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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

***THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF
POST-DIVORCE PROBLEMS OF WOMEN IN ADDIS ABABA: THE
CASE OF WOMEN THAT CAME TO EWLA***

SELOME ARGAW

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THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF POST-DIVORCE PROBLEMS OF WOMEN IN ADDIS ABABA; THE CASE OF WOMEN THAT CAME TO EWLA

By

SELOME ARGAW

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL

1.1 Introduction

Marriage is said to be the pillar of the society and when couples get married it is assumed that they do it by will feeling that they would live happily ever after. The image of the marriage that is idealized does not include divorce (Kirk & Okazowa, 1998). However sometimes the story becomes different once the couples get into it. As soon as they get married or after some time couples may find out that they have many differences and disagreements may arise as a result. When various problems arise and the couples are unable to solve these problems or these problems are so grave that they cannot live with them they resort to divorce.

Although divorce may be an uncomfortable experience to both the woman and man, there are many factors that make it more unpleasant and stressful for women (Daniel, 1994). Among the many problems we may find difficulties in coping with economic situations and facing hardship, being fully stretched by double roles and readjustment to the changed roles and social environment. However we should not confine ourselves to these problems only but also to the damage that it might bring to the psychology of the women as a result of loneliness, depression and rejection.

In Ethiopia, it is believed that, divorce brings many difficulties to the women. Studies have shown that many women who are living in third world countries like Ethiopia have fewer choices in life other than getting married and having children. Most Ethiopian women are dependent on their husband financially and they are less prepared for careers (Daniel, 1994). Because of the traditional sex role assigned to women, that is being a wife and taking care of children, they are confined to the domestic sphere. Hence few are educated and have marketable skills. On the average a mother gives birth from four to five children (Daniel, 1994). In addition, due to the limited opportunity for education and training, and due to the low level of development of the country, they have few opportunities to get employment and support themselves and their dependants. Hence because of the overall situation of the country, women in Ethiopia are going to face problems that are not encountered by other women living in developed countries.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

When a marriage ceases to be a comfortable one or when the couples could not live together peacefully, the ultimate solution will be divorce. Usually when the couples decide to get divorced or when one partner makes the decision it is done with the intention of ending the misery and unhappiness once and for all. However difficulties are bound to arise even after divorce. Even though the problem one faces in marriage and after divorce are different, it is far from the truth to say that a person has eliminated all the worries and troubles by getting divorced.

Many researches have shown that even though both women and men have some common problems that they face after divorce, it is widely agreed that the problem is magnified on women (Weitzman1985, Albretch 1980, Arendell 1987). When couples go through divorce it's the women who suffers the most economically, socially and also psychologically. This may be because of the pre-divorce situations of the women or because of factors that arose after the divorce. Because women's lives change tremendously after divorce, they have to make adjustments and this may be difficult.

Even though we have said that women encounter difficulties when divorced, it does not mean that all women face the same problems and the extent is also the same. The stress and adjustment problems that the women have to tackle differ in accordance with differences in cultural, environmental and personal characteristics of the women among other things (Daniel, 1994). In accordance with this the problem that divorced women in Ethiopia will face in this study will be different from those that have been reached upon by other researchers in other settings. This is due to the fact that Ethiopian women live in a very cultural and economically underdeveloped country.

Hence this research hopes to find out the economic, social and psychological problems that divorced women face and the differences that exist among the women. In addition to that factors that created these differences will also be researched.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research attempts to shed light on the problems that women face once they separate from their husbands and have to live alone.

Specifically the research will strive to:

- ❖ find out the economic, social and psychological problems that women face when divorced
- ❖ find out the factors that contribute to the difference that exists between the women if there is a difference at all
- ❖ forward some practical recommendations as to what should be done to alleviate the problems

1.4 Justification of the Study

As it has been said divorce is taken as the ultimate problem solver for a marriage which is unhappy and uncomfortable to the couples. However, divorce comes with its own problems and these problems are grave for women.

As researchers have revealed divorce is one of the most stressful phenomenon one has to go through in ones lifetime. This phenomenon is going to put women into a traumatic and highly tensful life experiences. On top of this the women face economic problems which makes them live on the edge of poverty. As it would be shown in the literature review among households that are living in poverty those which are headed by females (female headed households) rank the highest. Besides this they are also going to face social adjustment problems in

that they will not be able to attend social events and be socially active once they are separated from their husband.

However there is no much research done in this area. Especially those researches that we see around are not focused on the experiences of the women and are not presented in such a way that shows how the women relate to their situation. Hence there is a need to do a research that brings out the voice of the women.

In addition, there is a need to alleviate the problems that the women face after divorce. In order to do this we should make sound recommendation for those concerned and these recommendations should be based on research.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

As it has been said divorce is one of the major life events which causes great stress and many other problems to the women. Be it for the factors that existed before divorce or that came after women have been known to suffer the most than men. This is because divorce poses great adjustment problems to the women. It is suggested that divorce is one of the phenomenon that tend to be highly stressful and demands great adjustive efforts (Coleman, 1984). This adjustive problem is why women find it difficult to cope up with the stress of divorce. Since they have to make a transition from being married to unmarried and this in turn bring its own consequences like economic, social and psychological problems it is hard for the women to cope. However, this

adjustment problem might not be the same for all women because there are many factors that determine the degree of the adjustment problem. This is because the age, sex, occupation, economic status, personality makeup, family situations affects the nature and extent of adjustment problem to be faced by the divorcee (Coleman, 1984). This shows us that the position that the women had before divorce has an effect on the problems that she is going to encounter after divorce.

One of the reasons that the women face problems of adjustment is because of their position in the family. Through out time family is known to be the place where women face oppression. With this in mind feminists have repeatedly criticized the nuclear family in that it carries the notion of the man as the breadwinner and the woman as a full time wife and also a mother (Catlett & McKenry, 1996). She is assigned these traditional roles so that she is confined to the home. These researchers further note that this notion of the woman is taken as the ideal and traditional one serving the interest of the family. And this has made women face many problems when they have to go out and earn their living and support a family by themselves. They encounter a change of role in that they now have to be the breadwinner.

Feminists also believe that the position that the women has in the family has significant impact in their social relation in the family (Catlett & McKenry, 1996). They further note that this kind of gender relations causes inequities in the larger society which in turn causes differences in the access for resources

like education and finance. Because of these gender roles that is attributed to the women and men the women stay at home with no opportunity of getting education and earning their living. Hence this theory is saying that the family, as a place where gender roles is assigned to the women, has made post-divorce adjustment difficult to women because they have to face change of roles as they get divorced. This in turn causes economic, social and psychological problems.

Women also face adjustment problems because by being married one acquires the identity of a married person. Especially this identity is important to the women since she is usually dependant on her husband. Necessarily this identity will change once she gets divorced (DeGarmo and Kitson, 1996). 'Adjustment to the loss of a marital identity has been defined as an identity reconstruction process' (DeGarmo and Kitson, 1996 p.230). It means that one has to reconstruct identity from being a couple to being single upon divorce.

However the degree of the adjustment problem that one faces will be determined by the significance the other spouse had in the formulation of the spousal identity (Lofland, 1985 cited by DeGarmo and Kitson, 1996). This is to mean that the extent of the identity adjustment will be influenced by the degree that one spouse is dependant on the other. Usually when women become dependant they participate in social activities as a couple and these activities in most of the cases involve the friends of the husband. Because of this the women find it difficult to participate in social gathering.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 General Background

When one gets married no one thinks that it will end in the future and it is also considered to be bad luck to do so. There are very few, if at all, who, when they get married, think about the possibility of divorce (Ruth, 1989). However, for various reasons, which the spouses did not think about at the time of marriage, they find out that they cannot live together and decide to get divorced. Both couples need to reach an agreement on the fact that they are tired of each other and do not love each other, and these characteristics of marriage no longer exist. (Ezeokana,1998).

Although divorce is not considered to be a new social phenomena (Ezeokana, 1998), it is a major source for the disintegration of the family. It is a phenomenon that brings major changes in the way of life of the family in that before there used to be one household but now there are two. Hence it is considered that couples will resort to divorce only when they find no satisfying solution to their problems. However, despite this the divorce rate is said to be increasing in the world. The increase has been attributed to many factors by different researchers.

It is said that divorce rate has increased because of the fact that it has been made easily accessible by law (MacLean, 1991). This was achieved when the

transition was made from fault divorce to non-fault divorce. In a fault based divorce a spouse may only get divorced if he or she can prove that the other spouse has committed a fault which the society recognizes as serious enough to justify ending the marriage. This kind of divorce was based on the idea that marriage is a lifelong commitment from which a person should not easily be released. In no-fault divorce system, however, it is enough for the person who has filed for divorce not to be happy. There is no need to prove the fault of the other spouse.

The other reason for the increase in the rate of divorce according to Dike (1986), as cited by Ezeokana (1998,p.35), is the 'relatively recent emergence of women's political, psychological and economic independence and as such emancipation of woman'. In the earlier times women were more dependants on their spouses than today. Because of their dependency there was a tendency for them to want to stay in the marriage even if they were unhappy. Hence divorce, which was taken as a last resort to an unhappy marriage became easily obtainable when women's financial dependence on their husbands weakened as their independent resources increased by working outside the home. Studies have shown that women who are employed and more or less have some kind of income that is independent to their husband are more likely to be divorced than those who are not (Ezeokana, 1998).

The other factor that may be mentioned for the rise of divorce rate globally is the change in society. As we have said divorce was considered as a crisis by the

society (MacLean, 1991). But now this outlook has changed and the phenomenon has been more acceptable. This change of attitude towards divorce may be attributable to the increased rate of urbanization and modernization. This has somehow contributed to the decrease of the moral constraints and 'strict codes of ethics which used to be effective mechanism of control' (Daniel, 1994, p.8). This may also be taken as a factor which has increased the divorce rate in Ethiopia. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of cities in the rural areas leading to urbanization.

In Ethiopia, although there is no comprehensive statistical data that indicates whether the rate of divorce has increased or not, it can be deduced from our surroundings that it has somehow increased. However, here it has to be admitted that this increase in number has to be seen in light of the rate of marriage also. On the other hand, 'the existing ethnic politics, job displacement, economic crisis and the change in attitude towards marital relationship may be among the many potent reasons that account for the increasing rate of divorce in our country' (Daniel, 1994,p.32).

Whatever the rate (high or low) divorce has a profound effect not only on the spouses and children, but also on the society as a whole because family, the ideal one, is considered to be the pillar of the society. When a spouse decides to get divorced, it is considered to be a means to end unhappiness and discomfort on one's life. However, this is far from the truth because the period of after marriage comes with its own problems. Various studies conducted in different

places have shown that women's and men's experience during this period is very different (Albrech, 1980). This difference exists for various reasons. Women may experience this time in a different way than men because social attitudes towards unmarried person, customs and economic circumstances are often determined by sex (Ruth, 1989). The societies regard toward women who are divorced and their economic status is different which makes the problems they encounter and their life after that different.

What we have to note here is that the experience among women also differs with the difference in their age, educational status, and number of children among other things. However generally divorce involves many problems such as division of assets, decision on who will accept what kinds of responsibilities for raising children and provision for the support of children. Generally speaking, the problems women face are economical, social and psychological. The review will concentrate on these aspects giving special emphasis on women who have children.

2.2 Economic Problems

As we have said the experience of women and men after divorce is different. This is also true for the economic problem that they face. Weitzman in a study conducted in the United States (1985, 323) stated that 'while most divorced men find that their standard of living improves after divorce, most divorced women and the minor children in their household find that their standard of living plummets'. Most women have admitted that the most difficult part of their

experience was coping with the economic fall and financial insecurity prompted by divorce. (Andrell, 1987)

A study conducted by Weitzman (1985) in California has shown that comparing income to needs, divorced men experience an average 42% rise in their standard of living in the first year after divorce while divorced women experience a 73% decline. According to this study because of the fact that women usually earn much less than men, they are disproportionately over represented among the poor, the illiterate and the unemployed than men are. They do not have sufficient earnings to adequately support a family.

However Stroup & Pollock (1994) (Cited in Olson & DeFrain, 2000) revealed contrary findings in that the income of men also decreases as compared to that of married ones. This study, however, found out that the women's income showed a 42% decline when compared to the 10% decline of that of the men. According to Eshleman (1991) many divorced women have complained about being in constant financial crisis and of not being able to pay their bills, more stressed and less satisfied with their lives than any other group.

Also most studies show that female-headed households are over represented in the whole population which lives in poverty. According to Olson & DeFrain (2000) female single parents in the total percentage of people living in poverty is increasing. And in another study conducted by Hoffman (1977) in the United States in 1973, it was revealed that from all of the households that were being

headed by females, 44% were living in poverty and although they accounted only for 15% of all families, they compromised 41% of all families living in poverty. Another study conducted by Messiah in the Caribbean in 1983 (cited in Oladumiye & Ofori & OrjiKO, 1998) revealed that women headed households are more vulnerable to poverty. According to her, the reason for this is that the woman bears the sole responsibility of caring for the child, home maintenance and also earning an income on behalf of the household. Those expenses that used to be shared by two people now have to be borne by one.

Related to the issue of economic difficulties a study conducted by Andergachew and Seyoum (1989) on selected towns of Ethiopia asked the participants if they had faced financial problems and had to work more. About 66% of female subjects included in the study from selected Ethiopian towns reported that they had to work hard after divorce than the 34% who reported that the work was harder before divorce. In addition, the researchers inquired about whether the quality of the residence was improved after divorce. In response to this question it was found out that the percentage of women who did not live in decent houses increased from 24.5% to 29.2%. From the study we can deduce that the living standards of divorced women included in the study had deteriorated.

As it has been repeatedly said the post-divorce economic situation of women is highly determined by their education, the job they held during marriage, their age during divorce and the number of years they stayed in the marriage. In addition their situation will be aggravated if they have to care for the children

and the common property settlement also matters.

2.2.1 Child custody

In most cases women are given responsibility of caring for the children and also are not given sufficient child support. On top of that they face the problem of not being paid on time and sometimes not at all.

Studies have shown that in about 90% of the divorces that involved minor children, the women were given custody. This indicates that women have to worry about financial matters not only for themselves but also for their children. This would not have been the case if the child support given to them was sufficient to cover every aspect of the child's needs. However because this is far from the truth they encounter economic difficulties. As studies on child support indicate, most of the divorced mothers are receiving no or inadequate amount of child support for the direct and indirect costs of raising children. Moreover most men are not willing to pay on time.

Census data and other research findings in the United States have revealed that there is pattern of failure of divorced fathers to comply with child support orders and to contribute to the economic support of their minor children (Arendell, 1986). According to Sasse (1997) in the study made in the United States, from over $\frac{3}{4}$ of divorced fathers who have court orders to pay child support, only $\frac{1}{4}$ pay fully and on time. In another study conducted by Hoff (1991) in 1985, from the 78% of all the divorced women with children who were awarded child

support, only 48% received the full amount, 25.8 % received partial payment and 26 % no payment at all. Another survey conducted by the US census bureau in 1981 revealed the fact that less than half of the women who were awarded child support received it as ordered, while 30% received partial payment and the remaining percentage received nothing (Weitzman, 1985). A study conducted in 1980 in Canada also showed a similar result in that only 1/3 of the women received full payment while 1/3 received partial payment and the remaining no payment at all (Arendell, 1986).

In the study conduct by Arendell (1986) on 60 woman 60% of the divorced mother had sought enforcement of child support through the legal process at least once. And they further said that the ones who sought legal enforcement of child support found only more legal expenses and increased frustration without succeeding in getting the monthly child support.

In addition most researchers agree on the point that in most cases child support awarded by the courts do not address the need of the child effectively and do not acknowledge the fact that the child's need increases as she/he grows (Arendell, 1986; Kirk&Okazawa,1998; Sasse, 1997). According to the latter researcher usually the amount awarded is less than half of the cost of raising a child.

2.2.2 Division of common property

The other factor that aggravates women's economic situation after divorce is the way the marital property is allocated. When two people got married and live together they accumulate property which is considered to be common even if the woman is a housewife and the property is bought by the earning of the husband (Albrecht, 1980). The law of most countries works to the effect of dividing this property equally.

In the previous times, where most jurisdictions followed the fault system for divorce, the property used to be divided depending on who was the reason for the dissolution of divorce. Accordingly, the spouse who was responsible risked giving most of the share of property to the extent of losing it all. These kinds of sanctions were believed to help maintain the institution of marriage intact.

After many years of using this system, a transition was made to no-fault divorce. In this kind of divorce it is sufficient to be dissatisfied with the marriage in order to be awarded a divorce. In addition neither party is penalized for the divorce. As a consequence any property that they have acquired while living together is going to be divided equally between them. This is even if only one spouse was working outside of the home bringing the money during marriage. However 'a spouse who has been economically dependant in the marriage has little power in bargaining on the division of the property' (Sasse, 1997, p.237). In the cases where the spouses cannot reach agreement about their communal property the decision will be left to the judge who, usually, will take into

account the contribution of each spouse.

However there are some who feel that this transition deprived women the legal and financial protection that was provided to them by the previous law (Weitzman, 1985). According to this researcher the equal treatment law ignored the fact that the women have been confined in the homes losing opportunities for carrier development. He further notes that equal division often entails the selling of the common property including the family house which exposes the woman to financial dislocation and impoverishment. However what he did not take into consideration is the fact that in the previous law whosoever was at fault risked loosing all the property let alone get half of it. Usually when the women can no longer live in the marriage for different reasons they file for divorce. Hence they risk loosing some or all of their property.

In addition most of the property that is susceptible for division is tangible ones like car, house, furnishings. However the intangible ones like the work experience and the career development one has acquired are not considered in the division. Usually it is the woman who sacrifices her own carrier to further her husband's. This contribution of the woman in the development of her husband's education and professional attainment is not taken into consideration in the final division (Arendell, 1987). It is not considered to have been acquired jointly.

2.3. Social Problems

The process of going through a divorce and obtaining one has generally

disruptive effect on the social lives of the individuals involved (Albrecht, 1980). These changes may range from change or modification of relationship with former spouse and children, friendship patterns and involvement in social activities.

The social problem is significant on single working mother because divorce puts a limit on time, energy and money that she has to devote to her own life and has little time to devote for others (Weitzman, 1985). This researcher, his research in California, found out that most of the women he interviewed maintained one or two close friends and that their larger circle of friends gradually dissolved. Moreover lack of money deters divorcees from participating in shared activities.

During their marriage women tend to stay close to the husband's friends (Arendell.1986). And when that marriage disintegrates the women find themselves alone because they cannot keep their relationship with his friends and they have lost contact with theirs. This is because a wife rarely socializes without her husband (Ruth, 1993). And when she goes out in the social arena alone she enters a new territory.

Even if she dares to go out and socializes she will always be regarded as the "formerly married person" which makes her a somewhat outcast. Because the lives of the women evolve around their husband and their children they find it very difficult to adjust when the situation changes. As both Edwards and Johnson (1991,233) has said 'individuals who are less socially integrated are

more prone to find social life hard because they rely on their husbands’.

However studies conducted in this area seem to have contradictory results. Research conducted by Andargachew and Seyoum (1989) in selected cities in Ethiopia revealed that female subjects included in the study did not find any difficulty with respect to acceptability by other people. The data showed no difference in the social acceptability of females before and after divorce. Among the women that were studied, 75% reported that it was easy for them to be socially accepted before divorce while 73% indicated that social acceptance was better after divorce.

Mostly it is acknowledged that married friends feel uncomfortable around their divorced friends. Arendell (1986), in her study, found out that over three-quarters of the women included in the study experienced losing former friends usually during or immediately after divorce. According to this study, friends withdrew from the social relationships with their divorced friends for several reasons. For one married friends felt uncomfortable about how to respond to the changes prompted by divorce because they become knowledgeable that their own marriages might be at a risk. Moreover their divorced friend’s changed financial circumstances limited the activities they might share. Because of these facts divorced mothers change friendship networks and begin to circulate in a new community to replace friendships that are no longer satisfying. They acquired friends who share with them the new concerns and emotions of the divorce experience.

Again the research done by Andargachew and Seyoum (1989) revealed contradictory finding in that 64% of the female respondents indicated that it was easy for their friends to visit them after divorce whereas it was about 55% before divorce. This shows that there was no change in the social status of women before and after divorce and therefore they encountered no problem in this regard.

Also studies have revealed that the relationship that a woman has with her ex-husband depends also on the way their marriage has ended. Arendell (1986) in this respect states that a marriage that has been dominated by serious conflicts and violence and which has ended in hostility results in bad relationship between the two.

As to their relationship with other men, the divorcee finds something different from what she wants (Ruth, 1989). This is because she comes with a new status and new image which makes it difficult for her to engage in women-men relationships. In addition she finds herself being time and again treated as a sexual target (Ruth, 1989). And men are not very much in favor of dating women with children (Arendell, 1986). Hence divorced women with children find it difficult and consider themselves as unfit for sexual relations

2.4 Psychological Problems

A person who has gone through divorce is bound to face psychological problems. However the researches conducted in this area reveal a wide range of findings that are contrary to each other.

Weitzman, (1985,p.235) in his research conducted in California says that "psychological distress that a divorcee suffers is revealed in that she or he exhibit more symptoms like nervous breakdown than other persons in another marital status like separated or widowed". This research further notes that 'this is not surprising since divorce and marital separation consistently rank second and third in a list of 42 stressful life events'. He further notes that although the women may be faced with various difficulties after divorce they are more likely to find their lives after divorce more satisfying than they thought it will be. In this study most of the women reported that they are now functioning better than when they were in the marriage.

In another study of 60 divorced women conducted by Wallerstein in US (cited by Eshleman, 1991) it was found out that they have the feeling of anger and loneliness. Eshleman (1991) further notes that single parents are more prone to be depressed, suffer anxiety and have lower self images.

Although both women and men go through this psychological problem, 'women seem to experience the greater stress and their stress seems to take a higher fold' (Weitzman, 1985 215). This is because women tend to regard the process of

divorce with more emotional emphasis while the men perceive it in a more pragmatic and financial terms (Sabalis and Ayers, 1977). Women tend to view it in a more personal way while the men are detached from the process. The other factor may be that the degree to which the sexes are bound to experience this feelings of loss and failure is also different because men tend to repress and deny this feelings while the women are more open about it, (Sabalis and Ayers, 1977).

However contradictory result is found in the research done by Concoran (1997) in Canada. In this research it was found out that women experience less stress and better adjustment in general than men for various reasons. Women have a tendency to rely more on social support and they feel relief when marital problems end.

2.5 Factors That Contribute To Post-Divorce Problems Of Women

Various factors contribute to the aggravation of women's status after divorce. For one, most women are unemployed and are dependent on their husbands financially. If they are unemployed, for a large portion of their life parenting and housekeeping are their primary occupations (Ruth, 1989). Because of this fact they have neither a personal income that they have accumulated nor do they have enough experience to help them land a well paying job if at all they get a job. In addition to this they lack confidence in their ability 'to hold a good job in a tight job market' (Olson & DeFrain, 2000, p.499). Hence when they get

divorced they have to go and look for work even if they have no marketable skills, no experience, no work history and no seniority. These things make the road to looking for work very hard. Because of their lack of experience they have no or little worth for the market.

Even if the woman used to work outside the home during her marriage the salary she earns will be minimal and she has to provide for herself and her children with this meager income once she gets divorced. Low-level jobs and low wages are typical to women employees and job discrimination plays a powerful and direct impact on their lives (Ruth, 1989). Hence, because of the societal thinking and the existing situation it will be very difficult for those who have been a housewife all of their lives to go out and earn a living. Even if they do, it will not be enough to cover all their expenses and that of their children's.

The other factor that affects post-divorce adjustment of the women is their educational status. Here different researches have revealed different findings. Educational background can be related to having the ability to adjust to divorce more quickly and also getting the right job. According to Kelly (1982) those divorced women who did not have proper education and had not worked outside of the house are more prone to suffer from poverty. In addition as to this researcher the less educated women face difficulty in making a transition from being married to being divorced as opposed to those who have higher education. On the contrary Thiriot and Bucker (1991) have found out that education plays little role in the process of coping up with divorce.

The third factor that can be mentioned here is age of the divorcee. As it can be seen in various researches older women have difficulty in coping with the difficulties that they face both financially and emotionally. Because of their age they are unable to go out and compete for work. Moreover, the study conducted by Wallerstein (cited in Eshleman, 1991) reported that anger and loneliness was more persistent on those women who were above 40 years old. However other research found that older women who have been married for a longer time seem to be well adjusted after divorce than the younger ones (Cranwold, Pedler, and Schellie, 1979 cited in Ezeokana, 1998).

2.6 Divorce Laws And Their Implementation In Ethiopia

As was the case in many countries Ethiopia used to follow the 'fault based' system in granting a divorce. In the 1960 Civil Code it was provided that divorce by mutual consent is not allowed (Art.665). It further provides that the condition of divorce and its effects differs whether the spouse who filed for divorce has managed to prove serious cause for the divorce (Art.666). Meaning if the spouse cannot prove the serious causes enumerated under the law then there are some sanctions to be imposed during the division of the matrimonial property. This sanction may be giving some percentage of the share of the common property to the extent of giving up the entire share.

Then in 2000 a transition was made from the 'fault system' to 'no-fault system'. In this system divorce is allowed when the spouse can no longer live in harmony

and have lost all mutual regards for each other. Here there is no need to show the fault of one of the spouses for the declaration of the spouses. In the same regards the Revised Family Code (hereinafter referred to as RFC) provides that the only requirement for a divorce is to have irreconcilable differences between the spouses. The reasons that compelled the spouse(s) to file the divorce does not matter for the proceeding. However it is provided that the court should have a talk with the spouses to try to find out their problems in order to reconcile them. In addition it might also order some cooling period for the spouses to think over their problems and also solve their problems with the help of family arbitrators. Apart from this the court does not have any power of refusing to grant divorce based on the fact that the reason forwarded for the divorce is not sufficient.

Under the RFC two types of divorce proceedings are recognized. The first is divorce by mutual consent (Art.77). In this proceeding the couples file for divorce together. When they file for divorce they usually agree upon the effect of their divorce. Meaning they decide upon who would be the custodial parent, the amount of child maintenance, visitation right and also the division of their property. They present their petition merely for the purpose of making their divorce official.

The other type of divorce proceeding is where one spouse files for divorce (Art.81). In this kind of petition the matter of divorce is dealt with before its effect is addressed. It is usually in this kind of petition that the judge makes an

attempt to reconcile the couples and also give them cooling period. Although it is provided under the law that the court should consult the couples even if they filed a petition together, this law is not usually, as the researcher has observed, practically implemented. Once the couples decide that they cannot live together divorce is granted. Then a separate petition is needed in order for the court to entertain the division of property and also, sometimes, the matter of child custody.

Nowadays divorce by mutual consent is being preferred because it takes less time to litigate and also it is cheap cost wise.

2.6.1 Child custody

Once the court has pronounced divorce the effects of divorce has to be decided upon. One such effect is the issue of the custody of their child/ren. If the couples have minor children it is up to the court to decide upon whom would be left the care of the children, maintenance and also the right of the non-custodial parent to visit the children. It is provided under Art. 113(1) of the RFC that the court has to make a decision on child custody, child maintenance and also visitation right.

In the 1960 Civil Code it was provided that child custody should be decided upon taking into consideration the best interest of the child. However if the child is below the age of 5 then child custody will automatically be awarded to the mother. In the same token the RFC follows the 'best interest of the child'

criteria and the only difference here is that it does not matter whether the child is below 5 years old or not (Art.113/2/). This means the mother will not be given child custody just because of age of the child. In addition the same article provides that in making a decision the court has to take into account the income, age, health and condition of living of the spouses as well as the age and interests of the children.

With regard to the practice of the courts applying this law, a research conducted that covered most of the regions of Ethiopia (Semhal & Robyn, 2006) have shown that the practice does not square perfectly with the law. The factors that are listed under Art.113 (2) of the RFC are not reflected in significant number of court judgments. Whereas the RFC intended child custody issues to be sex neutral, the majority of court decisions have made mothers custodian parent. How the mothers were preferred to the fathers with respect to the standards applicable in custody issue of the child is not stated in the decisions. This shows that the mechanism of appointing custodian parents that was in effect prior to the adoption of the RFC still looms large.

But there were also cases where at least one of the factors were used to justify appointment of custodian parents. This can be shown from a number of court practices where the child's preference was taken into account in appointing custodian parent.

All in all the rules that are incorporated in the RFC with respect to giving custody power to one of the parents are hardly being applied. In the absence of strong implementation of these rules which have objective standards, divorced women are more often than not left alone with the burden of custody power over their children. Needless to say, this further compound the problems of divorced women as they will be occupied with their roles of care givers and as it would be difficult for them to pursue other options to make their adjustments easier.

2.6.2 Child maintenance

Once the issue of custody is settled, the parent who is vested with custodial power over the child may demand maintenance allowance for the child. The law has provided that sufficient allowance be given for the child after divorce by the non-custodian parent. One requirement for deciding on the amount of maintenance allowance for the child from the non-custodian parent is that the custodian parent has to show amount of income of the former.

The above research has shown that this burden of proof on the custodian parent poses great difficulty in decision of maintenance. This is due to the fact that a significant number of employment opportunities reside within the informal sector which make proof of amount of income and even the income itself hardly possible.

Apart from this problem, women who become custodian parent face even greater problems as the majority of them do not know their ex-husband's salaries.

The problems of maintenance are especially hard on women since they do not have any savings or properties in their own name. A research conducted in this issue which has managed to review court files has shown that maintenance is not ordered as strictly as the law provides. Out of the files surveyed in only 51% of the cases was maintenance allowed (Semhal & Robyn, 2006).

2.6.3 Division of common property

Another important legal issue that the court has to decide on upon divorce is concerning common property. The law has provided rules concerning division of property where the contract of marriage has not incorporated provisions concerning such issues or such contract is not accepted in a court of law.

As a rule, division of property does not include property which the spouses possess on the day of their marriage or which they acquire after their marriage by succession or donation (Art.57 of the RFC) and when the court approves on the request of a spouse, properties acquired through selling such personal properties will remain personal (Art.58). If such request is not submitted by the particular spouse or such request is not approved by the competent court then that property will be considered as belonging to both spouses.

In addition, the RFC considers all income derived by personal efforts of the spouses and from their common or personal property as being common property (Art.62). It is thus this latter category of property which becomes the object of division after divorce has been pronounced. In general, the law states that spouses shall divide common property equally (Art.90).

When we come to the actual practice of division of property we see that implementation of the legal rules is not adequate. The same research cited above found that division of common property was favorably disposed toward the men. 60% of women interviewed in the research stated that they had common property. And out of these 65% stated that they received half or more out of the common property while 9% of the women stated that they have not received any property or declined to answer at all.

This shows that a very significant number of women do not receive their rightful share of the common property. In another aspect, division of common property poses a problem to the women in that it might take longer that it should have. The researcher's findings show that only 41% of the property division was concluded within 3 months, while 4 % of the property division was concluded within 12-18 months, 7% took 18-24 months and 4% took greater than 24 months.

All in all, women do not benefit from the property division to the extent that they should.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Methodology

Feminist research is essentially done, according to Judith (1996) “to redress the sexiest imbalances of masculine scholarship”. It bases its thinking on the fact that women have been excluded from the process of the making of knowledge and that in the traditional research method they have been considered as the objects rather than the main source of the knowledge that is being researched upon. It has been a big debate that the traditional research methods have been formulated by male and are very much reflective of the patriarchal rule and by this helps sustain it. With this idea in mind feminist researchers have been trying to challenge these research methods and come up with feminist research methodologies whereby the participants are not alienated and objectified. Women’s experience and standpoint is important and one can only reflect on this only when the women are able to speak through the research.

However, Patti (1988) in her article “Feminist Perspective On Empowering Research Methodologies" emphasizes the point that not only the end result of feminist research is important but also the process that one goes about doing the research is important to the research. She, in explaining this point has said that, “emanicipatory social science must be premised upon the development of research approach which empowers the researched and contribute to the generation of change”. Here she is trying to forward across the point that the

process that one employs in performing the research is useful not only to get the best results and not to exclude women but also to raise the consciousness of the women who are the participants. In employing a technique that empowers women a transformation of social relation can be achieved. It will help raise the consciousness of women and make them start challenging the existing paradigm.

According to Jennifer (1997), feminist research differs from the traditional research for three reasons. One is that it moves to eliminate the power relationship that exists between the researcher and the researched, has a major role in the changing of the social inequality that exists in the day to day life and lastly it concentrates on the standpoint and experiences of women. The power relationship between the researcher and the researched should be eliminated because the reality that exists should be seen not as how the researcher sees it but rather how the participant looks at it. Feminist research believes that the participants are the experts of their own reality since they are the ones living in the social world and they can recognize the phenomenon that influences it. (Jennifer, 1997) Hence it is important to engage the participants actively in the research process beginning from the formulation of the topic until the research data is analyzed and presented.

When we come to qualitative research, it is the 'collection and the analysis of material that seeks to uncover meaning and understanding of

experience'(Jennifer 1997, p.9). Instead of explaining the reality by numbers, it tries to find out how the participants interpret their own reality and also experience their own world. The researcher tries to look at the participants from the inside of their world (Shaw and Oka, 2000). It emphasizes on 'subjectivity, personal meaning and definition, commonalties and giving voice to the oppressed' (Jennifer 1997,p.2). In doing this, the researcher is very much involved in the research and the question of objectivity is eliminated. The researcher goes into the natural world of the people that is being studied and come face-to-face with them (Shaw and Oka, 2000). The methods employed in this type of research are very much reflective of these characteristics. The most common ones are field work, interview, content analysis, participant observation and so on. These methods usually require for the researcher to go out in the field and engage actively with the participant and get them in their natural settings.

Because of the characteristics of qualitative research that we have seen and because of the research methods that it employs, feminists are known to favor it for their research. As we have said, feminist research tries to find out about the reality of the world as how the participants see, interpret and experience it in the same way that qualitative research does.

When we come to the research topic at hand, it tries to find out the problems that women encounter after divorce. It does not aim to find out how many get

economically affected, how many socially and so on. It rather wants to know how the women involved in a divorce and has gone through it describe their situation, how their social setting has affected their life after divorce and how they describe their world after divorce in their own words. As it has been said time and again one chooses to go through divorce to end a disturbing and an unhappy marriage. It is thought to be the ultimate problem solver. However the situation might be different once the women get divorced because the time after divorce comes with its own problems. Hence the research tries to find out how the women found their life after divorce, whether or not what they found is what they expected. All in all it tries to find out their life after divorce in their own words as they are situated in their own reality. Because of this aim of the research and because the research is a feminist one the researcher has chosen to use qualitative research methodology and hence employ the methods that pertain to it.

3.2 Sampling

In qualitative research the amount of data collected is small because it does not strive to generalize but rather provide an in-dept view on the topic (Benjamin, 1999). As Patton (1990) cited in Benjamin (1999) has provided since qualitative research focuses on going in depth in a relatively small sample which can even be a single case, the sample that is to be selected is going to be a purposive one.

As the title indicates the research area that has been chosen is the capital city of Ethiopia, that is, Addis Ababa. This city has been chosen because one can find all kind of people which makes it easier for the researcher to select from such variety. There are many variety of people who have different educational, economical, social, cultural background which makes it an ideal place for selection of a participant. From Addis Ababa again, the participants were chosen from the files found in the Ethiopian Women Lawyer's Association. These women came to the association to get legal advice and have finished or are in the divorce process with its help.

The sampling technique employed here is hence the criterion. According to Benjamin (1999), in this kind of sampling the participants meet some kind of criteria that is going to be set by the researcher. In the research at hand the problems that women has been known (by previous research) to face different problems according to their educational status, independent economic and social status, access to resource, the number of children that they have custody of and so on. Because of this the researcher has put down certain criteria for the participants in order to be fit for the research.

From the literature review that has been done previously, women have been known to face major adjustment problems when they have children to raise because their great stress is economic one. Hence the first criteria used was having children. The second criterion that the writer would like to employ is the

level of education that the divorcee has. As we have seen from related literature, this matters because the woman has to earn her living once she gets divorced and her education is an important factor that determines the kind of job that she is going to be able to acquire. Aside from this part we have to see whether the woman used to work before the divorce.

With this idea in mind the researcher has used 25 participants. There were two focus group discussions each of which had five participants. From this number of participants, all of them had children except five. In addition, from the 25 participants 20 were housewives and their educational background was diploma and below. 21 of the participants used in the study were married for at least five years before they got divorced and they have not remarried. In addition 20 of them had one or more children. Here the researcher would like to mention that no formula has been used to determine the number of the participants that are going to be used and also what criteria to use for the selection. It is purely based on prior literatures that have been written in this area.

3.3 Data Collection Method

Choosing a good data collection method is important because it is the part of the research where the researcher gets the information that is being researched upon, that is, from the person, group, institution, etc. Marshall & Rossman (1995) provide that, when choosing the research methods that are going to be used there are certain things that the researcher has to take into consideration. Among other things the researcher has to choose methods that help get

adequate information, is cost effective, and is feasible when considering the sensitiveness of the topic. In addition the method that is going to be chosen has to have relation to whether the type of information that is sought is quantitative or qualitative, should be practical and efficient so that the researcher will be able to extract the information that is needed. Hence in order for the researcher to be able to get information on the topic that is being researched she has to make sure that the method chosen is an appropriate one by taking the above things into consideration.

Having the above ideas in mind the researcher has chosen to triangulate methods. Hence, interview and also focus group discussions are used in the research. Separate discussion about each method will be made by emphasizing on their characteristics and how they relate to the research topic.

3.2.1 Interview

One of the methods that is used in this research is interview. Interview is the most frequently used data collection method in a qualitative study. This method has certain characteristics that make it favorable to this type of research.

To begin with, the interviewer can probe for a more detailed answer and immediate clarification is possible (Bailey, 1994). In a simple questionnaire the researcher will not be able to get a detailed answer and will not be able to get the real feeling of the interviewees in their own words. In addition, a wide range of persons can participate in that it does not require the ability to read or write.

And also many people are more comfortable when talking and are more confident that they can forward their opinion by talking rather than by writing. Apart from this, it is also possible to record the spontaneous answer of the respondent which may be more informative than other data collection methods. Another important characteristics is that it allows the interviewer and the interviewee come face to face during data collection which will help the researcher get the answer from the participant directly so that the participant's answer will not be distorted by the opinion of others because they will not have time for consultation. This is because it is important to have the perspectives of the participant and not the researcher's nor other people.

Because of the above characteristics that interview has it will be useful for the topic at hand. It is important that the problems that women face after divorce be told by the women themselves as they see it and not as how the researcher sees it. In order to achieve this interview is helpful because the women can tell their story by their own words. Moreover the interviewer can go in-depth by asking questions that probe and also leaves a room for explanations and make immediate clarification. As we have said talking makes people more comfortable than writing because they can go in detail into their feelings and also it will be easier to connect with a human person rather than a paper. In addition the interviewer will be able to choose a place where it is comfortable to the interviewee which will make the divorced women go into their feeling without fear of being over heard. In conclusion we can say that since the research

conducted is a qualitative one it required the employment of such kind of method.

To achieve the goal of the research, the interview was semi-structured. A set of questions was prepared which helped guide the interview. Certain questions were prepared around which the topic that the interviewer and the interviewee talked about evolves. These questions were not restrictive but rather a guidance on which the researcher can ask elaborating questions as the interview goes along.

3.2.2 Focus group discussions

The second method chosen is focus group discussions. Focus groups are 'guided group discussions designed to provide information on a certain topic from a certain population' (Bailey, 1994, 163). It is a systematic questioning of a group of people. This kind of data collection method is stimulating to the respondent in that it makes reluctant participants to come out with their feelings. Since the discussion is spontaneous, it will help the participants discuss their opinion and feelings on the topic.

Especially in the topic at hand this method was employed because the divorcees will be more comfortable to discuss their problems with other people who share their pain and who can relate to them. They will open up more when they hear that other women also share their problems and that the feelings and problems are not unique to them. In addition the participants may also go into their inner

feelings and opinions which might not be possible in other data collection methods.

With this end in mind two focus group discussions have been used composed of five individuals each. Each had a mixed group of women in that some of them had children and some didn't and some have been married for a long and some had not.

3.4 Research Setting

Ethiopian Women Lawyer's Association is non-profit women's advocacy group founded by few women lawyers. It has begun its operation in 1996 G.C. and it currently has its head office in Addis Ababa. It has set, as its mission, to promote the economic, political and social legal rights of women and to assist them to secure full protection of their rights under the constitution of Ethiopia and Human Rights Convention.

In order to achieve its mission it engages in many activities. It undertakes research and law reform advocacy. In addition to this it gives legal aid services for poor women who cannot afford to pay to get legal advice. On top of that it also engages in public education in order to raise awareness of the society on women's rights.

The legal aid office provides free legal advice and counseling in civil and criminal cases to women who have been victims of violence and those women facing

other problems such as marital disputes, paternity issues, maintenance claims, succession rights, employment issues etc. Where possible, the office undertakes mediation activities in order to reconcile spouses and resolve issues amicably, rather than adopting an adversarial approach. The activities are carried out in Addis Ababa (at the head office and at the nine sub-cities) and in the six branch offices and the committees under them (in Nazareth, Diredawa, Awassa, Gamebela, Assosa, BahirDar).

3.5 Managing and Analyzing the Data

This is the most complex part of the research process (Thorne, 2000). Especially for qualitative research it proves to be a very tiresome and complicated one because of the type and amount of data that is acquired. As it has been mentioned the researcher has used interview and focus group discussion for the collection of data and tape recorders are used to record the data. Hence the researcher has used four steps for the management and analysis of data.

3.5.1 Transcription

As we have said the data is collected using tape recorder. Hence transcription method was employed to have the concrete form of data that has been recorded and also to make it easier to work with. Transcription is the graphic representation of the selected aspects of the interview that has taken place (Flick & Kardoff & Steinke, 2004). It is the means by which the conversation that has taken place between the researcher and the researched is reduced to written

form. This makes it easier for the researcher to read what the participants have said and make some sense out of it. Because it is from this that the researcher is going to analyze and interpret the data, it is crucial that it is done carefully.

3.5.2 Coding

After the data in the records is reduced to written form what follows is coding. By reading the transcript again and again I was able to come up with analytical categories. This analytical category was basically informed by the prior literature that the researcher has read (Flick & Kardoff & Steinke, 2004). At this stage there was a need to read the text again and again so that not only those categories that are based on prior knowledge are taken out but also those that are not found out previously.

Accordingly the categories that have been identified were: -

1. Economic Problems

- income level before and after divorce
- decision on child custody
- decision on maintenance
- division of the common property
- overall opinion about economic status after divorce

2. Social Problems

- participation in various social institutions

- relationship with neighbors and former friends
- relationship with the opposite sex
- relationship with ex-husband

3. Psychological Problems

- Feeling about the whole process and the time after divorce

4. Factors

- Education during marriage and after divorce and its contribution to their post divorce condition
- Careers during marriage and its effect on post-divorce condition
- Age of the divorcee and the number of years they stayed in marriage with its effect on their condition

3.5.3 Applying the code

After the categories have been identified from the transcript then they have to be applied to the transcript itself (Flick & Kardoff & Steinke, 2004). There the information that is in the transcript will be classified according to the categories that have been identified previously. In this study, for instance, if we had loss of income as one category then we looked for the instances that has been mentioned by the participants that falls into this category.

3.5.4 Interpretation

This is the last stage of data analysis. According to Flick, Kardoff & Steinke (2004) the reason for such kind of analysis could be to test a hypothesis, to

reach at a theory, to revise an existing theory or so on. After the process of coding and applying this code to the transcript the findings were interpreted to find out whether they conform to prior hypothesis or whether they revealed new findings. At this stage the transcripts were read again and again and interpretation is made by relating it to the particular question that is being asked.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Economic Problems

One of the aftermath of divorce is that it affects the economic status quo for better or for worse. Matrimonial union basically draws resources to a common household. To a certain extent this helps efficient disposal of income. But when the union breaks down and couples get divorced resources naturally go with the respective individuals. This disruption of the status quo affects women mostly for worse.

There are certain ways of knowing whether the women have suffered economic loss after divorce or not. In order to make the findings clear different categories are used to analyze the experiences of the women.

4.1.1 Income level before and after divorce

Measuring the income the couples had during marriage and comparing it with their respective income after divorce identifies the economic effect of divorce. Here what is important is not only how much income they used to get during marriage. Whether the women have any say over this income and whether the husband provided sufficiently is also important for the economic impact of divorce. If the husband did not cover all the expenses of the household then the women may have to cover the gap by doing odd jobs. This might in turn help

her cope with the change in financial status after divorce since working is not going to be a new thing.

The research has found out that when we see the income of the couples before divorce it differs from couple to couple. Under income before we have two broad categories. The first is where the women have no personal income and are totally dependent on their husbands. We can further classify this group of women into two.

The first comprises of those who had some control over the income of their husband's. In this category what we have to note is that the women's control over the income usually changes after some time. This change may be one reason for their divorce or it came because of some disagreement between the couples.

DW4 explains how her husband used to give all his salary for her to manage and how through time this changed.

“Since my husband was a soldier we used to live in the deserts. At that time he used to give me all of his salary. From that money I used to give him pocket money for cigars and small expenses. Other than that I utilized the money as I see fit. However since his income was meager I complemented it by selling injera and tella. Then we came to Addis Ababa. Immediately after that his manner began to change. He met

another women and he had a child with her. He refused to give me money saying that I don't deserve it because I didn't do anything to earn it. After that I tried to cover the expense by selling various things like 'teff, berebere' etc. During that time I even supported his own child."

DW 10 also explains how she and her husband used to talk about their financial situation and how to utilize it accordingly.

"My husband owned a shop and we lived by the profit we get from this shop. We often talked about our expenses and how we should handle our profit. But when I gave birth to my first child I had to stay home with my child. After that my husband stopped discussing the matter of the shop with me. When I asked him about it he told me not to worry and just take care of my children. He began controlling everything that is being bought for the house including milk for my children. I didn't get anything for my personal use. After a while he stopped giving enough money for household expenses on the pretense that the shop is not making enough profit. We began arguing on this and after a while this became the reason for our divorce.

In the second group we find those who had no control over their husband's income at all and lived on whatever the husband deemed was enough and bought for the household.

DW2, for instance, had no control over her income during marriage and had to beg her husband for money.

“He bought teff and whatever he deemed is necessary for the household. I had no control over the income. I even used to give him all of my salary. Then I have to beg him to give me one or two birr each day. Since I didn’t have money to travel by taxi or bus to work I had to walk a long way. I would be in trouble if I didn’t give him all of my salary. But when I gave birth to a child a need came for hiring a maid and also buying milk. So I paid these expenses from my salary and stopped giving it to him. This is when we started quarreling. His control over the income continued after I left my job.”

DW 05 also says she had no control whatsoever on the income of the family.

“We used to live by his salary and some remittance from abroad. He never gave me any money. He was in control. He used to pay different expenses like electricity, water telephone bills by himself. There was no discussion concerning money between us.”

In the same token DW 3 when explaining the couple's income before divorce said: -

DW 3: *He used to give me only about 300 birr per month. The family used to be seven at that time. There were his children from another mother and I also had my own children. If it had been now this would not have been sufficient because every big and little expense is paid from this money. This amount covered school fee for the children, electricity and water bills, and*

food and clothing. But at that time I did everything to make it. I even put some birr in the 'Eqube' so that when I get some money I would be able to buy 'teff, berebre' and so on.

Q. *How much was he getting then?*

DW3: *His salary was Birr1010.*

Q. *Didn't you try to talk to him about it, that is, to increase what he was giving?*

DW3: *Yes I did but he told me that it is enough because he is planning something for the future.*

The other group that falls in the broad category of income are those who had their own income and combined this with their husband's to cover various expenses. When combining their income the couples discuss about their expenses and use it for the betterment of their lives. However this changes after some time where the husband begins to refuse to share his income and any information about it. This usually serves as a ground for disagreement.

DW6, who is a working mother, explains how she used to combine her salary with that of her husband's to cover household expenses.

"At first he used to give me his salary and we used to cover our expenses and our children's tuition fee. In addition, since we had extra rooms in our compound we used to let these. It was with this rent that we bought more

furniture for our home. Moreover we used to save some money. We lived together being considerate for each other. But after he came back from abroad he started to get more money and he started to save money hiding from me. He started to tell me not to open his cupboard. We began to argue because of this.”

DW12 also has the same story in that the couples talked about their income and decided that the wife’s salary will be used for immediate expenses while the husband’s is being used for building a house.

“When we take our 15 days salary and if we get about 400 birr then we use 200 for our daily needs like food and the other 200 for education. When we had our daughter we began thinking about building a house. Before we used to think that since our sons will get married and go away we don’t need a house. Because of this we used to handle our income accordingly. If we use my salary for daily consumption his would go to the bank. Those days were good and life was easy. He used to give me his salary properly and provide for his children. He didn’t used to hide anything. But his behavior began to change after a while. We began to argue continuously. He began drinking and disturbing the children. I began to be afraid that my children would go to the streets. That’s when I decided to get divorced.”

DW7, for instance, said that she used to control all financial matters but things changed when her husband began getting more money.

DW7: *I used to control most of the finances before divorce. My husband used to give me whatever that is he gets and I combined my salary with that. But after he finished his education and started getting a better salary he didn't increase what he used to give me."*

Q. *Did you try talking to him about it?*

DW7: *Yes, I confronted him about it but he said we have managed to survive before so we should manage now. After this we started arguing and when I couldn't bear it any longer I left him*

From the above findings we can see that women have different experiences when it comes to their economic situation before divorce. Their situation after divorce is directly linked with this situation of theirs. It can be observed that most of the women suffer from a decline in their income but the degree differs among them. However when responding to the question of their economic well being after divorce they associate it with the stress they had to go through economically before divorce. So they tend to see their life after divorce better as compared to before divorce even though their income has declined.

From the category of women who were dependent on their husband financially, DW2 has explained that she has to give up her salary to her husband and later on give up her job as whole. However now she says she feels that her situation is better.

She says: -

“I prefer the life after divorce even though he is trying to steal my house. This is in respect of everything including my freedom. Now I can work and use my salary as I see fit. I don’t have to worry whether he is going to buy food or not. The worry that I have is quite different now. So it’s better to worry for oneself because I can do something about it.”

DW3 who said that her husband gives her Birr300 from a salary of Birr1, 100 for a family of seven children feels that she is better off now than before money wise even though at the beginning of the divorce she was worried about it.

DW3: *When he left me I was left in the dark because I did not know what to do.*

This is in that I had to make a transition to what I used to know to a totally new terrain. Before I used to get money from him however small it was. When the money stopped I thought what am I going to do? I am not going to eat stone. I know I’m the one living in the house but I’m not going to eat the walls!”

Q: *So how would you assess your economic situation after divorce?*

DW3: *I live better now than before because I work for myself. ‘Asahrom koleche, lebesem atebe erasen tebeke enoralehu’. I take care of my children. Nothing has happened to me. He turned many stones to harm me. But I live a more comfortable life than him.”*

Q: *Are you looking at it money wise or from the freedom of the mind?*

DW3: *Even money wise I am well off. I have cloth on my back and food in my stomach even if I have to work hard for it.*

DW 6 has a different way of expressing how she feels she is well off now than before by assessing how well she has utilized her share of the property effectively.

“I’d say I’m better off now. You know women tend to ‘mebelecheleche’ when we get money. But I didn’t do that. I wanted my children to have a strong mother. When I got the settlement I built a house. Most women wouldn’t do that, either they would buy a cloths or shop for jewelries. But I preferred a home for my children and myself. And I could go to school until I am 60. That’s why I said I’m better off now.”

However other women who were dependent on their husband financially feel that their lives during marriage was better even though they had no control over the money or the amount was not enough. They say that the meager allowance they received was better than nothing.

DW4 whose husband stopped leaving the control of the finances to her while they moved to the capital city and began seeing another woman feel that she would have preferred living in matrimony for financial reasons.

“Before the little allowance that he gave me (100 birr and 150 birr) was very useful to me. We have lived together being considerate for each other. So I would have preferred to live in the marriage.”

DW 5 who did not have any control over the income that was brought by the husband feel that it is better to live in a marriage where she has no control than enduring her life after divorce. She explains

“I have nothing now. I was better off when I was married. There was money and we just used to live easily. But now I have to fend off without this constant income.”

DW10 who was used to living off the profit derived from her husband’s shop says that life is economically difficult after divorce.

“Life is very difficult after divorce. With the 400 birr I get I cannot do anything. It is not enough for my children. Had it been that I have received my share of the property I would have done something and generated some income. But now my hands are tied and I don’t believe the division will be concluded soon. So now I have to totally depend on my family for everything. We eat what they eat and we live with them.”

DW7 who is also a working mother says that even though she earns Birr 800 a month she has faced many economic difficulties.

“It is very difficult with four children. Especially now I have to pay college fee for the two. Before school fee is small but when we come to the college

fee it is totally different. I was lucky because I had a mother who gave me a house to live in and a sister who sends money now and then. If they had not been there I don't know what I would have done. These days it is very difficult to rent a house and with what ever I am getting both from my job and my ex-husband it would have been impossible to send by two children to college.”

DW12 who also fit in the category of women who had independent income says that she along with her children faced many financial problems and if it had not been for her parents wouldn't have been able to cope with them.

“We faced problems and it was difficult. I got a raise of salary very recently. But I was lucky because I had my parents. My father used to work so they supported me. Then 50 birr was like 5000 birr. But now even if there is money it doesn't do much. Then since there were two salaries it was better.”

4.1.2 Decision on child custody

As literature has shown women are given the sole responsibility of taking care of the children after divorce and they are not provided with sufficient child support from the father to do so. As it has been said most studies have revealed that in 90% of the cases that involved minor children the women were given custody. The research at hand revealed the same finding in that all the

women interviewed who had minor children are the custodian parents of their children. In these divorce cases women are given custody of the child either by the court or by their own free will. There are also cases whereby the father chases the children out of the house and the mother had no choice but to take care of them.

DW6 tells how she has voluntarily taken custody of her children in order not to see them live separately and how the court later on affirmed her being custodial parent. She says: -

“At first he said that we should have one kid each. But I said the kids could not live separately because if they are separated there won’t be any intimacy between them. So I proposed that he take both kids and that I’ll take them if they prefer to live with their mother. When the family council asked me about this matter, I told them that either he take them with him or he give me child support so that I can take them with me. They decided the children should live with me, and said that he should pay me Birr 450.”

In the same manner DW13 and her husband disputed over who would take custody of the children. The matter was sent to the family arbitrators by the court and was decided accordingly.

“My children age 6,10 and 13 began living with me by the decision of the court. During court proceeding both my ex-husband and me demanded child custody. So the matter was sent to family arbitrators. The family arbitrators decided that at least two of my children are old enough to

decide where they want to live. So when my children were asked they said they want to live with me. Based on this the family arbitrators decided that the 6 year old should be raised along with his sisters and brother. When they presented their decision for the court it confirmed it.”

There are also women who took the task of raising the children because of the fact that they have been kicked out of the house.

DW5

“It was not really decided by the court. When I went out of the house I took the younger ones with me. The older ones came later on when they couldn’t live with their father. I asked him if he could at least take care of the older ones he said he is not willing because they are over 18 and they should be taking care of themselves. So I had no choice but to take care of them. They are my children. I cannot simply let them go out to the streets.”

In FGD1 all of the women took custody of their children either because they wanted to be the ones to raise the children or because the father was not willing to raise them and kicked them out of the house.

Others took the custody of the children voluntarily and the court made no decision to this effect. As the women explained this matter was not even raised during the divorce.

These are the experiences of women who took custody of their children without court decision.

DW2

“There was no decision taken by the court. I don’t have any choice because I am the mother. I cannot leave them alone. Even a wild animal who has given birth will not leave it's child.”

DW10

“We have two children and they are living with me. When the court asked where the children are going to live I said I want them to live with me because I cannot bear to live without them. My husband agreed and they have been living with me for the past year.”

4.1.3 Child maintenance

As we have said women are usually given custody of the children in most of divorce cases. In addition they are compelled to raise them with no or meager allowance.

According to Arendell (1986), research and census data have shown that there is pattern of failure of fathers to contribute to the economic support of their minor children and also to comply with child support orders. The findings in this research are compatible with this assertion in that all the women

interviewed who have custody of their children have some kind of problem as regards child maintenance.

For one, some of the fathers have completely refused to provide for their children or to comply with the orders of the court to pay maintenance.

For instance DW1 says that she is raising her children by herself with whatever support she is getting from her family because her ex-husband has refused to pay alleging that he has no permanent job. Even the court has not done anything when she presented her complaint. It simply gave her the advice to leave the matter of child support alone and pursue the division of property. This is how she describes her situation.

DW1: *I raise the children from whatever support I get from family and also from the meager income I get by myself. My husband does not give any money. I send them to school by myself. In fact one of my children have some kind of medical problem and I take care of her by myself.*

Q. *You didn't ask for child support?*

DW1: *I did but he said he does not have any money. I don't have a permanent salary. He said he is 'yeken serategna' so he shouldn't pay.*

Q. *Did you ask the court?*

DW: *He gave the same answer to the court. He even quit his job for sometime in order to be convincing. When he said he did not have a job the judge said he cannot do anything so he suggested to pursue the division of*

property. I could have made him pay if he had permanent job. However since it is temporary he can leave it any time and when he is in need of some money he can go in secretly without anyone knowing and I cannot control this. What can I do if he does not feel any kind of humanity towards his children?

In a similar way the ex-husband of DW13 refused to pay on the pretense of having no money to pay. He even went to the extent of saying that he demanded custody of the children because he has nothing to pay. (We have seen previously that child custody has been awarded to the mother by court when the parents disputed over this fact) She says he stopped working in order not to make payment. But when she told the court this fact she was given the burden of proving that he is indeed working which she found very difficult.

She says:

“I am not getting any maintenance because my husband said he cannot afford to pay. He said that its because he does not have anything to pay that he said he will raise the children. I know he works as a tailor sitting along the street. But he has stopped or he works hidden (I don’t know) in order not to pay maintenance. I have tried to follow him around in order to prove to the court that he works but I have not succeeded so far. Hence the case is still pending and I have been raising the children without any support for almost a year.”

Others like DW2 get no child support because they didn't feel like their husband will pay and didn't want to go through all the hustle to get one.

“I gave birth to twins but one child died when my husband chased me out of the house. When the ‘kebele’ summoned him and asked him about child maintenance he said they are not his children. Then the ‘kebele’ helped me to get support from charitable organizations. Even then he took whatever the organization gave me and sold it. We did not see any money. How could you think that he would pay me maintenance when he is trying to chase me out of the house?”

On the other hand there are also those who feel that the child support awarded to them does not even come near to covering the expenses of the children. The researcher has also observed while working in the Federal First Instance Court, Family Bench that the decisions taken by the court is not considerate of the fact that the children's expenses increase as they grow old and also not considerate of the income of the husband. In addition most of the burden of proof is put on the mother.

The experience of DW6, mother of two children, is typical example for a child support not covering the need of the child fully. Moreover she tells how she has insured he pays monthly.

“I get 450 birr for child support which covers only their tuition fees. I cover all their expenses for clothes, transport, education material. At first our family council decided the amount. But when he started arguing I took the matter to court and the court affirmed the child support. I receive the child support directly from where he works. He said at first that he is going to give me the child support personally every month. But we are divorced now and he may remarry some day and it won't be appropriate for me to ask for me. So when the court asks me how I would like to get the support, I said I'd rather have it directly from where he works.”

DW7 who is a working mother have four children age 22,20,16 and 15. All four are living with the mothers because the father refused to take care of the older ones alleging that they are old enough to take care of themselves. The father pays maintenance for only the two minor ones but the older ones are still in school. So she has to take care of almost all their expenses. On top of that she believes he has reduced his salary when he tells it to the court in order not to pay that much support. However she gave up trying to find out the truth when she became tired of arguing.

“He told the court that his salary is birr1200. Then the court decided he should pay 300 for the two children. I told the court then that he is lying about his salary. So the court told me to present evidence otherwise the maintenance will hold. When I went to his office everybody refused to give me proof of his salary. After a while I gave up.”

DW10, whose husband is a merchant, says she accepted child support awarded by the court because she couldn't prove his income even if she knows he gets well over what he is admitting.

“He pays 400 birr for all the children. This amount was decided by the court based on the amount my husband said he is getting. Since he is a merchant I couldn't prove the exact amount he is getting from the shop. I know he could have afforded to pay well over Birr 500. But since I couldn't do anything I accepted. This amount does not come near to covering what the children are used to while we were living together as a family. So with the help of my family I try to maintain this standard for my children. Other than that the Birr 400 pays only their school fee. The court when deciding the support didn't ask how much I'm spending for tuition, food, clothing. It simply inquired about the amount my husband is getting and then made its decision.”

4.1.4 Division of common property

As studies have shown one of the factors that contributed for the aggravation of women's post-divorce economic problem is the process involved in the division of the common property starting from how it is allocated to the time taken to finish the process. As it can be observed women do not get their fair share of their property for various reasons.

For one the family arbitrators who take the side of the husband put a lot of pressure on them. Because of this pressure the women become tired of arguing and choose to go with whatever they can get. On top of this the ex-husband does many things in order to prevent the women get her share or if she does to make it easy for her.

This is exactly what happened to DW 1 when it took her nine years to finalize the process of the division of the property. During this time she has suffered many problems ranging from the family arbitrators taking the side of the husband to the non-appearance of her ex-husband for court date. With this regard the court has done nothing to make the husband appear and to get things going quickly.

“I encountered many problems during the division of property. It took about 9 years to finalize the divorce proceedings. This was due to the fact that it was sent to family arbitrators many times and there was a need to consult engineers. But most of all it was due to the non-appearance of the defendant. Even if the summons was sent to him via the police he did not come. I pursued the case for almost a year without his appearance. In the mean time the court did not take any action on him. It didn’t even order the police to detain him and bring him and it did not order any compensation to be paid.

When the division of the house was being seen by family arbitrators, he said that he should take the side that he wants. Since the family

arbitrators were from our neighborhood they took his side. They gave many privileges to him. When we divided our house into two there was some 15 cms taken from my side. I gave up this easily because for one I was tired of arguing and also for the fact that he has small children born after me. And right now he won't find a place to rent because he is a drunkard. I did it out of humanity. The other sabotage that was done on me by the family arbitrators is the fact that they gave me the water line. They pretended they did it out of fairness. But this is not true because I know that the water line is on the road and it breaks easily when a heavy truck drives on top this. But I accepted because I was tired of arguing. I did it for 9 years but I didn't want to do it no more. I didn't demand any household furniture and child maintenance."

This discrimination that women face is not only by the family arbitrators but also by the court. As DW2 describes her situation, she feels like the court has not been fair during the division of the common property.

DW2: *I have faced much discrimination in the court, especially during division of the house. The house had only one room when we rented it from the Keble. But during marriage we had built ten more rooms and we only pay 1.50 birr for the rent. I complained to the court that I did not get a fair decision since we had installed electricity, water and also telephone after divorce. But the court after talking to my ex-husband and his children alone decided against me. Even I didn't share electricity, water and telephone line. I even appealed but the decision of the lower court held.*

Q: *What about household items?*

DW2: *I didn't get anything but I signed a paper saying that I did because I was tired of arguing. However I took only one item.*

Q: *Why did you do that?*

DW2: *That's something that has passed. I have even lost my home so there is nothing new.*

As we have said one of the problems that women face during division of matrimonial property is that the ex-husband does many things to prevent her from getting her share of the property. This could be like not appearing during court date repeatedly, claiming that the property is not made during marriage and so on. He may even go to the extent of involving a third party and government offices to make his point. This is what happened to DW3 when she tried to get her share of the house which she has built together with her husband. She describes how her ex-husband went to great lengths to prevent her from getting her share.

“ My husband did many things to prevent me from getting the house that we have built together. This is what happened. He had a child before he married me and he moved in with the mother of this child after we separated. But she instituted a case against him in court saying that the house belongs to her pretending that he was still with me. In court he admitted that the house is her's and not mine. I did not hear of the case

until recently. During our court proceedings (in order for it not to be finished until they know the result of the other case) he claimed that since he goes out of the city regularly for work the court dates should be set six months apart. Because of this my case was seen only twice a year. During this time they plotted to get me out of the house.

In this case they claimed that I was the maid and I have refused to leave. So a decision was passed against me saying that my ex-husband should take the house from me and give it to her since she is the owner of the house. They brought this decision to the 'kebele' to be executed. When the 'kebeles' came to my house I asked them what they wanted. Mind you at this time I did not have any idea about what's been happening. They said that they have orders to take the house from me and give it to her. But I refused to vacate because I know there is no law which says a property should be taken from the owner and be given to non-owners. When I refused they said they are going to come back in the morning and to be ready. In the morning I waited for them with my doors closed. When they saw that I am not going to budge they took me to the police station. The police heard the case and said it cannot detain me because the order was not written directly to it but rather to the 'kebele'. So immediately after that I inquired about the case and claimed to be included in the case. The court then saw the case with me as a party and decided that I am the owner and not the other woman.

However my husband did not leave it at this. He appealed to the higher court saying that a person who does not have any proper authority gave the evidence that I presented to prove ownership. So the case about the division of the house including the furniture have not yet been concluded. So far the case has taken about five years.”

DW15 also faced problems when her ex-husband tried to stash way money without her knowledge and took it out of the bank immediately after they started arguing.

“ We didn’t have that much property. We only had some furniture. I always used to nag him about building a house but he told me there was no hurry. So we did not get around to it. During the divorce processt I heard that he had some money in the banks. However, he has taken it out when the divorce proceeding started. So I claimed that I should get this money since it was deposited while we were still married. He claimed that we have agreed to use it that’s why he took it out of the house. But this is impossible because at that time we were not even talking to each other. Despite this fact the court ruled in his favor. I have appealed and the case is still pending. So far it has taken about 2 years.”

DW6’s ex-husband also used to save money without her knowledge. When they came to the point of dividing the house after divorce he made an offer to pay her share and make the house his own.

“He used to save money without my knowledge. When we put up our house for sale after divorce he used to turn away prospective buyers. Then my husband offered to pay me half the value of the house. The estimated value of our house was around 650,000 birr. During the division of the house we quarreled. You think when you live in matrimony you would live together helping each other. I lived with him bearing all my problems but he tried to stab my neck with a knife. My children struggled with him at first then people who were renting our rooms came after hearing my shouts for help and they saved me. They said ‘why would you risk your life over petty money, leave it to him’ they told me to take care of my health and property will come later. So finally I accepted his offer.”

DW7 also faced problems when her ex-husband tried to chase away prospective buyers to the house in order to prevent the case from being concluded quickly. In this case the husband was the one living in the house during the divorce and she has left the house with her children.

“ Apart from the house we had full household items. It took us about 3 years to finish dividing our common property. He made claim that I do not deserve the house because it’s with his salary that it was built. However his argument did not stick because the house was built after marriage. And when he was asked if he was willing to divide the house equally and live together he refused. I would have preferred this because I am with 4 children and with the cost of a house these days it would be impossible to

buy a house with my share. After this the court ordered the house to be sold and the deeds to be divided equally. So this took about a year to materialize because he refused to show the house to buyers since he was the one living in the house at the time. And when they made an offer he turned them down saying that it is too low. The house was finally sold by the price that he thought is good. He didn't consult me when making a decision I accepted it because I wanted to get over with it."

The other problem that the women face is the time taken to conclude the division of property. From the above cases that we have seen there is a case, which has so far taken nine years and it, has not been concluded yet. Even the simplest division of property tends to take too much time. This is, from what can be seen from the cases, due to the ex-husband, as we have seen above, or because of some reasons that are to do with the courts.

For instance DW4 claims that even if they do not have that much of property it has taken two years to conclude division. As it can be deducted from the case the property that was to be divided was some household items which shouldn't have taken so long.

" We did not have that much of a property. Since he was a soldier we moved around a lot hence we did not get around to building a house. We had a house that we rented from the 'kebele' and he even tried to sell that behind my back. But the law helped me and he was prevented from doing that. Otherwise we had household items that did not have that much of a

value. Their estimate was about 900 birr and I got 450 birr. It took us about 2 years to finish the division of property.”

DW5 says that they only have few household items but division has not been effected yet.

“We have some items like TV, radio etc. These items have been counted but nothing has been done about the division of the property. I only got my clothes and nothing else. We have been divorced in 1994.”

4.2 Social Problems

Various researches have pointed out that divorce has a disruptive effect on the social life of the divorced women. These researches have said that women face many problems in that they experience change of circle of friends, involvement in social activities and relationship with their spouse. (Arendell, 1985, Ruth, 1993) According to Wietzman (1985) financial difficulties also has an impact on the social involvement of the women.

When we come to the research at hand it has revealed a contrary finding in that the women have hardly faced any social change after divorce. In most of the cases it was the women that actively involved in the social activity before divorce and has continued to do so after. They have experienced no strain in the relationship with their neighbors and friends. Even they say that their neighbors and friends have increased being supportive after divorce.

For this also various categories are used in order to make the analysis clear.

4.2.1 Participation in social institution

As to the social institution the researcher has chosen to employ the involvement in the 'edir' before and after marriage as one criterion because in the Ethiopian society it is a major institution where every one puts a great value on. So their participation in this institution before and after marriage is measured in order to find out the change in the social activity they involve in.

With this in mind the women under this study generally have revealed that they have seen no change in their participation in the 'edir' before and after marriage. Even in marriage they were the active participants than their husband and this has not changed after separation.

However some of them admitted that their financial problem has prevented them from making the monthly membership payment. In this area also friends and neighbors have been supportive by contributing some money to meet the required payment. Unfortunately, this has not been true for all the women in that they have to give up their membership for lack of money to pay.

This is the experience of DW5 in respect of her involvement in social institution after getting divorced.

"I was a member of 'edir' when I was married. Now I have managed to keep it with the help of my relatives because I had trouble keeping up with the payment."

My neighbors have helped me a great deal when I was in need. When I left my ex-husband I had only one clothing on my back. But my neighbors contributed some money and bought me some clothes.

My friends are still my good friends. When I need money they never refused. But now it is a little difficult for me to ask."

DW3 says that even if she has to give up her membership in 'edir' because of money problems her neighbors have continued to support her in time of her need.

"We used to participate in Edir. Now he is making the payment since I don't have any thing to pay. He did not use to participate during marriage because he used to work out of the city."

In focus group discussion also the women said that they have been active participants in the 'edir' during marriage and continued to be after divorce. However they admitted that their financial situation has put a strain on involvement in this institution. However they have managed to keep up with the payment with the help of neighbors and friends.

Another woman said that she has continued to participate in the institution and she has not seen any remorse against her because of her divorce.

DW2: *I have continued to participate in the institution with the little income that I get. I am doing this because I believe that it will help me keep in touch with my neighbors. I feel that the members treat me more favorably because of my divorce. They go extra miles to help me in time my needs.*

Q: *Don't you feel uncomfortable to mix with the members especially the married ones?*

DW2: *There is no such thing between us. We don't even think about the fact that they are married and I am not. We just talk like we used to do.*

4.2.2 Relationship with neighbors and former friends

The other category used to measure change in social life of the women after divorce is their relationship with their neighbors and friends. Here friends and neighbors are put in the same category because most of the time for most women their friends are also their neighbors. This may be because of the fact that the women stay confined to their homes and do not have access to places where you might make friends. Moreover they have to stay near the house and they can only socialize with people around. By this I am not generalizing in that women only have friends from their neighbors. Those women who have work and have exposure to the outside world may have friends outside of their neighbors. So both groups are covered in this analysis.

From what can be seen from the experiences of the women, in most cases they have received much support from friends and neighbors. They mostly say that their friends and families have been supportive be it economic wise or just being there in times of need. There are even some who say that getting through difficult times wouldn't have been possible had it not been for neighbors and friends.

One woman in FGD1 describes her experience as follows:

“The neighbors have supported me a great deal. They are the ones who protected when various things were being done to me like throwing of a stone on my house. Even when he left they pressurized him to give me my share of the property. They did not ‘maglele’ me. He even have quarreled with his office colleagues because they have sided with me and told him to give me my share and let me live my life. The society has never outcast me saying that I’m a divorcee.”

DW10 says that she has received much support from neighbors after divorce even though her husband tried to sabotage her relationship with them during marriage by telling false stories about her.

“The neighborhood assists me very much. Not only now but also when he used to chase me out of the house. They gave me water, food and invited me over for coffee. When we got married he told me I should not mix with the neighbors because they are going to tell me false things about him in order to break us up. Since at that time I loved him I believed him. At the same time he went to the neighbors and told them that since I love to talk

they should not tell me anything. So they told me nothing. But one day when we quarreled and I left the house they told me that he is used to doing such thing. They said that he has chased out four women before me.

Another woman in FG2 feels very grateful for her neighbors and friends since they are the ones who stood by her during her time of great stress. She says they have done everything possible to keep her children in school when she had nothing to pay.

“I cannot find any words to describe the generosity of my neighbors. They are the ones who contributed money for my children’s school fees when my ex-husband refused to give me any money. I even sent his friends to ask him for me but he sent them back empty handed. Since they were sad for me they gave me some money which they collected between them. So everyone has been nice to me since my divorce. They have been very supportive. And I participate in every activity like I used to before even better. This is because before I used to worry about what my husband would say if he finds the house empty. So I try not to get involved that much in social activities. But now I can do whatever I want whenever I want to.”

However there are some who says they have encountered no problems with neighbors but the story is different when it comes to the friends and relatives of ex-husbands. Here the findings are contrary in that some say their ex-

husband's relatives have refused to talk to him because of the divorce. However the majority said that his friends have been supportive of them because they felt that the husband has been bad to his wife and children. But here what we have to note is that all relatives and friends are not supportive. Some are and some are not.

DW8 says that even though there are some who have stopped seeing her because of the divorce she has received a tremendous support from the neighborhood and she has continued her social relationships as before.

"I have not encountered any problems socially. Of course some of his friends and relatives does not even want to acknowledge that I exist. But at the same time there are some that does not talk to him because of the things he did to me. Before the divorce I was the one who participated very much in social activities since he was away so much. I drank coffee with my neighbors who are also my friends regularly. I even feel that I'm closer to my friends than I have been. When I got divorced I rented a house nearby where I used to live so that I could be close to the community. So they have been very much supportive of my children and me. They often call my children into their homes for a meal or so. They even lent me money for my child's uniform when he was about to be expelled from school.

DW6 says that her ex-husband's relatives have not only taken his side but also don't want to have anything to do with her children.

“Although his relatives don’t want me I still want them to get along with them. However his relatives think that I have brainwashed my children against their father.”

4.2.3 Relationship with ex-husband

According to Arendell(1986) the relationship the women have with their ex-husband depends on the way the marriage ended. If the marriage ended due to continuous argument and violence then their relationship after that will not be a good one. This assertion is compatible from the findings of this research. The marriages of all interviewed women had ended with a great conflict with their ex-husband and this has reflected in their relationship after the marriage. They all explain that they do not talk to their ex-husband because of the hurt he has caused during marriage and divorce proceeding. Here are some of the testimonies of the women as they describe their relationship with their ex.

DW8 says she does not have a good relationship with her husband because she cannot forget what he has done to her.

“I don’t talk to him because I couldn’t forget what he has done. He doesn’t even want to see his children. Even when I take the maintenance money we don’t see each other. He sends someone out the door to give it to me.”

DW7's story is also the same.

"We don't talk to each other even if we suddenly come face to face we pretend that we have not seen each other. I don't want to talk to him because he has done so much to hurt me. I sacrificed my whole life for him but did not acknowledge that fact in the end. So I don't want to see him."

DW14

"I don't speak with my ex. Why should I? He has harmed me!"

DW1

"After the divorce I do not have a good relationship with my ex-husband. He even goes to the extent of wanting to kill me. This is because of the problem we have in the division of the property. Even one day I met him on the streets and when he tried to hit me I chased him away with a stone. I was even considered insane and some people tried to capture me. I have faced many problems after divorce."

4.2.4 Relationship with opposite sex

Research says that after divorce the women find it difficult to engage in a relationship with the opposite sex because of the fact that men are not much favorable in dating women with children. Moreover women find it difficult to regard themselves as sexual objects. In this research women say that they have received many offers of marriage unlike the findings of the above research. However all of them have not accepted for various reasons like don't

wanting to expose their children to a stepfather, not being allowed in religion, age and so on.

DW1's reason is religious.

"But many have asked me for marriage. However, I did not accept because it is not allowed to get married twice in my religion."

DW 14 say that her children have suffered a lot during marriage hearing their parents argue and she doesn't want to expose them to it again.

"During marriage my husband and me used to argue a lot. He comes home drunk and beats me. When my children try to come between us he hits them also. Since I don't want to expose them to this kind of abuse again I refused to get married. But still there are many offers of marriage coming my way."

DW5 feels that she has no use for a husband because of her age.

" There are some who have approached me for marriage. However I turned all of them away because at my age I don't have any use for a husband. What am I going to do with one? Now all I want to do is forget what happened in the past and live whatever I have left of my life peacefully."

4.3 Psychological Problems

Apart from economical and social problems divorce brings psychological problems to the divorcees. Even though both spouses suffer from stress it seems to be aggravated on the woman. There is contradictory finding in this area in that some researchers say that women tend to find their life after divorce more satisfying than stressful one (Weitzman, 1985, Concoran, 1997). On the other hand others say that it is more stressful to women since they tend to give the divorce process a more emotional emphasis. (Sabalis & Ayers, 1997)

Here also the findings are contradictory. While some regard their life after divorce as stressful and full of worry about many things the others feel they are comfortable with the freedom they have achieved both in respect of their mind and their activities.

DW1 says that she has obtained freedom of doing whatever she sees fit when getting divorced. This in turn has freed her from any kind of worry. She has seen how she is faring off after divorce in terms of the freedom she has lost by being married.

“ For freedom the time after divorce is better. You cannot freely participate in social activities. So I had to ask permission from my office in order to go to the various activities because I always has to be home when he comes in. But now since we are living with my parents I have shifted all my

burdens on my mother. All I have to do now is buy things that are necessary. When I have spare time I help around the house.”

DW3 also feels that apart from her worries about her share of the house she is living a good life. She looks at it in terms of the worries she had during marriage and how she is relieved from them now.

“I’m better now. The only thing that worries me is whether I’ll get my house or not. Otherwise I have no worries. I am living a good life because there is no argument. ‘aleke dekeke aleleme’ I can control my life. So no problem.”

DW8, in the same token, sees her life after divorce as stress free even if she sometimes has to worry about her children. This is because her marriage has been tenseful and divorce has freed her from this tension.

“Sometimes I worry about my children and their well being. I worry about how I am going to make ends meet. Apart from that you cannot imagine how relieved I am. My mind is free from frustration about the tension in the marriage. I feel free in every aspect. Even when I have to work now I do it with dedication with only my children in my mind. I’m free to decide what I do with my money.”

On the other hand there also others who claim that their life after divorce is unhappy and stressful. This is how DW4 describes her life after divorce.

“It was better when I was married. I used to do many things. Even when I buy chicken I do not have to go outside in order to get it killed. But now I have to look for someone to do it for me from the neighborhood. I even stopped buying chicken because I don’t want to call anyone to kill it for me. I am not happy anymore. I am not doing my job like I used to. So my life now cannot be equal to my life during marriage.

DW13 also sees her life after divorce as a lonely one. This is because all her neighbors around her are married and does not feel as if she belongs with them. In addition she always worry about her life now and feels that she has failed in her marriage.

“ I have so many worries now. Before I live by whatever my husband used to provide for me. But now I am not sure what I am to do myself now. With my age I don’t think I could find any kind of job. Even all my neighbors are married and I feel lonely when we are together and they talk about their husbands. I feel that my husband would not have left me if I have been able to give him children.”

From the responses given by the women about their psychological well being there are certain things that can be observed. Those women who said that they are better off after divorce since they are free from divorce are those whose marriages have been full of arguments and tension. In addition they are the ones who have filed for divorce. So they feel that their life is better now

because the divorce has stopped the arguments and the worries they had about their marriage.

On the other hand those women who has said that they were better off during marriage are those whose husbands filed for divorce. This does not, however, mean that their life during marriage was free from worries. However they expressed that they have a sense of failure and they worry that they have lost their status as a wife and do not want to face the outside world as single.

4.4 Factors That Contribute To Post-Divorce Problems Of Women

We have seen that after divorce women face many problems. From the women who participated in this research and from prior literature it can be seen that there are some factors that contribute for the post-divorce problems of women.

4.4.1. Careers during marriage and its impact on post-divorce situation of women

Most women during their marriage are not employed and are mostly dependent on their husband financially. In this research most of the women interviewed were housewives and almost totally depended on the income that is brought by their husband. Sometimes they complement this income by engaging in some kind of petty trade which brings very little profit. On the other hand there were also some that were discouraged by their husband when demanding to start a job.

DW3 had this experience in that during marriage she has asked her husband to start a small business for her but he has refused saying that he has no money.

“I wanted to sell some vegetables and fruits in the market. However my husband told me that he has no money. So how would I get the money to pursue what I want? You have to have some money even for the smallest of business. You have to have 10 or 20 birr. But at that time I had no money and I couldn’t persuade my husband to give me since I did not have any control over our income.”

Most of the women in the focus group discussion also said that it has been difficult to get their own income after divorce because they did not have any job during marriage. Most of them explained that they have been lost immediately after divorce because they did not know what to do about income.

In FD1 one woman explained the difficulties she encountered when applying for a job after divorce.

“ I had finished 12 grade when I married my husband. Immediately after that I gave birth to our first child and I lost hope of pursuing my education or finding a job since I had to take care of my child. After that I gave birth to two more children. I did not work during my marriage. When I got divorced I was given custody of the children with very little maintenance money. So I had to find a job in order to support my children. I have applied for posts of cleaning lady at various companies but there is

always someone with experience. So far I have not succeeded in finding a job. It is going to be difficult since I do not have any experience.”

This is going to be true for almost all women who had no or little experience during marriage because these days there is a lot of competition in the tight market. It is very difficult for a person with lots of experience to find a job let alone a person with no experience or who has been out of the market for a long time.

4.4.2 Education's effect on post-divorce situation of women

The other factor that contributes for the post- divorce problems of divorced women is education. According to Kelly (1982) those women who did not have proper education and had not worked outside of the house are more susceptible to living in poverty after divorce. Most of the women in this research have also given up pursuing their education during marriage and this has an obvious impact on their chance of getting a job after divorce.

Some of the women in this research gave up their education because the sole responsibility of taking care of the children was left to them. There were also some that were discouraged by their husband when trying to raise the issue. On the other hand there were also some that gave up their own dream of furthering their education to support their husband's education.

For instance DW3 mentioned the idea of getting an education. But her husband brushed her idea off.

“ I have mentioned about getting an education during marriage. But he said is it you or the children who is going to get educated? You cannot go out and go to school leaving all your housework. I did not pursue the matter that much because I was not that much aware. Since I came from regional areas I didn’t give it much attention.”

DW7 says that she gave up her education in favor of her husband’s. She works as a cashier and believes that she would have gotten a better salary had she been educated.

“ I always think about education. But I didn’t get the opportunity. My husband wanted to get a degree and at that time my children were small. So I had to take care of my children. After my husband finished his education the idea of building a house came. So I was kind of discouraged. Now I get pleasure by educating my children. I would have gotten a better salary if I was educated.”

In FD2 one woman said that she married her husband while she was still in school and her husband made her drop out.

“I met my husband while I was still in college. He convinced me to marry him before finishing school. He told me then that marrying him would not

prevent me from continuing my education. However immediately after he married me he changed his mind. He told me I could not go to school and education is not for me. We started arguing about this everyday. It became worse when I gave birth. He began saying that I should stay home and take care of my child.”

This is the experience of DW1

“I did try to improve my education. But I have to drop out every time I got pregnant. In addition since I worked shifts it was hard to arrange my schedule. I had the desire to get education but I couldn’t make it. I made my children get education because I don’t have anything to give them when I die.”

DW 14 says that she has been kicked out of the house because she went to school.

“I started going to school but after I finished my second month in school I had to stop. This is because when I came home one day my husband refused to allow me to go into the house. I spent five days outside. I accepted whatever he did to me because I couldn’t live without his financial support. Life in Addis Ababa is difficult if you have nothing to pay.”

4.4.3 Age and its contribution on post-divorce situations of divorced women

Age is also a factor that contributes for the condition of women after divorce. Wallerstein (cited in Eshleman, 1991) in research has found out that older women find it difficult to cope up with their post-divorce problems. I

In this research the women who said that they were lost when they got divorced are the older ones. Even when they describe their life after divorce they tend to refer to their age and how at their age it is difficult to be single. This is because with their age they can not provide for themselves or even get married.

In FGD2 one woman said that she feels too old to do anything.

“I was 50 years old when I got divorced. I got married at an early age and I do not know life outside of marriage. When I got divorced I did not know what to do. I have never worked outside of the house. I don’t think I could find a job now. Who would want an old woman?”

DW 10 explains the difficulty her age has posed like this.

“It is difficult to be divorced at this age. I cannot get a job or get married. What would I do with a husband now? Even it is hard to go into the society knowing that I am a divorcee.”

There are also others who felt that there is still time to do what they wanted to do but didn't do during marriage. They also felt that they could still run around and provide for their family.

One woman in FG2 expressed herself like this.

“ Now I feel like I could do what I wanted to do like go to school. I could even do any job that I might get in order to support my children. This would have been difficult if I have been older. But I believe I can still am able to fulfill my dream.”

But when we see all the cases they always link their being able to cope with their post-divorce situation and being able to provide for themselves with their. In the cases we have seen above the older women have said that they would have preferred to stay in the marriage because they are lost without it at their age.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

CONCLUSION

Various researches have shown that women are bound to face problems after divorce. These problems that they face are broadly categorized into economical, social and psychological. This research also focuses on these problems of divorced women in Addis Ababa.

To find out what problems divorced women in Addis Ababa face, various yardsticks have been used.

To begin with the couples income during marriage and after divorced have been measured to find out whether it a shown a decline. Here we find two categories of women in that during marriage there are those who had some kind of income of their own and those who were totally dependent on their husbands. From these categories we find those who had some kind of control over the income and those who did not have any say at all. Most women in the research said that their life during marriage is better economically. They said that its better to think that they will have something at the end of the day. This is because after divorce they have to figure out a way to sustain themselves. Even for those who had jobs they said that its better to have two income than one.

From the participants some said that their life after divorce is better economically than after. But from their experiences it can be seen that they are

seeing it from the perspective of being free from worry about money. They say that during marriage they had to worry about whether the husband will be generous enough to give them some money. But now its up to them to earn their living and to decide what to do with it. Hence generally we see that the women have faced adjustive problems because they had to make a transition from having two incomes or having somebody else earning the income to being the sole provider for the family. Most have been confined in the family taking care of their children and husband and have difficulty of being the breadwinner and having their role change. They have been used to not being exposed to the outside world and after the divorce they have to find out the jobs that are available and the qualification needed.

The other factor that aggravates women's post-divorce economic situation is the issue of child custody and child support awarded. Women in this study were all awarded child custody either willingly or because the children were chased out of the house by their father. There are also some cases whereby the mother being the custodial parent was assumed and the court took no decision to this effect.

When we come to child support the women face many problems. For one the father usually refuses to pay child support claiming that he has no job or income. There are also some who went to the extent of leaving their job. In this case the court orders the women to prove that the man indeed has some kind of

income. This has proved to be difficult because the man is good at covering his tracks. Because of this the woman loses the courage and stops pursuing the matter without any success.

Other women did not ask for child support at all because they did not feel like their ex will be willing to pay. This is because the man has brought them into too much hustle in the divorce process and they want to cut things short. Here also they have to make a transition from being a two-parent family to a single parent family. They have to shoulder the burden of being the sole caretaker of the family not only in respect of money but also being there for the child in time of various needs.

The other problem observed is with regards the law that allows support to be paid for only those children below the age of 18. This, they feel, does not take into consideration the fact that most children in Ethiopia do not leave their home well into their twenties and thirties. Those that are 18 or so might even have not finished high school let alone support themselves. However since the father is compelled by law only to pay for minor children the mother is left with the burden of raising the older children alone.

There is also problem of being paid on time. The mother has to beg the father to pay child support awarded by the court and might even go to the extent of sending someone to ask on behalf of her. In this case also he might not be

willing to pay the whole amount.

All in all the women felt that the amount of child support awarded by court does not take into consideration all the needs of the child. It is also ignorant of the fact that the child's needs are bound increase when growing older. In some cases the support does not come near to covering what the children have been used to while living with both parents. Here also the mother has to adjust their living style in accordance with the income that she is able to gain.

The other factor that has an impact on the post-divorce situation of the women is the process of division of matrimonial property. The first problem observed is the time it takes to finalize the process. Be it small property or very large one it tends to take very long time. In this time either the husband is using with the property without the wife getting anything.

The other problem seen is related with the family arbitrators. Even though they are chosen from both sides they tend to take the side of the husband. They pressurize the woman to take whatever is the husband is offering by reducing her bargaining power. They also do not take the matter seriously and they take a long time to finish the division.

The last problem seen in this regards is with the ex-husband himself. He tries to prevent division from being effected by doing many things. This may be from

not appearing for court date to trying to sabotage the process of division of property. In this case the court has been observed to do nothing to stop this act of the husband.

The other arena where divorced women face problems is in their social life. But here the research revealed a contrary finding from other researches in that in their social life the women have not experienced any change but rather they received big support.

In order to measure the change in their involvement in social activities the institution of “*Edir*” was used. After divorce the women saw no change in their involvement in this institution. During marriage they were the ones who actively participated in the institution and this fact has continued after divorce. For some the only impediment for their participation in the institution is their financial situation. But here friends and neighbors have shown great support by contributing some money for the membership fee. Apart from this the women are not outcaste because they are divorced. This is because during marriage they used to participate in social activities more than their husbands. Their social activities are not dependent on their identity or status as a wife. And they also socialize independently. Hence when they get divorced they have to make a transition from being married to being single but this does not affect their participation socially.

When we come to friends and neighbors, they have been more supportive of the women. They are observed to have gone to great length to help the women in time of their needs. They welcome them in their homes like before with more care given to them now. But here there are some especially the relatives of the husband who took his side. On the contrary there were some relatives of the husband who are not talking to him because of the things he is doing to his wife and children. All in all the circle of friends and neighbors has not changed and their attitude also has not changed.

The story becomes different when we come to their relationship with their ex-husband. Since the couples do not part in good terms they tend to have resentment towards each other. All women described their relationship with their ex as bad because they are not able to forget what he has done to hurt them. Most even said that they are fine if they do not ever see their ex again. They do not want to have anything to do with him since he has done nothing good.

With respect of their relationship with opposite sex, they confessed that they get many offers of marriage after the divorce. However no has taken the offer because of many reasons. There were some who did not want to marry again for religious reasons, some for reason of age but most for reason of not wanting to expose their children to a stepfather and argument.

Researches have also said that divorce will have a psychological effect on the women. But here the findings are contradictory. One group felt a sense of failure after the divorce. They felt that they are personally to be blame for the breaking up of the marriage. They also feel as if they have lost a certain status in the society and they feel like not belonging there. They feel like they have lost their identity as a wife and are not comfortable especially with their married friends and neighbors.

But others expressed feeling a big relief to come out of a marriage which has been full of argument. They see it in their sense of being free from all the worry and the anxiety they had to face in marriage. But now they are free to do whatever it is that they wanted to do without worrying about what the husband would do and how he will react.

When we come to the factors that contribute to post-divorce situation of the women is career before divorce. For those who did not have careers during marriage securing job after divorce has been difficult. Especially getting a job that brings about enough income that will support the whole family.

As regards education most have given it up in order to raise their children. There are also some who were prevented from pursuing their education by their husband either because he wanted to further his own education or because he

simply did not want her to go to school. But because of their lack of education most say that it is difficult to get a job.

As to age as a factor most saw it as an impediment to doing what they want to do after divorce. This could be like getting the job that they want to do or continuing the education that they had to stop for various reasons. Hence while the older ones felt that they cannot get anything done at their age while others felt that they still have time to do what they always wanted to do.

Hence those women who have been confined to home taking care of the house and children have greater problem of adjustment to their post-divorce situation. Because of their roles in the house they have no opportunity to further their education and their career. This makes their adjustment difficult.

Hence this research has tried to find out the problems that women face after divorce in their own words. Although what has been found out conforms to what prior research has revealed about the problems of the women in Addis Ababa its unique in such a way that it has helped to transmit the voices of the women. It expresses the experiences of the women as they see it and express it.

Implications

In light of the problems the women face after divorce the researcher believes that there are some implications and would like to point out these.

- The government should formulate a mechanism to compensate the women for spending their time in the home contributing for the income of the husband. This could be for instance by promulgating a law that provides for the payment of alimony.
- A mechanism should be formulated by the concerned body of the government to make the husband pay child maintenance even if he claims he has no job or income. This could be by putting in the law a minimum amount that should be paid even if the parent does not have a permanent income
- Judges should implement the law strictly when it comes to payment of child maintenance
- The court should change its mechanism of putting the burden of proof of the income of the ex-husband on the woman
- The court should take into consideration every need of the child including that her/his need might increase while awarding maintenance
- A guideline of how much child support should be paid accordingly with what income should be formulated by the courts to prevent the arbitrariness of the judges

- The courts authorities should formulate a mechanism whereby the time it takes to conclude division of marital property is shortened. This could be having many benches that entertain family cases.
- The court should regularly follow up the work of family arbitrators
- A counseling service should be arranged by the government so that the women could join the society freely without being burdened by their divorce
- A project should be prepared by concerned civil societies to help divorced women especially in the areas of giving various trainings and involving them in income generating activities
- Creating the awareness of married women in order to make them well informed about their rights during marriage and also after divorce. This could be done when the couples come to the authorities to get married.

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