told them as if she has the plan to take them to the United States of

America and arose their interest which has never been there before. But she was unable to keep her promises and left without even saying goodbye and hurt my children's feelings (p.03)".

According to the participants, they facilitated for their ex-wives' visit so that their children would not feel empty on one side but, most of their ex-wives used the visitation as a tool to further hurt their ex-husbands (01, 03, and 04). Impact of Divorce on Children

From participants view, the process they went through before divorce and the challenge they faced after it has, in one way or another, affected their children in terms of their school performance, their communication with people, their affection towards their mother and their psychological stability. Some participants stated that, their children lost interest for education as a result of their parent's divorce and for some, it make their children deviant. Participant 03 said," my wife made our son quit school and when I brought them with me, he was not learning and he seemed dead inside". According to the participants view, the divorce affected their children's social activities; some children didn't want to go out from their house; some children didn't have friends at school, while other children began to be with friends that have bad manners. According to participant 03, his son didn't know any games, and he didn't play with other children. According to most participants, their children didn't want any type of attachment with their mother because they used to observe their mother's attitude towards their father and because of how their mother used to treat them in general. Participant 02 substantiates the above statement; "my child tells me she doesn't want her mother and she even tells me to get married". Moreover, according to the participants, what worried them most was their children witnessing a fight between their parents at young age, things they couldn't analyze and understand with their child minds and for such exposure not to affect their psychological stability. But, most

participants (01, 02, 03, and 04) revealed that as a result of their divorce; their children used to be stressed, they became anxious, tensioned, lost their interest for education, and even became exposed to anxiety problems. Participant 02 said, my daughter was very anxious and she used to get up whenever she hears something. Participant 04 also added, divorce is very damaging and hurtful because it does not only affect the divorcees but also their children who do not have any part in their parent's problems.

3. Readiness for remarriage

According to the participants' view, during their marital years, they have been deceived by their wives, lost their property as a result of the divorce, and witnessed their children suffering from unhealthy marital relationship and consequently divorce. As a result, they stated that, because of what they have experienced with their wives, their view of marriage has changed and holds a negative connotation for them. Supporting the above statement, Participant 05 said, "I will not get married again because I don't want to make the same mistake again and hurt my child". It seems like what they have experienced during their marital relationship has let them to believe and to negatively perceive marriage. Participant 03 substantiates the later statement; "marriage is a hell and I will not get married again and go to hell."

7. Legal procedures

In relation to the procedures they went through because of their divorce, the participants have complained about how the appointments get delayed and how it takes long time to get whatever court decision. They have also stated, until they get verdict from the court, they have suffered a lot. Participant 04 said, "I was ordered by the judge to give all the property to my wife

and I didn't have anything to eat at the time". It seems that not getting decision on time from the court was one of the factors that contributed to the problems that the participants faced in the process of the divorce.

1. Coping mechanism

According to the participants, they have faced many challenges and problems as a result of their divorce. In order to get through challenges, as the participants revealed, they have applied different techniques that they believed will help them get through their problems. They have mentioned the following coping mechanisms that were applied in dealing with after divorce situations; to make themselves busy with work so that they will not think of their problems, to make themselves believe that they can live without their wives, to believe in their prayer so that it can give them the strength to move on, to consider children as a motivation to get back their interest to live again, to read books, get advice from people, and sharing their experience with friends so that they could learn how to cope with their problems. By believing in forgiveness and forgetting about the wrong that is done to them, they have managed not to fix themselves on the past rather mobilized their energy to look towards their future. Supporting the above paragraph, Participant 07 said, "instead of avoiding my problems, I faced it and I tried to substitute it with prayer and hard work."

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter synthesis the information gathered from the participants with the knowledge obtained from the literature review. Here the findings will be discussed in major areas of participants lived experiences that include; economic, social, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the impact of divorce as discussed by the study participants as well as the coping mechanisms they applied. It will, however, be essential to discuss the essence of the study "divorce" as

perceived by research participants in relation to available knowledge and reviewed literature.

View of participants about divorce

Even though the study is focused on divorce, I believe it is essential to mention how the research participants related divorce to what they perceived to be family in order to explain the impact the divorce it had on them.

According to the participants, the thing that constitutes the term family includes; husband, wife, and children and these people should live under one roof for a long period of time to be called as family. When people form a family, they are in another way binding to each other socially, economically, and emotionally. When the husband and the wife reach to a level of disagreement that will break up the family system, then divorce will occur. Divorce, as founded from the finding, is a very harmful and damaging thing not only to the divorcee but also to the children involved because it will not only break up the family but also expose them to social, economic, and psychological problems. According to Faghan and Churchil (2012), divorce has been found to have an impact on all members of the family but with more emphasis on women and children considering their vulnerability to multiple situations in society. However, the findings revealed that, the divorce had a severe impact on the men and their children as it is believed to have on women and their children. Kiernan and Mueller (1998), support this idea by stating, divorce will replace the feeling of love and affection that the couple had for each other with the feeling of anger, resentment and betrayal ,as well as, the person's living adjustment, which is alone, in terms of decision making in their daily activities.

The Socio-economic impact of divorce

The findings that are revealed from the research participants' confirm that, the major reason that the participants disclosed to be the contributing factor for their financial instability

after their divorce was unfair distribution of property settlement; their wives took almost all of their house property. Furthermore, the field data shows that, without the consent and knowledge of the research participants, their wives took almost all of their money and sabotaged their business. Ellington (2003), has stated that mostly, compared to the man, the living standard of the woman will decrease dramatically immediately after the divorce and the women will face difficulty in terms of economic stability. But in the case of the research findings, the men were also victims of economic crisis; some had to sell their cloth and shoes to provide for their children while others had to work as daily laborers for survival.

Social life is among the sensitive issues mentioned by the research participants' that was affected by the outcome of their marriage dissolution. As a result of their divorce, the participants relocated and changed their living environment, they lost contact with the people they knew; including their own family members, some changed the type of occupation they had, and some were even excluded from social activities and lost the respect and the values they had with people. Kiernan and Mueller (1998), substantiate the above statement and refer the social aspect of the impact of divorce as, community divorce. They stated that, when people get divorced, they might lose their previous socialization; friends, living environment, and work.

The psychological impact of divorce

The participants stated that, as a result of their divorce, they have lost part of property ownership and their economic status has reduced. In addition to that, not getting the appropriate social support; from families, friends, or other people, while raising their children used to make them feel frustrated. The post-divorce relationship they had with their ex-wives was not only unhealthy but also emotionally abusive and hurtful. Avis (2000), supports this idea by stating that, it is easy for newly divorced individuals, particularly those with fewer resources,

to be preoccupied with the immediate stressors of life following divorce.

Moreover, sense of failure in their life achievements because of the divorce has brought the feeling of loneliness, stress, anxiety, and depression as explained by research participants. Such severe stress and instability caused by unhealthy marital relationship and that has reached at its climax by the crisis of divorce has led participant 03 to go temporarily crazy:

I had a severe car accident and when I got out from hospital and went home, my land lord told me that my wife had legally divorced me and she took my children and disappeared, in addition to that, she took all my property, sold my car, took my money, and froze my bank account,I became mentally illbegan to live on the streets...and got healed after two years of holy water treatment. The above statement is an empirical evidence of the extent to which divorce has negatively affected the psychological wellbeing of the participants. Supporting this statement, Kelly (2000) and Landucci (2008) stated that, parents will experience anxiety, exhaustion, and psychological stress after the divorce resulting in the decline of the assistance they give to their children in terms of affections, language stimulation, academic support, emotional support, financial assistance, and support in social maturity. Fitzpatrick-Strand (2002), have also found that child's coping skills, family functioning and stability, pre-and-post divorce conditions, and external support systems are among the factors that determine the extent of the impact of divorce and how fast the child could adjust to the changes. Supporting this statement, participant 04 said "Because of the confusion caused by the divorce and lack of immediate support, my daughter was exposed to stress and anxiety that later on turned to serious problem: she used to faint at school..." The findings show that, divorce not only affects the parents but also their children's mental stability because of the stress and anxiety.

Coping mechanism of divorce

According to the findings, the participants are currently found in a better living condition physically and psychologically. This became possible because, within an average of two years time, they have begun to adjust to their new life style by applying mechanisms that they individually believed will help them shape their post-divorce adjustment process. The findings revealed that, the severities of the impact of divorce that the participants went through after their divorce were different. In terms of coping, their inner strength and the availability of support system they had, had an influence in how they handled their problem. Even though they all faced psychological problem following the divorce, the level of impact it had on them differed. The story of participant (04) that is captured in the previous paragraph is a typical example about the variation in participants' experiences. Mosher and Handal (1997) stated that, people who possess the ability to respond positively to negative life consequences and stress adapt more positively to large stressors like divorce. Moreover, individuals tend to adjust better to divorce if they have more personal resources, such as higher income, education level, or family system.

According to the revealed information, some research participants have tried to adjust to their problems through secular life and others had used their belief system as a major tool to get through their problems. Various studies show the positive effect of religion on the negative life consequences such as psychological distress and general stressors (Mosher & Handal, 1997). Supporting this statement participant 04 said "I was someone who gave up in life and waiting for my death, but God gave me hope and strength to live again". The findings show that, the participants have used their personal and social resources to cope with their stressor events. The personal resources include; reading books, believing in their capacity to change, forgiving and forgetting their past and working hard. While the social resources include; believing in prayer and spirituality, by taking their children as motivation, getting advice from friends and

experience sharing, and support from family members. The above coping techniques had helped the participants to hope for the future and become a better person for themselves and their children.

Application of Theoretical Framework to Research Findings

The research findings revealed that, the participants have experienced multiple stressful events during their marital relationships that resulted from; infidelity, difference in belief system, communication gap, losing interest for spouse, and others. As a result, the participants stated that they have struggled to keep their family intact by attempting to overcome the stressors using family resource as well as the environments; their children, in-laws, and friends. Unfortunately, the efforts was not enough to keep them exposed from the crisis; divorce. After the divorce, some of the events occurred to the participants were; reduced social status and social participation, leaving work or changing the type of work, managing household and taking on different roles, and financial instability. The initial crisis have exposed the participants to the above mentioned additional crisis and attempting to cope with these crisis using internal or external resources was not effective and in return exposed the participants to additional stressor events such as; loneliness, mental instability, feeling of failure in life, isolation, depression, anxiety problem, and others. In addition to this, they have described how rearing a child alone was one of the major stressor since they didn't have the knowledge and skills to nurture a child.

Since the level of severity of the impact of divorce varies among participants, the perception the participants had towards their problems also differs and this has guide the participants to come up with a coping mechanism that they believe had helped them adjust to their problems in a healthy manner and get passed it. Some participants thought it will take them time to revive and restart a new life while others thought they were not strong enough to get

through their problems at all but through time, all participants have found a way to adjust with the problems and go passed it. Among the mechanisms they have applied some are; believing in God, using their children as a motive, and working hard.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION, AND SOCIAL WORK

IMPLICATION

Conclusion

Divorce is not a recent phenomenon; in fact, many research reports have been produced on this specific social problem for the past several decades. But by and large the focus of researchers, in terms of trying to understand the impact of divorce, has been emphasized on women and their children. Similarly; the few researchers in our country focused their study on understanding the impact of divorce on women and their children. This is because, women are considered to be less privileged and culturally deprived of their rights for the last decades and hence, are considered to be more affected by the impacts of divorce compared to men. This research on the other hand, has studied the lived experiences of divorced men who took the responsibility of caring for children and found out that the economic, social and psychological impact of divorce is enormous on participants. It can be also concluded that the socialization of men and the socially defined role of a husband and wife in marital relationship has created serious stress and anxiety on men as they assume the responsibility of caring for children and household chores after the divorce. Apart from that, as family belief system shapes the

relationship among members, religious belief is among the strong coping mechanisms that gives hope for future life of divorced men.

The other important conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that research participants' narration of their lived experiences tended to assume marital relationships as unidirectional: making their wives entirely responsible for the divorce. However, relationship problems in a family cannot be explained using linear causality and effect relationship. As family members interactions are complex, sources and consequences of family problems should be explained in their multiplicity affecting the family holistically.

Recommendation

In the contemporary society where culture has a diminishing value in the daily lives of people, divorce is starting to be considered as a normal phenomenon and is increasing at an alarming rate. This needs an immediate attention from professionals, particularly in our country since many families are becoming victims of the problem of divorce. So, I recommend:

- To organize training program to couples and the society at large by family experts about marriage and family and the possible impacts of divorce on the divorcee and their children.
- Provide pre-marital counseling to help the couples avoid divorce and post-marital counseling to help the divorcee cope with their stress in a healthy manner.
- Provide post-divorce counseling to couples so that the conclusion of divorce, child custody, property distribution and child visitation will be smoothly conducted and healthy relationship established between the divorcees. The post divorce counseling will help couples from falling into further crisis because of the reduced status in society, lowered family economy, and challenges associated with post divorce adjustment.
- After the divorce, arrange a parent-child counseling service in order to help the child cope

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with the stress in a healthy manner and to help the parent understand the children's needs and rights.

- To work in collaboration with the social media and give awareness about single-parenting, particularly about men.

Implication for social work

Macro level

- Social workers should advocate for policy to be designed on family so as to protect the right of family and its members in the time of family problem like divorce. Family specific policy direction that guides planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation of interventions that address the psychological, emotional and social crisis of divorce should be among the top priorities of the government.

Mezzo level

- School social workers should work in collaboration with teacher's to help children of divorce improve their education by following up their academic performance
- School social work psychologists should help children of divorce to adjust the changes in their life caused by their parents divorce in a healthy and stable mind
- School social work counselors should have a face-to-face discussion with the parents of children of divorce in order to understand more about the children and come up with a solution by working as a team so that, the children could be supported both at school and their home consistently
- Social work practitioners should advocate for post-divorce counseling institutes to be

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open in order to help divorced men and women cope with their stressors in a healthy manner without affecting their psychological and emotional wellbeing

- Social workers should work in collaboration with religious institutions in order to help married couples avoid divorce, as well as, to spiritually support people to cope with their stressors after their divorce
- The society has already set a gender role for each sex to play and school social workers should work in collaboration with schools in order to minimize the deeply rooted thinking of structural and instrumental role of men and women at early age.
- Social work practitioners should give awareness creation to single-parent men on how to be resilient to the impacts of divorce using social medias: radio, drama, and the like

Micro level

- Social workers should arranging gender-based awareness creation seminars in collaboration with kebele officials in order to address the issue of single-parenting particularly of men, at grass root level.
- Social workers should give awareness creation for men about child-rearing and household management to make them psychologically ready to any possibilities in their future and to change their perception towards gender based roles sets by the society

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Annex: A

Interview Guide Questions-English Version

In-depth interviewee's profile

Date:-----

Time started:-----Time ended-----Place-----Code-----

Basic personal information

Place of birth -----

Age -----

Educational status -----

Family size including the interviewee M-----F-----Total-----

Religion -----

Ethnicity -----

Occupation-----

Housing tenure: own house-----rented from Kebele-----rented from individual-----

In-depth interview Guide Questions

1. Can you describe your pre-marital and marital experience?
2. How long has it been since your divorce?
3. Can you describe how the divorce affected you?

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4. How were you affected by the post-divorce impact while rearing your child?
5. What challenges did you face as a result of the post-divorce impact?
6. How would you describe the challenges of raise your child?
7. To overcome the challenges you faced as a result of your divorce, what measures did you employ?

Annex: B

Consent Form

I am a post-graduate student at Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work. This research is conducted for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters Social Work (MSW).

Dear participant,

The following information is provided for you so that you can decide to either participate or don't participate. So, it is your decision to decide not to participate or withdraw from this research at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher.

This research aims to conduct a research and understand how divorced fathers, who live in Addis Ababa and raising their children, are managing to live after the post-divorce impact. This will be helpful in-terms of educating divorced fathers by providing information and sharing experience. To produce quality information, your willingness to participate and honesty to discuss issues is necessary. This interview will be held between you and me. To capture every information you give me, I would like to tape record this interview and I would ask for your willingness with respect.

If you have any concern and questions concerning this study, you can contact me on my cell-0913-24-98-93.

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If you agree to participate in the study, I would like to ask you to sign. Thank you in advance for giving me your precious time for the interview.

I have read this form or its been read for me and I have understood and agreed to participate in this study. And I reassure my full consent by signing on this form.

Participant's code -----Signature -----Date -----