

Addis Ababa  
University



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**THE CAUSES OF DIVORCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE PSYCHO-  
SOCIAL WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AT  
NIFAS SILK LAFTO SUB-CITY FEDERAL SUPREME COURT**

**By: Eyerusalem Kebede**

**August, 2021**

**Addis Ababa**

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SOCIAL WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AT NIFASSILK LAFTO SUB-  
CITY FEDERAL SUPREME COURT**

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Addis Ababa University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Social  
Psychology

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**The Causes of Divorce and its Influence on The Psycho-social Wellbeing of Children at  
Nifas silk lafto sub-city Federal Supreme Court**

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This is to certify that this thesis is prepared by Eyerusalem Kebede entitled “The causes of divorce and its influence on the psycho-social wellbeing of children at Nifas silk lafto sub-city federal supreme court” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Social Psychology. It complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with regards to originality and quality.

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## ABSTRACT

*Psychosocial wellbeing is a measure of a healthy lifestyle that has three major dimensions namely: emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing, and resilience to changing environments. Many psychologists claim that there is a relationship between the psychosocial wellbeing of children and divorce. The main objective of this study is to assess the causes of divorce and psychosocial wellbeing of children in divorced families at Nifas Silk Lafto sub-city. Generally, economic, social, psychological and emotional problems were taken as major causes of divorce which leads to the children's wellbeing. Cross-sectional research design was used and both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were implemented. In this research, there were 146 study participants. The data were collected using questionnaire and interview guide. It has used descriptive statistics with means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages as well as regression analysis for finding out results. From the findings, the prevalence of psychosocial unwellness amongst children of divorced parents at Nifas Silk Lafto sub-city was calculated to be 46.6% based on a scoring system developed. The most psychosocial dimension which is compromised was the ability to cope with new situations faced after divorce followed by emotional wellbeing and social wellbeing, respectively. It was found that child distress has a significant association with age, educational status, income level, and occupational status. Similarly, age, divorce handling age, and income level were observed to have statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) effects on academic performance. These quantitative findings compliment qualitative results obtained from in-depth interview (IDI), focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interview (KII) to collect the necessary data from target population. Regardless of its wide range occurrence, divorce has not given attention by the society and other concerned bodies. Therefore, it is recommended that the society, social workers, the concerned government organs are advised to play their important role in preventing the prevalence of divorce and ensuring its proper adjustment through changing the social environment in relation to marriage stability.*

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background of the study**

One of the most important issues in social psychology is interpersonal relationships in marriage. The lifelong journey between couples requires both to keep a vested interest. Makara, (2009) defines marriage as ‘the way through which society enters to the basic institution of family formation. Marital relationships can be conceptualized as the cyclical patterns of transactions of valued resources, tangible, or intangible, between partners and the rewards and costs associated with such transactions, which culminate in dyadic or individual outcomes of profit or loss (McDonald, 1978). It is a social institution that unites couples in a special form of mutual dependence for the purpose of finding and maintaining a family. Many people view singles to be incomplete without members of the opposite sex, hence marriage fulfills these gaps of human wants and needs, which leads to a successful life.

According to Revised Family Law of Ethiopia (2012) marriage is into which the free and full consent of the intending spouses enter through one of the three ways i.e., civil, traditional, or religious marriages. Marriage in Ethiopia has its own historical background. Yisak and Camfield (2009) pointed out that in Ethiopia marriage often makes primarily an economic (in terms of family wealth and property) transition through the influence of family members. The researchers also pointed out that marriage is important to share feelings, responsibilities, and childbearing. Elders say that singles are incomplete without their better halves; better halves, by design, are members of the opposite sex. Thus, marriage fulfills many gaps of human needs and wants which leads to a successful life.

Marriage remains a deep-rooted culture among societies (Claiborne, 2012). This implies that the cultures and values keep marriage for a long time. However, norms and cultures are not static rather vary with the change of global condition. Makara (2009) agreed that global changes are affecting the world where we live; these are technological, communicative, and political situations. Through these changes, the values of marriage decline with increasing divorce practices. According to Ambert (2009), the number of marriages goes down in reverse with the flourishing of most western economies, which results in the flourishing of the welfare state that has coincided with a decline of the role of the family. Ciardi and Mammini (2008) confirmed that divorce has been introduced, and the value of marriages has been declined. This is also revealed by Fagan and

Churchill (2012) on the impacts of the cultural revolution which has a great role in divorce in society. As a result, the divorce rate is increasing, particularly in industrialized western countries.

The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology (2007) defines divorce as a termination of the marriage. Most scholars define divorce as a dissolution of marriage (Beaman, 2005; Ahrons, 2006; Kraynak, 2006; & Harkonen, 2013). Other researchers Buzzle (2013) indicated that societies have always various views on marriage and divorce that are influenced by the culture that one belongs to, among others. there are many different and complex causes and reasons for divorce, each of them specific to that particular marital couple.

Gersem (2006) concluded that divorce experience in the world today is due to a result of one of the following: Immaturity, infidelity, abandonment, lack of communication, physical abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, ego problem, sexual abuse, joblessness, lust, cultural and religious differences, crime, incompatibility, family background, failed expectations and the like. other researcher like Cathy (2013) categorized three major causes of divorce based on their experience. The first one is laziness which is a misguided belief that marriage will make the couples happy. The second is lack of communication skills that could have been expressed through their feelings and openly listening to their spouse. The third is high expectations which can go hand in hand with laziness when it comes to predicting whether a marriage will end in divorce.

Divorce is a serious experience that affects the whole family system particularly its impact on children is critical. Seblewongel (2009) pointed that divorce is not an event that happens at a single point in time; it represents an extended transition in lines of parents and children. Specifically, children whose parents divorced are being at great risk for psychological and social adjustment than from intact families (Sisay, 1997). Children of a divorced family are exposed to various problems and risks. Claiborne (2012) revealed that children of a divorcee are more likely to be engaged in promiscuous behavior (having many sexual partners), violence, crimes, and other related anti-social and criminal activities. The negative impact of divorce, continue to the adulthood where adults from divorced family found to have a problem in an intimate relationship and work than those adults from non-divorced family (Walsh, 1993). Divorce damages society and consumes social and human capital (Fagan & Churchill, 2012). It also permanently weakens the family and the relationship between children and parents. There are different causes and reasons for divorce and its consequences on children are not easy.

Early studies generally supported the assumption that children who experience parental divorce are prone to a variety of academic, behavioral, and emotional problems. In 1971, psychologists Judith Wallerstein and Joan Kelly began an influential long-term study of 60 divorced families and 131 children (Amato, 2005) According to the authors, five years after the divorce, one-third of the children were adjusting well and had good relationships with both parents. Another group of children (more than one-third of the sample) were clinically depressed, were doing poorly in school, had difficulty maintaining friendships, experienced chronic problems such as sleep disturbances, and continued to hope that their parents would reconcile. Despite these early findings, other studies in the 1970s challenged the dominant view that divorce is uniformly bad for children. For example, Mavis Hetherington and her colleagues studied 144 preschool children, half from recently divorced maternal-custody families and a half from continuously married two-parent families (Mavis ,1985). During the first year of the study, children with divorced parents exhibited more behavioral and emotional problems than did the children with continuously married parents. Two years after the divorce, however, children with divorced parents no longer exhibited an elevated number of problems (although a few difficulties lingered for boys). Much of this inconsistency is due to variations across studies in the types of samples, the ages of the children, the outcomes examined, and the methods of analysis. Therefore, this study is focused on the reasons for divorce and its effects on children's wellbeing.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

As many research works like Amato (2000) suggest that divorce greatly affects children than the spouses, that it has both short and long-term effects both in psychological and physical aspects of the children. Other Ethiopian researchers tried to assess the reasons and impacts of divorce on society especially women. However, little effort is made to analyze the psychological effect of divorce on children. Regarding this, Serkalem (2006) investigated the socioeconomic impacts of divorce that focused on both women and their children in the Ethiopian context. Her study dealt with effects of divorce on women in Addis Ababa which excluded the impact it has on the children. Furthermore, Hawi (2014) in her study investigated the effects of divorce on adolescent self-esteem. Her study found out the effects of divorce only on the status of adolescents at Addis Ababa city. Wubedel (2014) also assessed if there are any positive results seen in the lives of women the following divorce. The study focused on finding out the Causes and Psychological Impacts of divorce on Women supported at the EWLA (Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association). The

investigation focused on the institution. This study is different from the previous studies in some considerable issues. Accordingly, it focuses specifically on finding out the main reasons for divorce and its effects on children's psychosocial wellbeing at a sub-city level. Divorce may be a highly stressful and emotional experience for youngsters. Especially for school-aged children, it is often traumatic to witness the dissolution of their parent's marriage and therefore the breakup of the family. Kids may feel shocked, uncertain, or angry. Some may even feel guilty, blaming themselves for the divorce. Thus, assessing the psychological and social impact of divorce on children is of prime importance to circumvent the consequences. Unfortunately, no previous study has been conducted in Nifas silk lafto sub-city. Therefore, this study is conducted to fill this gap by assessing the psycho-social wellbeing of children after the divorce process, to investigate the nature of the problem, and the extent of the impact on the wellbeing of children at Nifas silk lafto sub-city in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The study addresses the following research Questions.

1. What are the reasons of divorce?
2. What is the impact of divorce on children's psychosocial wellbeing?
3. What relation does exist between age, sex, and psychosocial wellbeing of children?

### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to uncover the causes of divorce and its impact on the psycho-social wellbeing of children at nifasilk lafto sub-city. The population under study are divorced parents who undergo through divorce in the sub-city. Specifically, this study addresses the following objectives.

- To identify the reasons for parental divorce.
- To identify the impact of divorce on the psycho-social wellbeing of children.
- To investigate the relationship between the children's age, sex and their psycho-social wellbeing.

### **1.5. Delimitation of the Study**

The scope of this study is limited to present major causes of divorce and its negative effects on parental divorced children, with a specific focus on children's wellbeing in Addis Ababa referring Nifas silk lafto sub-city between the years 2010 and 2012 E.C.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

It is the researcher's belief that the findings of the study have the following major significances:

- It provides relevant information for Nifas Silk Sub-City Federal Supreme Court as well as being able to generate the required objective of ensuring the psychosocial wellbeing of children and the parent in general.
- It gives comprehensive data on divorce and how it affects children's wellbeing.
- It further provides concrete information about the reasons, consequences, and mechanisms to resolve parental divorce similar to organizations in the Ethiopian context.
- It may also serve as a springboard for other researchers who intend to undertake further research in such area.

### **1.7. Definition of Terms**

**Divorce:** Refers to the dissolution of marriage or termination of marital relationship through the court system.

**Marital Dissolution:** Defined as another term for divorce.

**Parents:** The researcher used it as people who have gone through the divorce process.

**Children:** Defined as girls/boys whose parents have processed through a divorce between the age 12 to 18 years of age.

**Custodial parent:** One of the parents who takes the responsibility of caring for her/his children about divorce.

**Children wellbeing:** is the quality of children's lives in terms of social wellbeing, emotional wellbeing and the ability to cope after the divorce. The researcher also used to measure children's

wellbeing based on self-reported happiness, life satisfaction in terms of food, cloth, shelter, and leisure time, self-rated health, and quality of school life.

### **1.8. Organization of the Study**

The paper is organized in five chapters. The first chapter provides a brief background of the study, statement of the problem, objective, research questions, significance and scope of the study, and limitation. The second chapter is a review of related literature and the conceptual framework of the study. The third chapter comprises methods for collecting relevant data and analyzing field data. These are study area and design, selection procedures and sampling techniques, data collection methods including primary and secondary data, quality assurance, and data analysis and interpretation sections. The fourth chapter presents the study result and discussion while the last chapter, chapter five, gives the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Concept of Marriage and Family Relationship**

A family can be defined as two or more people who are intimated & committed to each other, share resources, make a decision, responsibilities, and values. Family is a basic and essential unit of society and is entitled the protection by society and the state. The family functions as a group or a family system Therefore, everything that happens to any family member has an impact on everyone else in the family because the members are interconnected (Olson and Disfrain ,2000).

According to Tilson & Larsen (2000), the practice of marriage in Ethiopia has different forms such as traditional, cultural, religious, and civil. Traditional and religious marriages are still widely practiced while civil marriage is becoming more common. The 1994 Population and Housing Census (PHC) in Addis Ababa mentions that all age groups constituted 1,722,391 individuals and married were 506,852 while divorcing were 97,147 (PHC, 1994). Tilson and Larson (2000) also studied that divorce had been practiced early in Ethiopia; “divorce has been a common and largely accepted practice in Ethiopia for centuries. As early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, divorce was referred to as to the custom of the country”. This implies that Ethiopia has started exercising a divorce rather like that of western countries.

Similarly, according to the recent study by the Addis Ababa City Government of Vital Events and Resident Services, (2012/2013), from the total 33,191 married couples in the city of Addis Ababa, divorced people constitute 3,473. This figure only includes those individuals who undergo the formal marriage procedures at the city government and does not include religious and traditional marriage procedures or cohabitation. Besides, per the officials at the city government, the stated figure is not accurate because the office only depends on organizing the knowledge concerning the divorce number from those that reach the office to gather their divorce certificates. On the other hand, people who did not approach the city government to gather their divorce certificate are not included within the stated figure underestimating the divorce figure. In Ethiopian society, a high divorce rate was examined concerning religious and ethnic backgrounds. The findings of Pankhurst (1992a), (1992b), Beckstrom (1969), and CSA (1993) (as cited in Tilson & Larsen, 2000) presented that there was an alarming rate of divorce in Ethiopia.

## **2.2. Concept of divorce**

Ezeokanana (1999) defined divorce as the final dissolution of unsuccessful marital life which is the culmination of poor marital adjustments and happens most of the time when both spouses are unable to solve their problems through consensus. The Encyclopedia of Psychology (1996) defined divorce as a legal dissolution of a marriage. The essential English dictionary (1999) defines divorce as legal permission to separate from one's married partner and to marry someone else if so desired, or to officially end a marriage.

The new dictionary of social work (1995) states divorces as the dissolution of a marriage by judicial order. Cohen (2002) describes that "Divorce is the termination of the family unit." As defined by Havemann (1990), divorce is a social action taken toward ending a marriage that has a result or effect both for the families involved and for society. It is a lawful process through which marriage is terminated. Conventionally, divorce implies that it is the fault of one of the parties involved due to some illegal or dishonest behavior in marriage.

As defined by McDonald (1978), divorce is the dissolution of society and a democratically recognized marital relationship. It is usually accompanied by formal arrangements for the owning of property, custody, and support of children if there are any. The property adjustment may also include a provision requiring alimony to be paid by one former partner to the other although alimony is less frequently granted today. In 2007 about 52 percent of African urban parents were found to be single (Monama 2011). The statistics data in South Africa revealed that a solid increase in the divorce rate from 1997 to 1999. Though, the divorce rate has begun to decrease, with the last reported 582 divorces per 100,000 married couples in 2001 (Locoh, 2001). (Collins, 2003) mentioned that in South Africa, one out of every two marriages end in divorce. These are alarming statistics not only because it points to the breakdown of the family, but also because a number of young people come from broken homes. The statistics of South Africa, (2005) reveals that 32,484 divorces were recorded in 2005. In the case of Ethiopia, 45 % of all first marriages end in divorce or separation within 30 years, and 95% of the women marry by the age of 30, and 45 % of all first marriages end in divorce within the first year, 34% within 10 years, and 40 % within 20 years (Tilson & Larsen, 2000). Furthermore, the same study stated that two-third of the women divorced within the first five years of marriage.

### **2.3. Factors of Divorce**

There are multiple interconnected factors that have contributed to the rapid growth in divorce rate around the world. According to Medina, (2010), the psychological, economic, and social factors are considered major contributors to the rapid increase in divorce rates throughout the world. The various factors that are responsible for the increasing rates of divorce in the world are highlighted and discussed as below.

#### ***Cultural Factors***

In some societies, divorce has lost its stigma and has become a more socially acceptable phenomenon. This has made people less attached to the institution of marriage and consequently, they consider divorce as an alternative to escape from marital abuses. Those people from individualistic societies consider marital union as valuable as long as it satisfies their needs for personal growth. If, however, the marital relationship is unable to meet their personal needs and interests, they feel to end the union and find new relationships through a marital dissolution. Additionally, couples lose interest in putting up with marriage challenges and carrying the sacrifices it may need. Therefore, women mostly initiate marital dissolution to free themselves of dissatisfying and frustrating marital union (Ambert, 2002).

#### ***Personal Factors***

Ambert(2009) indicated that various personal factors contribute to the disintegration of marital relationships which include domestic violence, alcoholism, financial problem and infidelity, and so forth by couples. Another study by Willemse(2011) revealed that most marital relationships dissolve as a result of the failure to detect the early warning signs that signal the marriage is on the verge of falling apart. He also indicated that there are a number of personal factors that lead to the disintegration of marital union in many families.

#### ***Low Commitment***

In other cases, couples start to lose interest and commitment in the union and also the lack of responsibility to stay married for a lifetime; as a result, the relationship will be affected that leads to the dissolution of the marriage without any sensible reason (Willemse, 2011).

### ***Financial crisis***

Askalemariam & Minwagaw (2014) revealed that financial problem is the root of all the causes, as is said, “The love of money is the root of all evils”. With regard to the least causes of divorced women’s education, abandonment and sexual impotence take the first two ranks, followed by infidelity and differences in having or rearing children.

Low incomes and poverty are possible factors because financial stressors often impact negatively on a marital relationship. On the other side of the comparison, a very rapid upward social mobility where the acquisition of money and status is a prime mover is also a risk factor. This may be because such pursuit of materialism takes time away from relationships or reflects individualistic values that are incompatible with a good conjugal life which refers us back to the cultural factors mentioned earlier (Clark & Crompton, 2006). The psychological, economic, and social factors are also considered major contributors to the rapid growth in divorce rates throughout the world (Medina, 2010).

### ***Addiction***

Serkalem (2006) indicated that in Ethiopia husband addiction to, alcohol/chat/smoking are the main contributing factors for divorce. Amato, (2000); Hughes & Waite (2009) also revealed that divorced individuals have higher levels of substance abuse, depression, as well as lower levels of overall health. Amato (2000) investigated that addiction in a marriage results a spouse to lie, cheat, steal, or otherwise betray the foundational trust that a marriage is built upon. It’s for sure that addiction is one of the main causes of divorce.

Additionally, findings by Khurshid, Khatoon & Khurshid (2012) have indicated that the rate of divorce is rising as a result of urbanization and industrialization. In another study by Parvez (2011), the findings proved that divorce is caused in consequence of factors like psychological, biological, and environmental factors that include family, finance, and social factors. another researcher from India, Mundu & Unisa, (2011) stated that the main factors that lead to marital dissolution in India are young age at marriage, religion, social class, and education. Since, in Indian society, age is considered as the most important factor that affects marriage dissolution.

one of the major causes of divorce is inadequate preparation for marriage and having no clue about marriage. Most people are able to get married young with no knowledge and preparation, no social skills, less idea of the responsibilities in marital relationship and no moral values. Most Parents

are more interested in their children's marriage rather than advising them to stay happily in the marriage (Claiborne, 2012). This idea was confirmed in another research that argues most parents want their children to have good marriages, but they do not give their young married children the knowledge and experience to be succeeding in their marriages (Claire et al., 2013).

In addition, another study by Askalemariam and Minwagaw (2013) stated that conflict management problems, parental interference and communication problems, alcohol addiction, financial problem, lack of promise to marry, physical abuse, sexual incompatibility, falling out of love and lack of maturity are the main causes of divorce. Regarding its consequence, divorce leads children to face social, economic, and psychological problems (Fagan & Rector, 2000). Similarly, Tarekegn (2015) stated that divorce has psychological, social, and economic consequences for the parents and their children and majorly the society. Moreover, the impact of dissolution of marriage results in a lifelong crisis of enormous proportion that makes the start of the painful process of changes including major troubles in the family system (Seid, 2014). However, in Ethiopia different reasons are considered as major causes of divorce from a women's viewpoint. The rising divorce rate is a reflection of the empowered position of women to leave unsatisfactory relationships (Serkalem, 2006).

#### **2.4. Impact of divorce on children**

Most researchers studied that the impact of divorce on children is not uniform due to the developmental stage, the nature of the temperament, the way parents deal with it, and the changes after divorce, including economic and social changes (Furstenberg and Kiernan, 2001). According to Marcia (2001), the divorce experience of adolescents may vary due to various factors before and after the divorce, but regardless of their personal experience, the way adolescents react to divorce is the same. Braver et al. (2008) pointed out that divorce is never a good thing. This is always the case in the tug of war between property, children's welfare and assets. Almost all young people dream of having their own family, with two or more children, and a happy partner (Jackel, 2001). Young children also hope to succeed in their education. However, children and young people are disappointed with the dissolution of their original family. Children with divorced parents face greater risks of psychological and social adaptation than children from intact families (Sisay, 1997). Therefore, children from divorced families will face various psychological and social psychological problems. Therefore, the negative effects of divorce last until adulthood, and adults in divorced families have problems in their close relationships (Walsh, 1993). Similarly,

according to Woldekidan (2003), in Ethiopia, an estimated 4,042,357 children are living in difficult circumstances due to family disintegration. Therefore, the dissolution of the family may greatly affect the living conditions of the children.

### **Psycho-social factors**

According to StrohSchein (2005) and Vandewater & Lansford (1998), children from divorced families have higher rates of depression and antisocial behavior. Amato and Cheadle (2005) have shown that children of divorced parents have a higher risk of experiencing emotional distress in adulthood. Amato (2005) described in his study that more than one-third of the children in the study sample were clinically depressed, performed poorly in school, had difficulty keeping friends, had trouble sleeping and continued to hope their parents would get back together again. The negative psychological effects of divorce that parents and children face during and after the divorce process are inevitable. The effects are anxiety, anger, sadness, fatigue, guilt, feeling of isolation, low self-esteem, anxiety, frustration and disappointment. Parents and their children are not the only ones affected, but other loved ones can also be affected.

Another question regarding the effects of divorce is whether differences in child behavior and development precede marriage breakdown. The results of several studies suggest that the behavioral problems children present at or after divorce are, in fact, the present years before separation. This could be the result of pre-divorce family stress, child behavior issues that contributed to the parents' marriage breakdown, or more difficult parents can't get along with a spouse passing on this behavior to their offspring by means of modeling or heredity. The prescription of differences in children's behavior was first discovered by Block and Gjerde (1986). In their longitudinal study, the children were assessed at the ages of 3, 4, 7 and 14 years old. By age 14, 41 out of 100 children lived in divorced or separated families. Looking back at their data files, Block et al. (1986) found that boys from later divorced families were less interested in other children and emotionally unstable and more stubborn by age 3 and more controllable., impulsive, aggressive and hyperactive. At 7 years old. Unfortunately, in this sample, the number of boys whose parents are divorced is very low. In several follow-up studies with larger samples, other researchers replicated the results of Block et al. Jenkins and Smith (1993) found that children whose parents divorced later had higher levels of disturbances, such as anxiety, sadness, fear, trouble sleeping, trouble sleeping, and aggression, in in the middle of childhood, when the children lived in harmonious houses. Amato and Booth (1996) found that parents' reports of problems in

their relationships with their children in a national longitudinal study increased significantly from 8 to 12 years before divorce. Cherlin et al. (1991) found that the apparent effect of divorce on boys' success and behavior problems was significantly reduced when considering children's behavioral problems and achievement levels. son and current family difficulties before the divorce. However, not all studies have found a difference in children's behavior. Allison and Furstenberg (1989) found no difference between parents, teachers and children reporting behavior problems, psychological distress, and academic performance in a sample of children aged 7 to 11.

### **Academic performance**

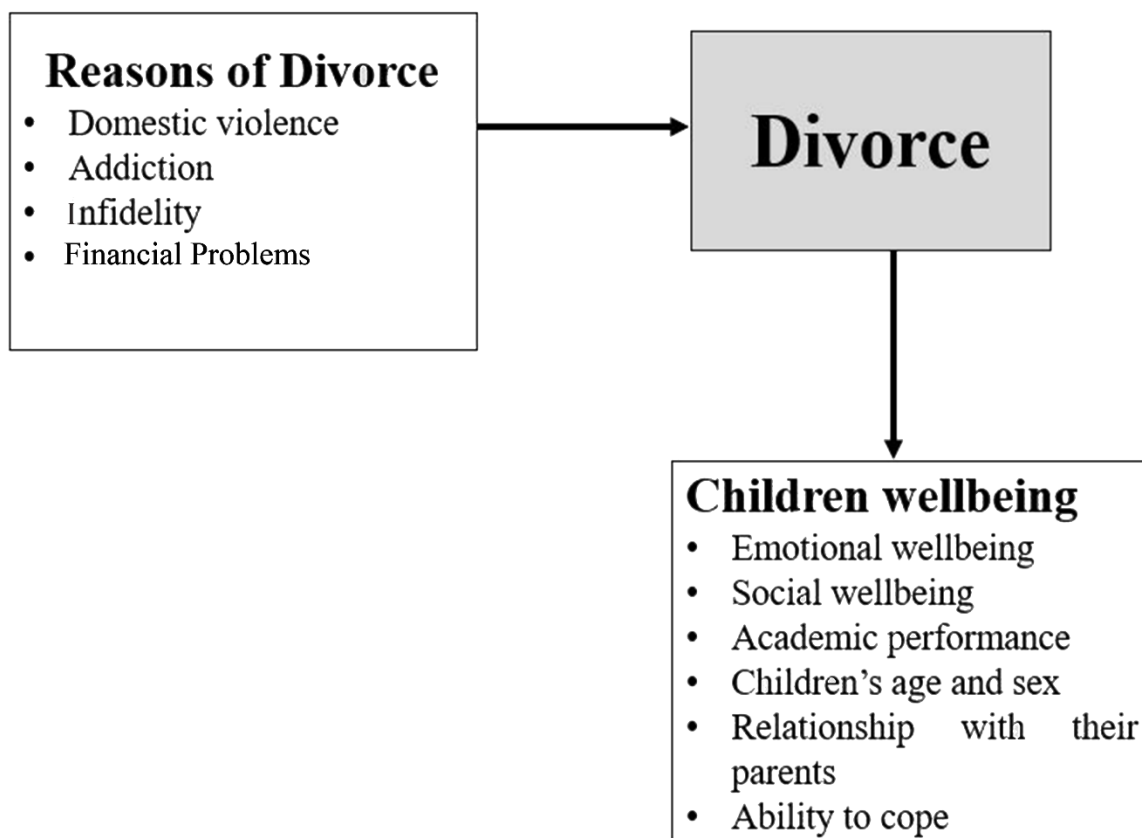
In the process of children's decline until divorce, academic success is an important factor. Studies have shown that parental divorce has a significant negative effect on a child's academic performance, such as academic achievement and success (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991; Frisco et al., 2007; Lansford, 2009; Potter, 2010; Sun and Li, 2001). Among divorced children, relatively few studies examine academic achievement after high school. Even small studies of the effects of parental divorce have focused on college graduate degrees.

### **Relationship between age and sex with the children's wellbeing**

Research on the impact of divorce is determined by the likelihood that boys and girls react differently to marriage breakdown. Preschool-aged girls recover more quickly from marital breakdown, while boys continue to experience less emotional distress, behavioral problems and cognitive performance (Hetherington et al., 1979). Foulkes-Jamison (2013) reported that boys and girls tend to react differently to parental divorce. Generally, girls tend to become anxious and withdrawn, while boys tend to become more aggressive and disobedient. Girls from divorced families may become sexually active earlier than girls from non-intact families. Interestingly, boys often cope better when their mother remarries, while girls have a harder time. Booth, (2000) illustrated the separation of parents was concluded to investigate boys and girls affecting others. Boys and girls have their own approach and affection to their parents.

## 2.5. Conceptual framework

After a review of the related literature, the following conceptual model is formulated to the influence of divorce on children's wellbeing in terms of psychological, social, cultural, and economic aspects starting from the reasons for Divorce.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of the research

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Research design**

Any idea or theory about the world can be empirically tested. This leads to carefully designing structure of the research and the concepts to be studied prior to going out to the field (Marlow, 1998; Cournoyer & Klein, 2000) Based on this concept, this study used cross sectional research design to investigate the causes of divorce and its impact on children's wellbeing. It is cross sectional as it tries to observe and compare how individuals experience vary in relation to variables at a point of time (Jacob, 1988). It has tried to describe the phenomenon using this cross-sectional design. The current study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting relevant data and analyze them in accordance to describe the phenomenon under study. It further describes the effect of divorce on children's wellbeing from the point of view of custodial parents as well as children who went through the process of mediation in the court.

Relying on mixed approach, data were gathered using adopted surveys and structured interviews. As a result, the quantitative methods allowed to gather survey findings from divorced partners as well as their children. On the other hand, qualitative methods in terms of Key informant interview (KII), In-depth interview (IDI), and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were included as to help fill the gaps in knowledge and overcome the flaw or inherent biases.it is also incorporated to bring some unstated and uncovered issues and findings in relation to the study objective. After the analysis, findings from both approaches were triangulated and were presented as one supporting the other. As Patton (2001) states, the triangulation method of designing research by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches provide not the only consensus of the quantitative findings with the qualitative one, but it also brings out other issues that can explain the subject under study.

### **3.2. Study setting**

The researcher has used a purposive sampling method to select the study setting. Depending on the researcher's professional experiences and better knowledge of the area, the Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Federal Supreme Court was selected. Based on the data gathered from the sub city, research participant population as well as samples were drawn.

## **Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Federal Supreme Court system and Child Justice Project Office**

The Federal Supreme Court Child Justice Project Office was established in 1999 with the objective of enhancing the protection of children for the realization of their rights and works in all sub-cities. It is one of the core institutional measures of the government of Ethiopia to guarantee the realization of the best interest of the child in process of administering justice to the children. The center has been able to provide the service to a vast number of children having multiple legal and psychological issues. The center has been providing counseling and mediation service for couples who are experiencing marital problems or difficulties and brought their case to court for divorce to ensure children's well-being.

The study was conducted on the divorced parents and children whose divorce passed through Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Federal Supreme Court system from the year 2010 to the year 2012. This is selected for the reason of obtaining recent data and to get in contact with the divorced parents as they process the mediation and financial allowances for the children.

### **3.3. Study population, sample technique and sample size**

Data were collected from a divorced parents who have children and their divorce passed through Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Federal Supreme Court system from the year 2010 to 2012 E.C. According to the court report, the total population are 170 divorced parents had passed though the court system since the year 2010 to 2012 EC and sixty-eight (68) children's whose ages were between 15 to 18. Since the number of children were manageable in size all were considered in the study. Regarding the divorced parents, however, considering all the limited time and other resources, considerable representative sample were drawn from 170 parents using Morris (2004)

sampling formula used for small group of population i.e.  $n = \frac{NZ^2Pq}{E^2(N-1)+z^2pq}$ . Where:

- N: is total population of the study=170 (Number of divorces reported in 24 months)
- P is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, p= 0.5 (maximum variability).
- Q is 1-p. which is equal to 0.5.
- $Z^2$  is the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area at the tails (1-equals the desired confidence level, in our case at 95%) and  $\pm 5\%$  precision is the desired level of precision, 5%. For such a case  $z = 1.96$

- E sets the accuracy of sample proportions. In this research, it is also relevant to know what proportion of individuals are in favor of some variables, with an accuracy of  $\pm 3\%$ , E is set to 0.03. The value for Z is found in statistical tables which contain the area under the normal curve.

$$n = \frac{NZ^2pq}{E^2(N-1)+z^2pq} = 146$$

$$n = 146$$

Based on the standard formula, 146 samples were determined to be drawn from the total population. To identify participatory samples, a simple random sampling technique was deployed to give equal chance for all to be represented and confidently infer the outcome over the total population as it sufficiently represents. From the available sample frame where the list of the divorced families and their children was recorded chronologically, the 146 samples were drawn. Accordingly, relevant data were collected from these participants through survey questionnaire. In addition, 68 children of the surveyed parents within the age range of 12-18 were also selected to search findings on the relationship they have with their custodial and non-custodial parents. According to Brighton (2007). 12-18 year is a period for cognitive development, marking a transition in ways of thinking and reasoning about problems and ideas. Based on the assumption that these children could better express themselves, a very short survey tool was adopted, modified, and administered to gather their information.

For the interview and focus group discussion, purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used. As Kruger et.al (2006) states, such method of sampling technique is used when it is hard to reach all the targeted population and the use of expertise is needed as it helps to investigate the effect in depth. Accordingly, key informants who have contacts with the divorced parents and their children i.e., two social workers, two psychologists and one lawyer who were working at Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Federal Supreme Court were considered for the focus group discussion to obtain relevant and factual information about the causes and its influences on the psycho-social wellbeing of children using a guiding question. Besides, 15 parents who volunteered and have convenient time were interviewed in addition by the time of administering the survey questionnaire. The data came through interview and focus group discussion were used to affirm and strengthen the data collected through survey questionnaire.

### **3.4. Data collection tools**

The primary data were collected from respondents who filled out structured questionnaire, from an interview that took place between key informants and the researcher and FGD. The instruments were adapted from similar local research particularly from Aster (2015) and Sisay (1997). In relations to the objective of this study, adjustments and improvements have been made at different aspects and levels. After receiving comments from the Advisor, the instrument was administered to 146 parents as well as 68 children participants.

#### **3.4.1. Questionnaire for custodian parents**

The custodian parent's questionnaire was conducted with parents and the children to investigate the major effects of divorce. The questionnaire was developed to explore the effects of divorce on children's life in relation to social, psychological and economic values. It was administered to 146 parents. The questionnaire has two sections where it begins with introducing the objective of the study and consent of the respondents. The second section followed by a standard form of personal and demographic background information and the questions focused to assess the major impacts of divorce on children wellbeing was followed. This questionnaire basically focuses on the age, income level, educational level of the parents but mainly asks the parents about the children's academic performance, financial support, and their ability to communicate with friends and family after the divorce.

#### **3.4.2. Questionnaire for children from age 12-18**

The children's questionnaire was administered to 68 children and between the age 12 up to 18. Their age is selected based on their level of understanding and answering. According to (Brighton ,2007) 12-18 year is a period for cognitive development, marking a transition in ways of thinking and reasoning about problems and ideas. In the first section, it is focused on with whom the children are living and how they get access to schooling, food, clothing, and social activities .it also addresses the feeling of the children after the divorce and their relationship with their other family members and non-custodian parent.

#### **3.4.3. IDI, FGD and KII guides**

The interview questions were prepared by the researcher to find answers to the main reasons for divorce, and effects on the children. Mainly the social and emotional wellbeing of the children

after the divorce. the children's emotion and feeling regarding divorce such as: easily upset, angry, feel sad, inferiority, stress, depression, and loss of confidence. The in-depth interview (IDI) is composed of five questions with prob explanations which let data to be collected from the parents and the children. The Key informant interview (KII) guide has nine questions that was administered to social workers, psychologists, and lawyers. The Focus Group discussion (FGD) on the other hand has twelve questions that was discussed among the researcher and two social workers, two psychologists and one lawyer who were working at Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Federal Supreme Court.

### **3.5. Inclusion criteria**

- Divorced parents whose divorce process passed through Nifas Silk Lafto Federal Supreme Court and who had mediation service.
- Divorced parents showed a willingness to participate in the study so that they could disclose their true feelings and experiences which was valuable for the study.
- Parents who were divorced between the years 2010 and 2012 E.C. since the short duration would enable them to remember every part of the divorce process and this would allow them to express what they really felt and experienced in their post-divorce lives.
- Divorced parents who were living in Addis Ababa for the reason that it would be much easier for the researcher to get in touch with the informants whenever required.
- Divorced parents who had children from the age 12 up to 18. This is due to the reason that this is the age that children develop cognitive and reasoning skills. (Brighton, 2007)

### **3.6. Variables**

The dependent variable used was psychosocial wellbeing which includes emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing and ability to cope in addition to academic performance and child distress. On the other hand, the independent variables were age of the parent, age of children, sex of custodial parent, the educational level of parents, income level, education level of parent, number of children, occupation, and financial support from non-custodian parent.

### **3.7. Validity and Reliability**

The pilot test was made to identify the clarity, relevancy and capacity of each questionnaire to measure the intended variables. The pilot test was done for the two groups of questionnaires these

are questionnaires for divorced parents, and the children. The pilot study was taken after translating the questionnaires into Amharic language. This is due to the belief that the respondents may face some difficulties in understanding the English language and it is not their native language. The translation was made by two language students who were learning in different higher educational institutions. After they translated it, the best language translation that fitted with the English version was chosen.

Finally, the Amharic version of the instrument was pilot tested on 20 parents in assessing the psychosocial wellbeing of children. Accordingly, the responses of the respondents were scored, and the internal consistency of the item was computed by using Cronbach alpha with the help of the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20. Internal consistency of the outcome variables is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The primary outcome variables are the psychosocial wellbeing of children. The score is greater than 0.80 representing an acceptable level of internal consistency as shown in table 1.

***Table 1. Internal Consistency of Outcome Measures***

Tool	Cronbach's Alpha
Emotional well being	0.85
Social wellbeing	0.87
Ability to cope	0.86

### **3.8. Data collection and procedures**

This research used a convenient and simple random sampling technique and data was collected by using a structured questionnaire from children and divorced parents who received custody at Nifas silk Lafto sub-city supreme court between the years 2010 and 2012 E.C. This is selected due to obtaining recent data and to get in contact with the divorced parents as they access the court for process. So, the researcher has collected the data by going directly to the court when they access the court for mediation process and children financial support every Tuesday and Saturday.

### **3.8.1. Data analysis techniques**

### **3.8.2. Analysis Techniques of Data form Quantitative Method**

The data collected from the parents was from any outlier information by visual inspection setting the minimum and maximum values before the data analysis. And, descriptive information, from the questionnaire, the researcher found out what exactly the respondents said for that particular issue. And the quality of the data analyzed by using different types of data analysis especially by frequency counts, mean median, and standard deviation and finally all the data were processed using SPSS version 20 and Microsoft Excel, and the respective percentages, graphs, and rates were determined. Before proceeding to the actual statistical analysis, assumptions associated with the use of each of the analysis, was checked. After the data were coded and entered to the computer, different statistical analyses were made for the following purposes:

1. To answer questions related to employment status, age of a parent, educational level antichildren school admission.
2. For investigating the psychological and social, wellbeing of children after the divorce.

### **3.8.3 Analysis Techniques of Data form Qualitative Method**

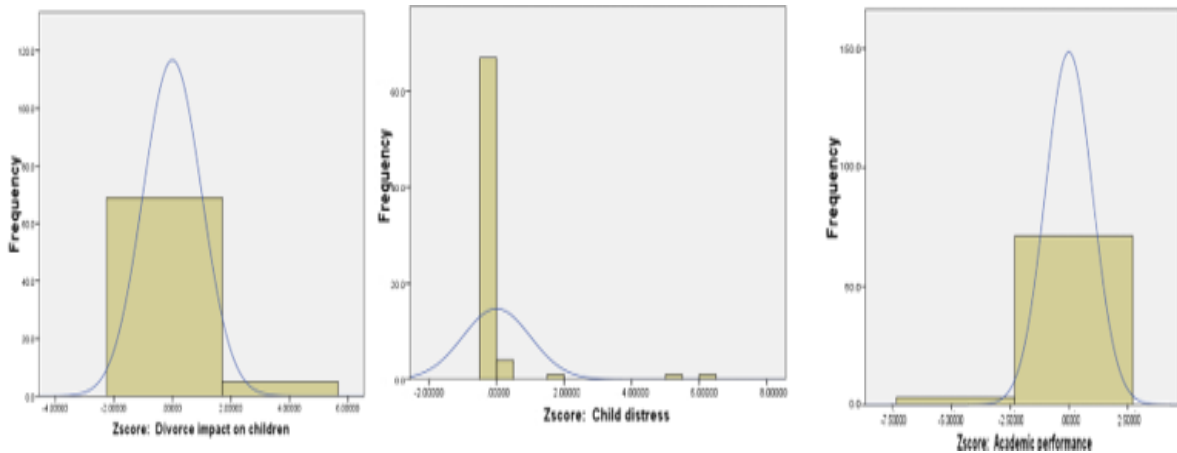
As the main tool of the research for the qualitative approach, interview was the chosen technique to find results for the questions related. In accordance with this technique, the researcher has analyzed the responses from the three key informants using the following way. Since the researcher has used interview guides that tried to show the consistency of the findings from the survey as well as coming out with other related issues that can explain their relationship with the society, the questions prepared were guiding and it has been limited in coming out with findings that are constructed by the respondents. This has leaded to analyze the findings from the interview report directly from the answers of the respondents as being coded. These finding from the interview are presented in accompanied with the survey findings.

## **3.9. Data quality**

### **Data Distribution**

The distribution of scores on the psychosocial wellbeing outcome variables is examined for outliers and normality using summary statistics, histograms, and residual plots. The distribution showed a moderate positive skewness value of 0.892 with 6 scores (0.9%) located greater than 2 standard deviations above the mean. (See Figure 2) Even though the primary response rate is 99.6

% (from the total 146 samples 9 participants gave incomplete responses to the questionnaire), thus 9 participants were over-recruited to the study to account for skipped responses and ensure 146 respondents participated in the final analysis.



**Figure 2.** Normal distribution histogram of behavioral characteristics of children and divorced parents' perspectives

### 3.10. Ethical consideration

The researcher observes the required levels of ethical considerations while conducting the study. The researcher obtains informed consent from the Nifas Silk Lafto Federal Supreme Court Child Protection Project Office and all target participants. Participants were informed that the information they provide on the questionnaire would be kept confidential and only be used for the purpose of this study. The participants informed the purpose of the study and all the responses confidentially secured and analyzed anonymously and the finding of the study debriefed at the end of the study. When working with children the researcher took special effort to explain the research procedures to the parents and be especially sensitive to any indicators of discomfort in the child.

Before seeking consent from the child, the researcher informed the child of all features of the research that may affect his or her willingness to participate and should answer the child's questions in terms appropriate to the child's comprehension. The researcher respected the child's freedom to choosing to participate in the research or not by giving the child the opportunity to give or not give assent to participation as well as to choose to discontinue participation at any time. The researcher used research procedure that won't harm the child either physically or psychologically. additionally, obligated at all times to use the least stressful research procedure whenever possible.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents quantitative as well as qualitative findings of the study. In the quantitative study, 146 divorced parents have participated from After the data cleansing method, these filled questionnaires have been used for finding out results. First, the results of the descriptive analysis for the socio-demographic variables are presented. Next, the results of the analysis evaluating the prevalence of and risk factors for the unsatisfying psychosocial wellbeing of children in the study sample are presented.

### **4.1. Results**

#### **4.1.1. Participants' socio-demographic characteristics**

From a total of 170 population recruited, 146 participated in the study while 9 gave incomplete results, yielding a response rate of 99.6 %. However, since 146 participants are needed to derive appropriate conclusions, 9 more participants, who gave complete responses, were additionally recruited. Among the 146 divorced participants who got custody, 93.2% were females. The highest age range where divorce is common is 35-44 years. The majority of the respondents, 89.2%, have more than one child. Divorce is common among those who received high school and BSc education with a prevalence rate of 41.2% and 39%, respectively. The divorce rate on people with an income greater than 12,000 birr is 4.1% while it ranges from 29-32% for others getting lower income. 90.5% of parents who got custody received financial aid from the other parent. The majority of the study participants (60.5%) have a job (see table 2 and 3) and 1.4% of divorced parents have the thought of remarriage.

**Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of divorced parents who received custody**

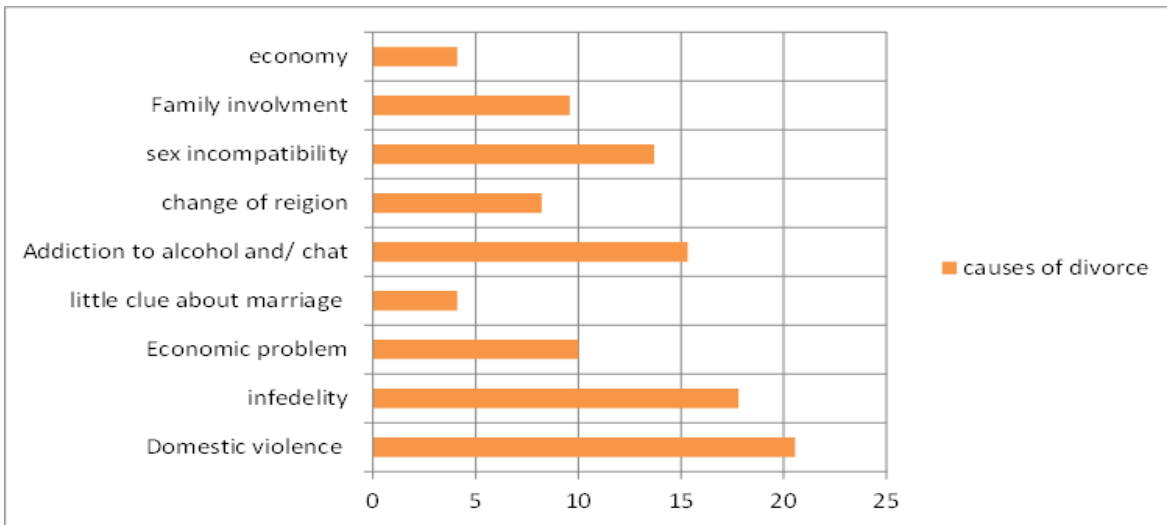
		n%
Age	18-24	<b>6.8%</b>
	25-34	<b>31.1%</b>
	35-44	<b>41.9%</b>
	45-54	<b>20.3%</b>
	55-64	-
	>65	-
Relation	Mother	<b>93.2%</b>
	Father	<b>6.8%</b>
Number of children	1	<b>10.8%</b>
	2-4	<b>89.2%</b>
Educational status	Grade 4	<b>1.4%</b>
	Grade 6-8	<b>17.6%</b>
	Grade 9-12	<b>41.9%</b>
	Bachelor degree	<b>39.2%</b>

**Table 3.** *Socio-demographic characteristics of divorced parents who received custody*

		Column Valid n%
Occupational status	Employed	<b>58.1%</b>
	Unemployed	<b>35.1%</b>
	Student	<b>2.7%</b>
	Other	<b>4.1%</b>
Income level	<1000	<b>1.4%</b>
	1000-4000	<b>32.4%</b>
	4000-8000	<b>32.4%</b>
	8000-12000	<b>29.7%</b>
	>12000	<b>4.1%</b>
Financial support	Received	<b>90.5%</b>
	Do not receive	<b>9.5%</b>
Remarried (father)	Yes	<b>1.4%</b>
	No	<b>98.6%</b>

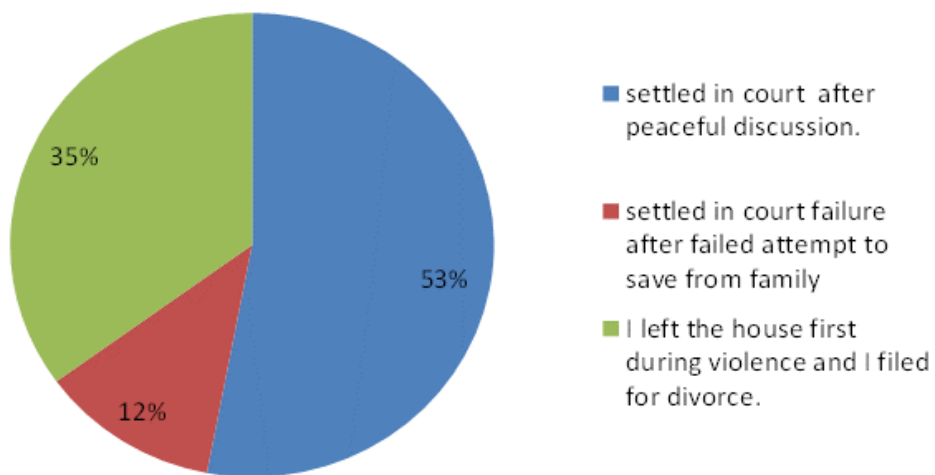
#### **4.1.2. Causes of divorce**

Figure 3 shows different reasons for divorce. The most prominent one that accounts for 21% of divorce is domestic violence whereby wives get tortured by their husbands due to arguments about the economy. Infidelity and sex incompatibility follow the prior divorce leading cause with 17% and 14%, respectively.



**Figure 3.** Causes of divorce

There might be different driving factors for getting the courage to finally go to court and file for divorce. In this research, three driving factors are mentioned. The first that accounts for 53% of the cases are divorce after a peaceful discussion. The second most dominant one accounting 35% of the cases is harsh domestic violence or physical abuse that makes mothers escape from their house, never return back, and appear in court. The last factor that contributes to 12% of the cases is divorce filing after failed attempts from the family side to resolve the issues of marriage.



**Figure 4.** Typical divorce processes

### 4.1.3. Status of children and parents

As shown in table 4, 95.9% of parents interviewed responded that the age of children has a direct impact on how they handle their behavior. Half of the custodial parents reported that they are satisfied with the financial support they get from the other parent. 94% of parents interviewed believe that divorce has an impact on their children and 90.5% reported some form of child distress.

*Table 4. Status of Children and divorced parents' perspectives who received custody*

<b>status of children after the Divorce (From Parents view)</b>	<b>n%</b>
Children's age is affected by the divorce	<b>95.9%</b>
Children's age is not affected by the divorce	<b>4.1%</b>
The Divorce changed the children	<b>93.2%</b>
The Divorce didn't change the children	<b>6.8%</b>
The children don't get support	<b>1.4%</b>
The children get Enough support	<b>50.0%</b>
The children get support, but it is not enough	<b>48.6%</b>
Children are admitted to school	<b>100%</b>
Lower Children's Academic performance	<b>4.1%</b>
Same Children's Academic performance	<b>95.9%</b>
View Child distress	<b>90.5%</b>
Not sure to view child distress	<b>9.5%</b>

Quantitative data analysis of children shows that (table 5) only 7% of the children reported satisfaction. Additionally, more than 76% of children reported a feeling of non-custodial parental loss with an associated reduction of playfulness by 13%.

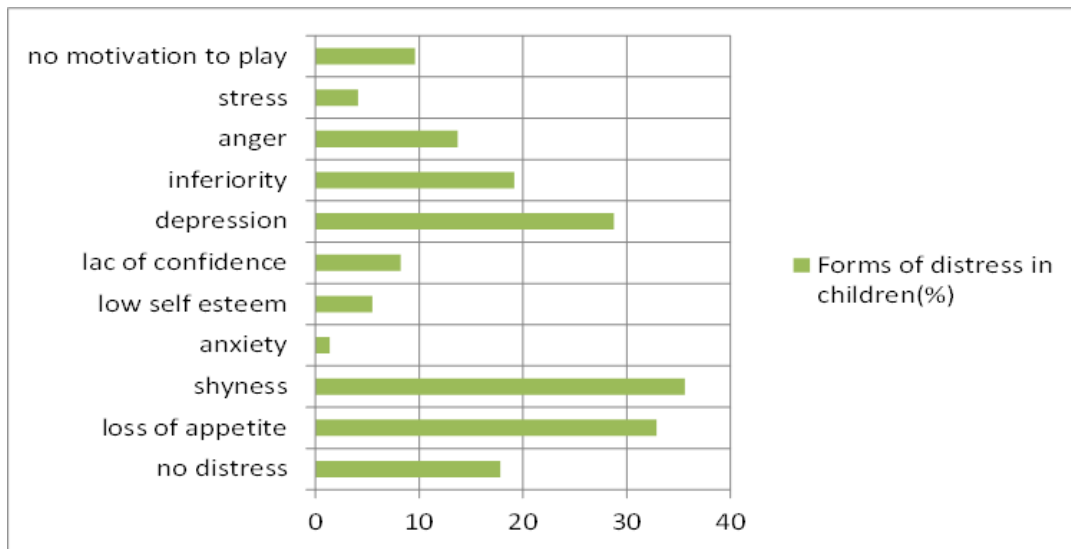
*Table 5. Status of children from their own perspectives after divorce*

<b>Status of children after the Divorce (From children's view)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Children's Playfulness is good after the divorce	<b>12.9%</b>
Children's Playfulness is the same after the divorce	<b>83.9%</b>
Children's Playfulness is not good after the divorce	<b>3.2%</b>
Children's appetite after the divorce is good	<b>74.2%</b>
Children's appetite after the divorce is bad	<b>19.4%</b>
Children's appetite after the divorce is very bad	<b>6.5%</b>
Children's Shelter after the divorce is better	<b>9.7%</b>
Children's Shelter after the divorce is worse	<b>83.9%</b>
The children are Intimated with parents after divorce	<b>93.5%</b>
The children are Not Intimated with parents after divorce	<b>6.5%</b>
The children are satisfied with what they have after the divorce	<b>6.5%</b>
The Children are not satisfied with what they have after the divorce (they don't get toys, books...)	<b>93.5</b>

#### **4.1.4. Psychosocial status of children**

Regarding psychosocial distress, 75% of respondents witnessed symptoms of psychosocial distress in their children as shown in figure 4. However, 94.6% of custodian parents reported some form of child distress as presented in table 5. The major psychosocial manifestations observed in children are shyness, loss of appetite, and depression accounting 35%, 31%, and 28%, respectively.

This is followed by anger, lack of confidence, and low self-esteem as shown in figure 5. Additionally, no significant effect is reported on the academic performance of children after divorce whereby only 4% of them showed a decrease in performance.

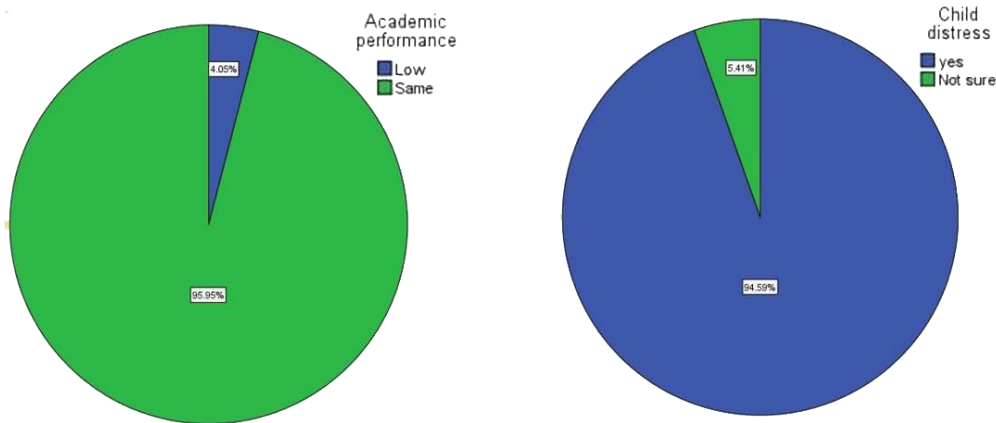


**Figure 5.** Psychosocial status of children

**Table 6.** Psychosocial impact indicators on children

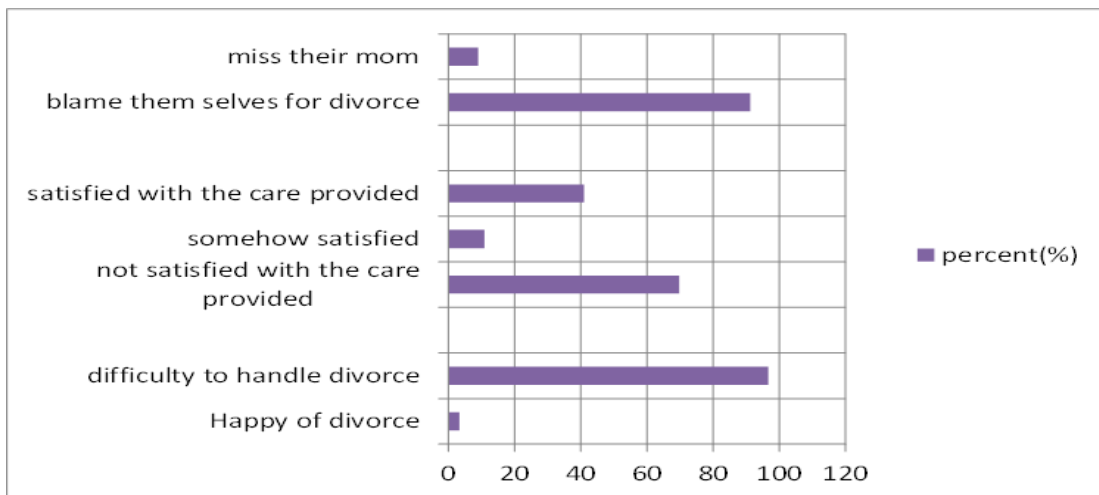
		Column N %	Column Valid N %
	High	-	-
Academic performance	Low	4.1%	4.1%
	Same	95.9%	95.9%
	Yes	94.6%	94.6%
Child distress	No	-	-
	Not sure	5.4%	5.4%

About 92% of children are reported to have been affected by their parent's divorce. Of these, 93% of custodian parents report that they observed a certain degree of child distress as shown in table 7 above and below figure 6.



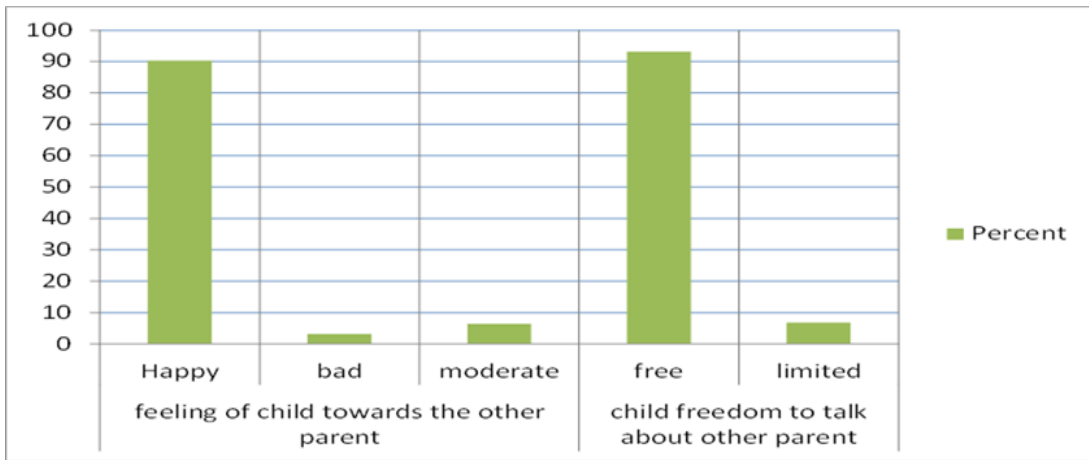
**Figure 6.** Psychosocial impact indicator variables percentage

From the 75% of respondents who reported psychosocial distress, 85% of the children faced difficulty in handling divorce. Of these, about 82% of the children blame themselves for the divorce while the rest report missing their mom often. Additionally, from those who showed psychosocial distress 65% of them are not satisfied with the care they get from their custodial parent as shown in figure 7.



**Figure 7.** Behavior of children with child distress

Figure 8 shows that around 90% of the children have a very good feeling towards the non-custodial parent and freely talk about them.

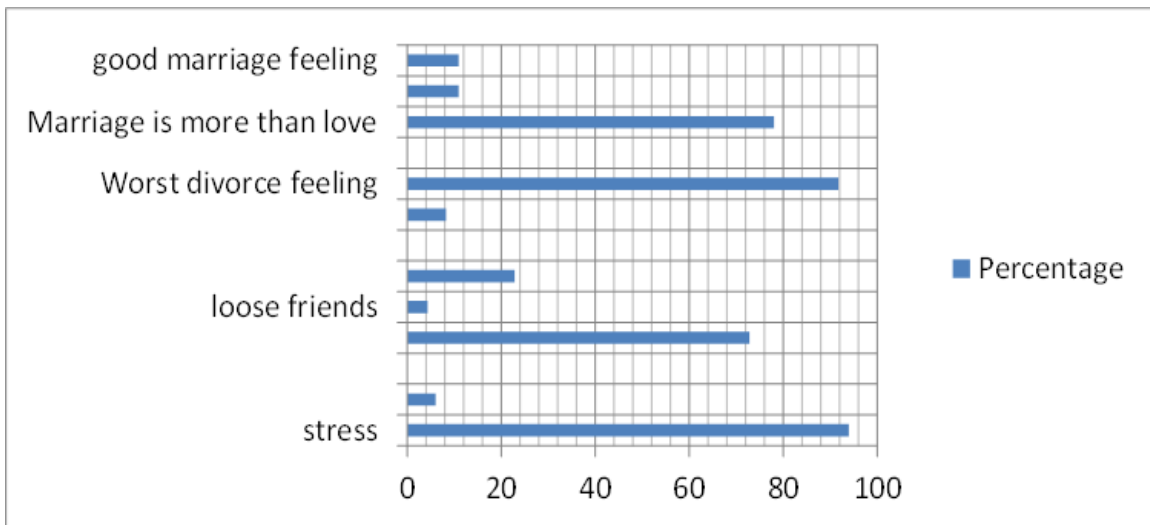


**Figure 8.** Social behavioral characteristics of children

#### **4.1.5. Psychosocial status of custodian Parents**

Among the number of respondents, 78% believe that marriage is more than love that needs dedication. They also point out that they were initially happily married but their feelings towards marriage somehow deteriorated through time. Around 11% of the respondents share the same feeling added to the fear of not being wanted by anyone. Of all the custodians, only 9% of them showed a positive attitude towards marriage while 91% of respondents have resentment towards divorce and its process but they find it to be better than being in a toxic marriage. And 9% of them have a good feeling toward marriage (figure 9).

About 76% of the custodians reported some form of social abuse and impact, whereby 72% of them experienced discrimination and about 4% witnessed reduced social circle. However, 22% of them developed a feeling of freedom and marked a beginning to a new life. Added to the divorce process and social abuses, 94% of the custodians reported a high level of stress and 9% showed symptoms of depression.



**Figure 9.** Psychosocial status of custodians

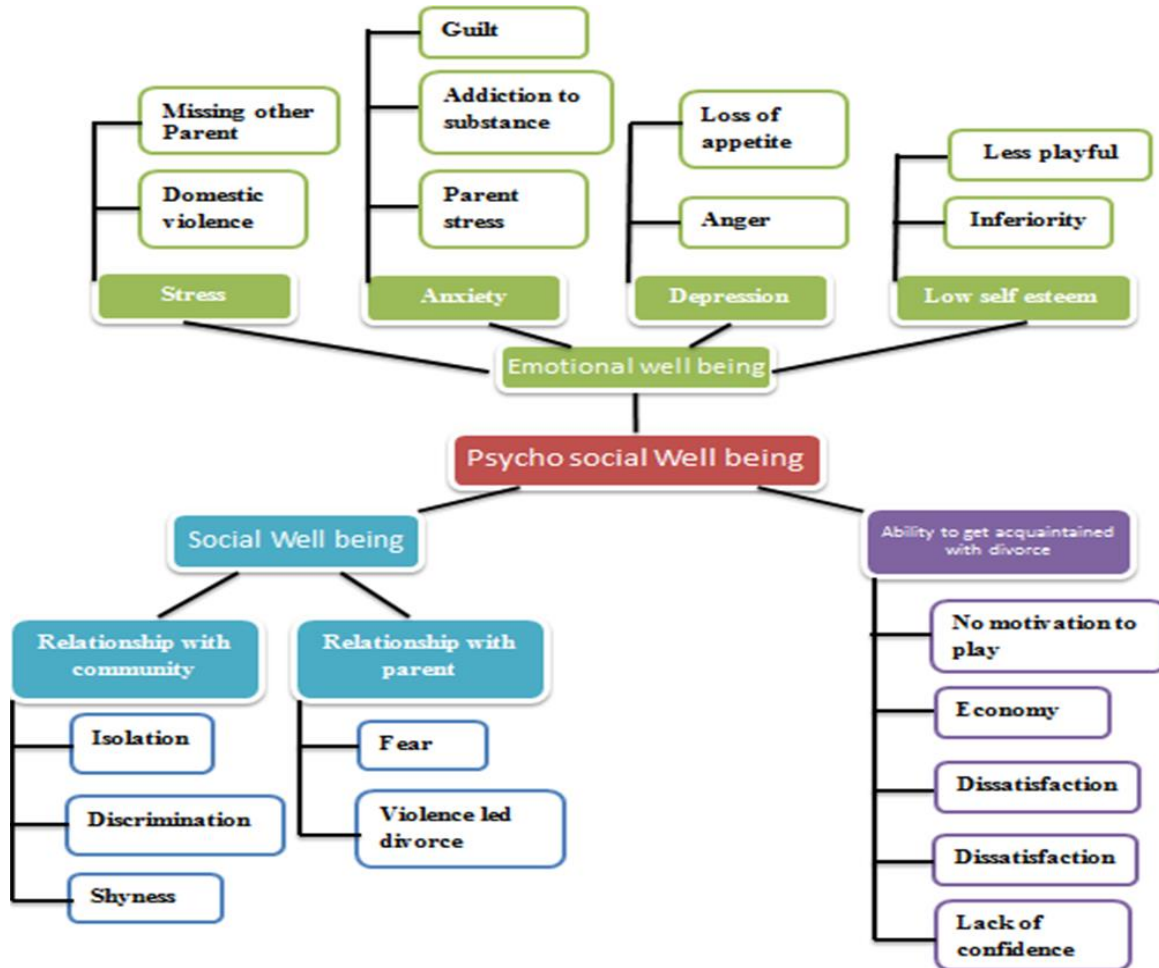
According to table 7, the majority of custodians are mothers who do not have an intention to remarry. However, 1.4% of the total respondents that make up 100% of the male custodian have a plan to remarry. In addition, of all the custodians, only 91% receive financial aid stipend by the court. Out of these, nearly half of them (48.6%) consider the allowance to be insufficient. None of the female respondents have tough to remarry but 1.4% of fathers claimed to be in need of it.

**Table 7.** Statistical variables on custodian status and financial aid

	n %
Children living with their mother	93.2%
Children living with their father	6.8%
Father got married after the divorce	1.4%
Father didn't get married after the divorce	98.6%
Custodian parent received financial support	90.5%
Custodian parent didn't receive financial support	9.5%
The financial support was enough	51.4%
The financial support was not enough	48.6%

## 4.2. Qualitative results

Qualitative questions are analyzed using codes and themes. Upon a thorough investigation of parent and children's qualitative responses, the thematic diagram is presented in figure 10.



**Figure 10.** Code and theme of psychosocial wellbeing

### 4.2.1. Social well-being

Throughout the questionnaire filling process, the inability to properly express oneself was observed both in custodial parents and children. The two common themes that emerged were feeling of isolation and discrimination. Parents feel that their freedom to join crowds has been significantly decreased because they feel people treat them differently after their divorce. One custodial parent described her situation as follows:

*Married couples often build friendships with other couples and time spent with these friends be as a couple. After a divorce, it can seem that there's a barrier to contacting these friends because you're now an individual. You may also have doubts as to whether these people really like you, or if it was your spouse that they were truly friends with. They start seeing you as a different person being a single mom raising my children on my own. Thus, I prefer to get detached from the society friends and family gatherings.*

This feeling of isolation has a psychological impact on parents, which also hinders children from learning how to socialize with people around them. This is also noted in the response of the children. One 14-year-old child said that:

*My life is changed when my parents decide to live apart. I was happy when both were at home. But I don't meet with my dad everyday now. He doesn't even play football with me like before because I only see him once a week. I also don't like hanging out with my friends and doing some school activities.*

Other children are also observed to have less communication with their father, non-custodial parent because they were used to seeing violence at their house before divorce that also impacts children's social wellbeing.

*We used to always fight, and he even slapped me, and the children saw that and especially the older one doesn't have a good feeling towards him.*

This implies that self-isolation prevails both in parents and children due to fear of discrimination and immediate withdrawal of child-parent relationships due to divorce. The latter is also manifested with fear of meeting new people. One respondent discussed that:

*My older child is a little bit shy and afraid of meeting new people after my divorce.*

The sub themes under social wellbeing are also taken from observations made at qualitative responses of FDG. Social workers reported that children whose family is going through divorce may have a harder time relating to others and tend to have fewer social contacts. One person stated that *sometimes children feel insecure and wonder if their family is the only family that has gotten divorced. This intern makes them develop fear to socialize with their community.*

Additionally, social workers emphasized on social discrimination and isolation that happen to divorce parents. One psychologist stated *Most divorced people, while they remain single, eventually find new single friends. At some point, they begin to feel awkward in their previous married friends' circles. Divorcees also lose married friends if those friends feel pressured to choose sides; they may choose one spouse over the other, or they may jettison from both friendships to avoid further conflict.* This social isolation of parents in turn affects children. This is also supported by lawyers' opinions that are interviewed. One lawyer stated that *according to the law Divorced parents will have to share the kids on holidays or rotate holidays. Either way, that leaves one parent alone or without their kids on some of the most sentimental and nostalgic days of the year. Other important days, like graduations, birthdays, and weddings become events that must be shared by both parents simultaneously. This can create tension if the exes have not figured out how to be cordial to one another and one another's new spouses (if they exist).*

A lifetime of uncomfortable holidays tremendously affects the children's social wellbeing. There is reason to believe that divorce can affect children's attachment or can cause an already attached child to lose that attachment. Interviewed psychologists mentioned that children who do not develop a secure attachment can have difficulties with regulating feelings, attention problems, and dissociative symptomatology. One psychologist stated that "At school age and adolescent age, it is seen that a secure attachment could be disrupted or lost after a parental divorce. If the divorce produces high conflict or violence, it can threaten the attachment the child has developed with the parent." and this in turn worsen the children's social wellbeing.

Generally, the major themes that impact the social wellbeing of children outlined in this research are the relationship of children with the community and their parents. Under these, the major codes identified are isolating oneself, fear of discrimination, poor relationship with a parent due to violence and distance, shyness, and fear to socialize.

#### **4.2.2. Emotional wellbeing**

The qualitative questions of the questionnaire presented have reported different compromised emotional wellbeing factors. These are categorized into four major themes as shown in figure 10 and are further categorized into sub-themes.

The major theme is stress. It is observed that parents develop stress due to economic crisis and socioeconomic uncertainty that will in turn affect emotional wellbeing because children need will not be met, that makes them start to miss their old family and non-custodian parent. One parent stated:

*The level of comfort that you've grown accustomed to during the course of a marriage dissipates and creates a level of socioeconomic uncertainty that you haven't known since you were first single.' Another parent further complements this stating 'Women suffer more from financial losses than men because of unequal wages for men and women and because women usually have more expenses associated with the physical custody of children after divorce.*

Some other custodian parents also pointed out that being a lone parent after a break-up turns out to be a very difficult situation, as the chances of ending up in poverty are high for single parents. This stress of parents added to unmet needs of children will double affect the emotional wellbeing of divorced family children.

One custodian explained her sad feeling as follows: *Divorce is the death of a union, and therefore the death of a dream, a promise, a life, and a family unit. Everyone involved even a perpetrator will feel grief and loss during a divorce. If there are children involved, they will experience severe grief over the loss of being with both parents together, living under the same roof and they will feel a familial loss. This haunts me daily.* This clearly indicates the stress level divorced parents and children go through.

Most of the divorce processes are reported to occur after serious domestic violence. One parent explained this as follows:

*There was violence at home & then I left the house. Even if our families got involved, I couldn't handle it. My children were worried and not happy that they couldn't see me. It was hard for them to accept but after we processed the divorce through the court, I got custody. Now they are living with me. they meet with their dad every Sunday because of the court order.*

Such traumatic violent incidents followed by divorce process settlements leverage the stress of children that brings further emotional instability as anxiety is the second thematic area observed

under emotional wellbeing. Many children reported feeling guilt for their parents' divorce. One child stated that:

*My life is changed when my parents told me that they got divorced and now I feel that I am the reason for it.*

This is also complemented by the view of many parents who have reported that their children are most anxious because they blame themselves for their parent's separation.

Interviewed psychologists also witnessed that children often wonder why a divorce is happening in their family. One psychologist stated that *children look for reasons, wondering if their parents no longer love each other, or if they have done something wrong*. These feelings of guilt are a very common effect of divorce on children as reported by study subjects, but also one which can lead to many other issues. Guilt increases pressure, can lead to depression, anxiety, and other health problems.

The children's anxiety is further increased by their parents' worrisome actions. Many parents reported that they are worried about what will happen to their children if something goes wrong with them. And they act extra cautious as a result. Stress and anxiety is believed to have led to the third theme of wellbeing which is low self-esteem. And this is seen both in custodial parents and children. Parents reported having reduced self-esteem due to isolation and discrimination codes discussed in social wellbeing added to owing a worthless life because they can no longer find love again. One parent claimed:

*I get stressed sometimes and I feel if it weren't for my children, I would be free.*

This gives parents the potential to mistreat their children sometimes. Children are seen to experience inferiority accompanied by a lack of confidence and thus play less. One child reported:

*I feel lonely and different from my friends because they live with a happy family and together that makes me feel like I am not like them, or I won't be good as they are in everything.*

This reduces their social relationship and makes them exhibit depression. Many parents have reported behavioral changes in their children like loss of appetite, anger, and declined playfulness that are manifestations of depression.

Divorce creates emotional turmoil for the entire family, but for kids, the situation can be quite scary, confusing, and frustrating. Interviewed social workers claim that children's psychological reactions to their parents' divorce vary in degree and is dependent on three factors: (1) the quality of their relationship with each of their parents before the separation, (2) the intensity and duration of the parental conflict, and (3) the parents' ability to focus on the needs of children in their divorce.

Generally, the emotional wellbeing of children is observed to be compromised due to stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression factors majorly. These are caused due to stress of parents, inferior feeling experienced by children, guilt, the witness of violence and substance use by parents, and unmet needs of children.

#### **4.2.3. Ability to get acquaintance with divorce**

The last but not least thematic area identified is the resilience of children to withstand divorce crises or their ability to cope with altered situations after divorce. The most recurrent code observed is reduced playfulness because children are unhappy after divorce. This is complemented by other codes such as poor economy leading to the dissatisfaction of children in terms of their need. One child said:

*I am not happy because I see my friends with both their parents, and I don't feel like I am the same as them. I feel sad seeing my friend's parents pick them from school.*

Another child also shared the same opinion adding that he does not want to play with his friends and gets carried away thinking about his parent's separation. This effect is strengthened by the economic instability of custodial parents which also makes children worry at such a young age. One child said:

*When my dad moved out, I obviously knew there would be things that my mum would be struggling with. Being on her own for the first time ever, with the knowledge that my dad was on his own too, with many things. I stopped spending as much time with my partner and stayed at home more, I stopped going out with my friends because I was worried about my mum being at home on her own*

The financial crisis forces custodian parents to limit the needs of their children that further reduces the confidence of the children. A number of parents stated that their children are not getting much

on their clothing and food because they don't have a job and they only expect money from the non-custodial partner as per the court order''.

Thus, the ability to cope with children is also seen to have been affected due to the financial crisis, lack of confidence, and thereby reduced playfulness.

#### **4.3. Correlation of psychosocial variables and socio-economic status**

Association of independent variables, child distress, and academic performance are assessed by analyzing percentage and correlation using chi-square test to determine significance value. For statistically significant categorical variables, binary logistic regression is carried out to analyze associations and determine odds ratio while for binary independent variables odds relation is analyzed using crosstabs.

Table 8 presents the effect of different socioeconomic variables on children presenting with some form of psychosocial distress and their academic performance. The following result and discussion are built upon the table.

Those children who got custody of their father did not report any reduction in their academic performance. On the contrary, all these children showed some form of distress. Of those who reported lower academic performance, the majority of the 66.7% fall in the age category of 45-54. While the dominant age group of custodians whereby children exhibited distress is 35-44 years of age. Those custodians who are employed reported the highest rate of child distress. Moreover, the unemployed custodians make up >99% of children who showed lower academic performance.

In terms of the educational background effect of custodians on child psychosocial wellbeing, the more the educational background is the higher the child distress and the lower their background is the lower the academic performance of the child. Additionally, table 9 depicts that when the number of children increases, the child distress and lower academic performance rises.

**Table 8.** Association of psychosocial variables and socio demographic characteristics (1)

		Child distress			95% CI				
		Yes	No	Not sure	Chi-square test	COR	Lower bound	Upper bound	df
		%	%	%	Sig. Value				
Age	18-24	4.3%		50.0%	0.66				3
	25-34	31.4%		25.0%	0.54	1.2	0.624	1.395	1
	35-44	44.3%			0.047	1.34	0.037	1.102	1
	45-54	20.0%		25.0%	0.042	0.99	0.01	0.04	1
Occupational status	Employed	61.4%			0.33				3
	Unemployed	31.4%		100.0%	1	1	0.05	0.059	1
	Student	2.9%			0.02	0.293	0.08	0.53	1
	Other	4.3%			0.09	1.05	0.005	0.873	1
Educational status	Grade 4	1.4%			1				3
	Grade 6-8	14.3%		75.0%	0.048	1.2	0.05	-	1
	Grade 9-12	42.9%		25.0%	1	0.95	0.3	0.05	1
	Bachelor degree	41.4%			0.49	1.7	0.2	0.4	1
Income level	<1000	1.4%							4
	1000-4000	30.0%		75.0%	0.037	1.7	0.205	0.65	1
	4000-8000	32.9%		25.0%	0.044	1.9	0.11	0.30	1
	8000-12000	31.4%			0.89	2.1			1
	>12000	4.3%			0.89	0.8	0.02	0.072	1

**Table 9.** Association of psychosocial variables and socio demographic characteristics (2)

		Child distress			Academic performance				
		Yes	No	Not sure	Chi-square	High	Low	Same	Chi-square test
		%	%	%	Sig.	%	%	%	Sig. Value
Relation	Mother	92.9%	100.0%				100.0%	93.0%	0.808
	Father	7.1%			0.057			7.0%	0.82
Age	18-24	4.3%	50.0%		0.66			7.0%	0.999
	25-34	31.4%	25.0%		0.54		33.3%	31.0%	0.223
	35-44	44.3%	0.0%		0.047			43.7%	0.998
	45-54	20.0%	25.0%		0.042		66.7%	18.3%	0.049
Occupational status	Employed	61.4%	0.0%		0.33			60.6%	1
	Unemployed	31.4%	100.0%		1		100.0%	32.4%	1
	Student	2.9%			0.02			2.8%	0.99
Educational status	Other	4.3%			0.09			4.2%	1
	Grade 4	1.4%			1			1.4%	0.92
	Grade 6-8	14.3%	75.0%		0.048		100.0%	14.1%	1
	Grade 9-12	42.9%	25.0%		1			43.7%	0.998
	Bachelor degree	41.4%			0.49			40.8%	1
	Master's degree				0.028				0.94

*Table 10. Correlation of psychosocial variables and socio demographic characteristics*

		Child distress			Academic performance				
		Yes	No	Not sure	Chi-square	High	Low	Same	Chi-square
		%	%	%	Sig.	%	%	%	Sig.
Divorce handling age	Yes	95.7%		100.0%		100.0%		95.8%	0.99
	No	4.3%			0.844			4.2%	0.038
Number of children	1	7.1%		75.0%	0.756	33.3%		9.9%	0.205
	2-4	92.9%		25.0%		66.7%		90.1%	
	>4							0.0%	0.043
Income level	<1000	1.4%						1.4%	
	1000-4000	30.0%		75.0%	0.037	33.3%		32.4%	
	4000-8000	32.9%		25.0%	0.044	66.7%		31.0%	
	8000-12000	31.4%			0.89			31.0%	
	>12000	4.3%			0.89			4.2%	0.574
Financial support	Received	90.0%		100.0%	1	100.0%		90.1%	
	Do not receive	10.0%			0.66			9.9%	
Enough support	Yes	54.3%						53.5%	0.071
	No	45.7%		100.0%	0.051	100.0%		46.5%	

Child distress is not observed to be affected by whether the custodian reported less financial support or not. However, all the children who showed lower academic performance have a custodial parent that claims to have very low financial support. Similarly, income level variation is also observed to have no impact on child distress whereby all income categories reported similar degrees of psychosocial abnormality. However, those parents with a monthly income above 12,000 birrs did not report any reduction in their child's academic performance.

To further analyze the correlation of the above results, the statistical significance of independent variables is studied using the chi-square test. To analyze statistically significant association, correlation of variables is analyzed using chi-square test. However, the only independent variables that have statistical significance ( $P > .05$ ) on child distress are age, educational status, income level, and occupational status. Similarly, age of the parent, divorce handling age and income level are observed to have statistically significant effects on academic performance. A further bivariate logistic regression analysis is run for statistically significant variables and result is shown on table 10 and 11.

The odds of child distress dominance in parent aged between 35-44 are 1.34 times greater as compared to those aged 18-24,  $p=0.047$ [COR=1.34, 95% CI: 0.037, 1.102], while age group 45-54 is found to be the age group where significantly lower academic performance is observed,  $p=0.049$ [COR=1.4, 95% CI: 0.104, 0.214]. The odd of child getting distressed in employed custodians over student parents is 0.3. Divorce handling age affects academic performance significantly,  $p=0.038$ [COR=1.7, 95% CI: 0.994, 1.096], whereby the odds of low-class performance in children handling divorce badly is 1.7 times greater than those who did.

This is actually well supported by the results of qualitative data obtained from FGD. All FGD respondents claimed that children of divorced parents are prone to distress caused due to changing economic and social factors after divorce which is dependent on age of children during divorce process. One social worker described the effect of handling age on child distress as follows:

*Most of the children are not active to play with friends and so on except the kids up to 5 years of age, which is the age they just want to play. As they grow up, they are less likely to keep track with their peers and are more prone to feeling anxious, lonely, sad, and tend to have low self-esteem,*

compared with their peers whose parents remained married. And these effects are exacerbated in children having older housewives' custodian mother.

**Table 11.** Association of psychosocial variables and socio demographic characteristics

		df	95% CI		COR	Academic performance			Chi-square test
			Lower bound	Upper Bound		High	Low	Same	
									Sig. Value
Age	18-24	3					7.0%	0.999	
	25-34	1	0.084	0.187	2.4		33.3%	31.0%	0.223
	35-44	1	0.145	0.267	0.8			43.7%	0.998
	45-54	1	0.104	0.214	1.4		6.7%	18.3%	0.049
Income level	<1000	1	0.682	0.812	0.5			1.4%	0.043
	1000-4000	1	0.683	0.812	0.9		33.3%	32.4%	-
	4000-8000	1	0.682	0.812	0.8		66.7%	31.0%	-
	8000-12000	1	0.472	0.622	1.1			31.0%	-
	>12000	4						4.2%	0.574
Divorce handling age	Yes	1	0.994	1.096	1.7		100%	95.8%	0.99
	No							4.2%	0.038

However, psychologists have presented two views regarding the effect of divorce handling age on academic performance and child distress. Some believe that in younger children (i.e., those in elementary school) the adverse impact was more pronounced than for older children (i.e., those in high school) suggesting that younger children may feel more anxious about abandonment and that they may be more likely to blame themselves. One psychologist stated that *Young children often*

*struggle to understand why they must go between two homes. They may worry that if their parents stop loving one another that someday, their parents may stop loving them and also worry that the divorce is their fault. They may fear they misbehaved, or they may assume they did something wrong.* However, other psychologists stated that divorce may adversely affect adolescents more than elementary school-age children, or that the child's age did not alter the effect of divorce on academic achievement. A psychologist supports this argument stating that *Teenagers may become quite angry about a divorce and the changes it creates. They may blame one parent for the dissolution of the marriage, or they may resent one or both parents for the upheaval in the family.* A lawyer also discussed that a child from divorced families don't always perform as well academically because parental separation is associated with reduced cognitive development and educational performance especially in teens than youngsters. He further mentioned that this is caused by feelings of guilt, blame, stressors, and diminished resources for the teens. Thus, it is not surprising that parental separation has also been reported to negatively affect a child's motivation, engagement, and learning-related behavior in the classroom.

Psychologists included in the interview also stressed the effect of income level on child distress and academic performance. One psychologist stated: *The economic resources available to the mother and the children may decline. The implications of this reduction in resources may include changes in the nutrition intake. For example, the mother may have less money to buy fresh vegetables or less time to prepare healthy food at home because of her work. The pressure on the mother's time and economic resources may affect the energy expended by the children as well.*

#### **4.4. Measurement of Psychosocial wellbeing of children**

Thus far, quantitative and qualitative data results have been presented and discussed and generalized implication of the data has been inferred. In this section, the three dimensions of psychosocial wellbeing of children namely: Emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing, and ability to cope with new situations are individually weighed using a scoring system. As depicted in table 12, 13 and 14, different measurable aspects of the three psychosocial wellbeing dimensions are inferred from quantitative and qualitative data results and weighed. To do so, a scoring system was developed whereby zero score is given for those that show positive results for psychosocial abnormality, while a score of 2 is given for those with no sign of psychosocial abnormality. This scoring is done for each dimension of psychosocial wellbeing. Finally, the total score is summed and presented to draw results and implications.

*Table 12. Measurement of the emotional wellbeing of children*

				0	1	2	
<b>Psychosocial well being Emotional/ personal well-being.</b>	Confidence	0 Not confident	1 Somehow	2 Confident	8	92	
	Child gets angry	0 Angry	1 Somehow	2 Not angry	14	92	
	Depression	0 Depressed	1 Somehow	2 Not depressed	29	71	
	Anxiety	0 Anxious	1 Somehow	2 No anxiety	2	98	
	Inferiority	0 Feeling of inferiority		2 No inferiority	19	81	
	Low self-esteem	0 Low self-esteem	1 Somehow	2 Intact self-esteem	6	93	
	Child distress	0 Highly distressed	1 Somehow distressed	2 No distress	90	10	
	Stress	0 Stressed	1 Somehow	2 No stress	83	17	
	Parent loss	0 Yes	1 Somehow	2 No	78	22	
	Happiness	0 Not happy	1 Somehow	2 Happy	69	10	21
	Parent intimacy	0 Not intimate	1 limited	2 Intimate	7		93
	Food	0 Reduced meal	1 Same	2 Improved meals	19	74	7
	Shelter	0 Reduced	1 Same	2 Improved	84	9	7
	Feeling towards other parents	0 Bad feeling	1 Same	2 Very good	3	7	90
	<b>Total</b>				<b>36%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>57%</b>

**Table 13. Measurement of emotional wellbeing of children**

					Total 0 score (%)	Total 1 score (%)	Total 2 Score (%)	
<b>psychosocial wellbeing</b>	<b>Social/interpersonal wellbeing</b>	Playfulness	0 Not playful	1 Somehow playful	2 playful	10		90
		Level of satisfaction with family	0 Not satisfied	1 Somehow satisfied	2 Very satisfied		93	7
		Ability to talk freely about the other parent	0 Not free	1 Same	2 Free	7		93
		Connection with family	0 Good with one parent	1 partially with both	2 Good With both	33		67
		Parent intimacy	0 Not good	1 Same	2 Good	7		93
		<b>Total</b>					12%	18%

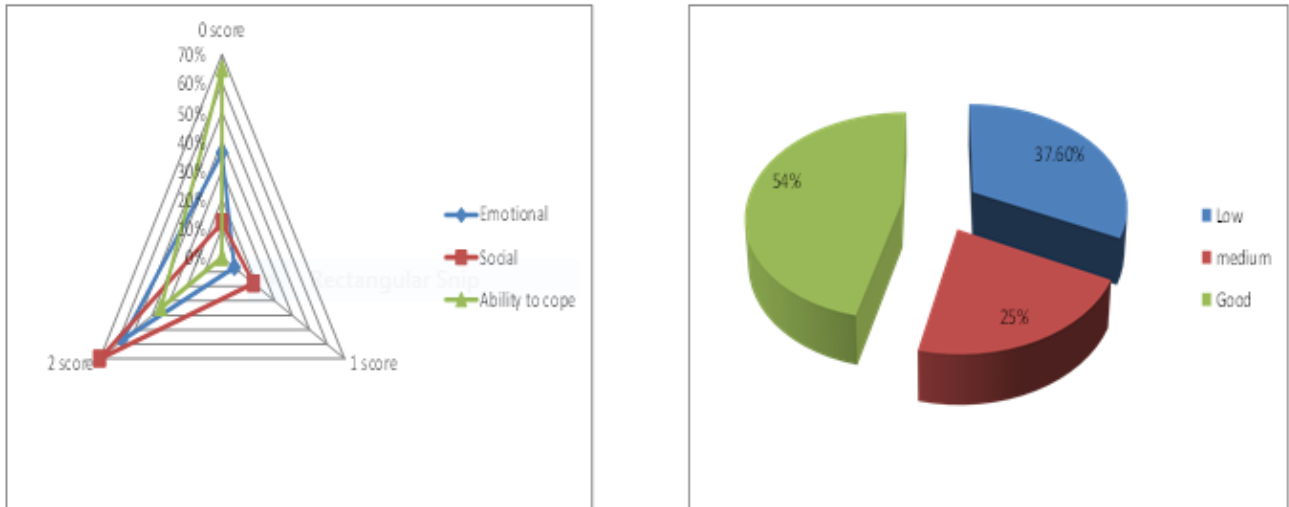
**Table 14. Measurement of social wellbeing and ability to cope of children**

		Total 0	Total 1	Total 2	
		score (%)	score (%)	score (%)	
<b>Ability to cope</b>	Shyness	0	1	2	65
		Not	Somehow	Very	
		shy	shy	shy	35

As presented in figure 11 and table 15 of the total respondents around 40% showed lower psychosocial wellbeing. The most psychosocial dimension which is compromised is ability to cope with new situations faced after divorce, social wellbeing and emotional wellbeing, respectively. Generally, 46% of the children showed greatly compromised psychosocial wellbeing.

**Table 15. Score of psychosocial dimensions**

Psychosocial wellbeing dimensions	0 score	1 score	2 score
Emotional	36%	7%	57%
Social	12%	18%	70%
Ability to cope	65%		35%
Total	37.6%	9%	54%



**Figure 11.** Proportion of children with psychosocial problems

#### 4.5. Discussions

In this section, the results of the study are discussed in line with relevant results from other up-to-date studies. Generally, the most important or relevant results of the study are discussed first, followed by additional results.

According to this research, the most prominent divorce factor that accounts for 21% of divorce is domestic violence whereby mothers get tortured by their husbands due to arguments about the economy. Infidelity and sex incompatibility follow the prior with 17% and 14% divorce leading cause. Within the target population of this study, divorce is also observed to be common in the age range of 35-44. This is supported by researchers Erulkar and Muthengi (2009) that indicated Ethiopia has one of the highest rates of early marriage which later results in divorce. Whereas a study conducted in Nigeria by Umoh and Adeyemi (2000), showed that, religious differences, sexual incompatibility, cross-cultural marriages, and age differences were indicated as other factors of divorce. This study is also consistent with Serkalem's (2006)'s report which stated that; sexual incompatibility, pressure from friends and families, the difference in religious and ethnic background were the major causes of divorce in Addis Ababa city. Similarly, Fincham (2003) explained that conflict, infidelity, addiction is strongly associated with marital conflict and also lead to marital dissolution.

The interview also asserted that: infidelity, early marriage, economic problems, addiction, domestic violence, and unnecessary family interference were causes for divorce. This study further revealed that divorce creates economic, social, and psychological problems for the divorced families and their children. This result is supported by previous studies. For example, Serkalem (2006) indicated that divorce affects the relationships of divorced women with their relatives and friends. Her finding indicated that among divorced women, more than half reported that the support they had been getting from relatives and friends has stopped after they get divorced.

This study clearly reveals divorce in its turn can be a cause for addiction to alcohol and chat, and it also leads to having a loose relation between fathers and their children. Furthermore, lack of fulfilling the basic needs of children, reduction of income, and economic crisis are also the main economic consequences of divorce. Garner (2008) stated that the divorced exhibit higher rates of depression, suicide, alcohol abuse, and mental health problem. Ambert (2009) also strengthened the above idea by asserting that divorce creates a series of stress for parents, particularly for custodial parents. Many divorced parents are so preoccupied and emotionally burdened and in turn, they become depressed.

The interview findings also revealed that divorcees and their children were considering themselves as neglected and isolated by society and feel under stress and become dissatisfied in their life. Children of divorced families develop an inferiority complex due to feeling helpless and feel shy and unconfident in front of their peers and teachers. This finding is supported by Kelly (2000)'s report which indicated that children of divorced parents may have a greater risk of adjusting in areas of social relationships, education, self-concept, behavior, and psychological well-being. Parents also face anxiety, exhaustion, and stress after the divorce resulting in the decline of the assistance they give to their children in terms of affections, language stimulation, academic support, emotional support, financial assistance, and support in social maturity (Kelly, 2000).

The quantitative data finding asserts that divorce is a potential threat to the wellbeing of the family since it results in family breakdown and collapse. Children will be forced to depart from one of their parents, usually their father's, due to the tight contact that they have with their mothers and mostly with the court order. Children's safekeeping will be left to mothers after divorce, with mothers' weak educational background in study areas and there is no sufficient income for their

living, taking the whole responsibilities for their children has a contribution for their being economically unstable.

A statistically significant association on child distress is observed by age ( $P=0.047$ ), educational status ( $P=0.028$ ), income level ( $P=0.037$ ), and occupational status (0.02) variables. Similarly, Age ( $P=0.049$ ), divorce handling age (0.038), and income level (0.043) are observed to have statistically significant effects on the academic performance of children after divorce. These results are well aligned with qualitative results. Adolescents with divorced parents are more likely to engage in risky behavior, such as substance use and early sexual activity. In the United States, adolescents with divorced parents drink alcohol earlier and report higher alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and drug use than their peers. Similarly, adolescents whose parents divorced when they were 5 years old or younger were at particularly high risk for becoming sexually active prior to the age of 16.

The educational attainment rate of children after their parents got divorced is the same as before in 85% of the cases. This is due to the reason that age of the children and way of living as well. Children with families of more income gets the advantage of a tutor and teachers support. This is also stated by a recent study (Brand JE ,2019) Children whose parents divorce tend to have worse educational outcomes than children whose parents stay married. However, not all children respond identically to their parents divorcing.

In terms of the educational background effect of a custodian on child psychosocial wellbeing, the more the educational background is the higher the child distress and the lower their background is the lower academic performance of the child. This is also outlined by (Brand JE ,2019) who studied that children's response to divorce varies by socioeconomic characteristics and family wellbeing. Children of more educated parents experience greater effects of parental divorce than children of less-educated parents. Economical issue is also seen to have a significant effect on child academic performance. Negative economic consequences experienced by divorced women in urban areas include a reduced standard of housing, difficulty in paying school fees for their children, food insecurity, medical problems, and insufficient money to buy clothing and other resources needed for subsistence life (Tilsen and Larsen, 2000).

The interview also indicated that the main experiences of women before divorce are violence, different kinds of abuses, and staying out of their homes. The finding shows that 21% of divorced women had experienced frequent quarreling during the marriage. Due to violence and disagreements, divorced women indicated that they had stayed out of their homes.

This study also reveals the educational level of divorced parents that determines the opportunity of employment and creates differences between individual and families' economic and social functions. Divorced women had limited opportunity of employment due to low level of education and limited experience of employed work. Raising family income to sustain life with little support from outside is a challenge for most of them.

Divorce can bring several types of emotions to the forefront for a family, and the children involved are no different. Feelings of loss, anger, confusion, anxiety, and many others, all may come from this transition. Divorce can leave children feeling overwhelmed and emotionally sensitive. Children need an outlet for their emotions – someone to talk to, someone who will listen, etc. Children may feel the effects of divorce through how they process their emotions. In some cases, where children feel overwhelmed and do not know how to respond to the effects they feel during divorce, they may become angry or irritable. Their anger may be directed at a wide range of perceived causes. Children processing divorce may display anger at their parents, themselves, their friends, and others. While for many children this anger dissipates after several weeks, if it persists, it is important to be aware that this may be a lingering effect of the divorce on children.

Generally, the major themes that impact the social wellbeing of children outlined in this research are the relationship of children with the community and their parents. Under these, the major codes identified are isolating oneself, fear of discrimination, poor relationship with a parent due to violence and distance, shyness, and fear to socialize. The emotional wellbeing of children is also observed to be compromised due to stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression factors. These are caused due to stress of parents, inferiority feeling experienced by children, guilt, the witness of violence and substance use by parents, and unmet needs of children. As a result, the ability to cope with children is also seen to have been affected due to financial crisis, lack of confidence, and leading to reduced playfulness. Upon the scoring scale developed in the results section, near to 50% of children exhibited psychosocial abnormality.

## **4.6. Summary**

This cross-sectional research investigated the psychosocial effects of divorce on children from different dimensions. Parents, children, and key personnel are inquired for questionnaire and 146 respondents are assessed in total. The questionnaire has both qualitative and quantitative questions for a better understanding of child behavioral characteristics. The results are analyzed using SPSS 20 and Excel. After analysis, results are presented, discussed, and weighed. Upon scoring and weighing of psychosocial dimensions in children, nearly 47% of total respondents are observed to show above-average psychosocial impacts. The most dominant psychosocial well-being compromised is emotional wellbeing. Thus, parallel to divorce handling, the children of divorced parents seek psychological therapy.

This study shows all the custodians 91% of them showed a negative attitude towards marriage. And around 90% of respondents have resentment towards divorce. Moreover, 76% of custodians reported some form of social abuse and impact, whereby 72% of them experienced discrimination. 94% of the custodians reported high-level stress and 9% showed symptoms of depression. This amplifies the psychosocial status of custodians that directly affects the well-being of children. Additionally, the dominant age group of custodians whereby children exhibited distress is found to be 35-44 years of age.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1. Conclusions

The study identified major causes of divorce and contributing factors for the increasing number of divorces in Addis Ababa mainly for the wellbeing of the children. Primarily the study indicated that economic problems, addiction, violence, pressure from friends and families, and difference in religion and ethnic background are identified as the causes of divorce.

Traditionally women are expected to make the marriage workable by paying whatever sacrifice even with the burden of problems and sufferings especially after the birth of a child. This is mostly because it is the mother who gets custody of the child after divorce. one Amharic proverb explains that “ጎሽ ለልጅ ስትል ተወጋች” which is meaning that women have to shoulder whatever happens in the family for the sake of their children. Therefore, divorced women have a burden of social obligation that aggravates the feeling of failure and shame to the extent that creates mental distress after divorce.

The social life quality of divorced women in the study changed after their divorce. This is limited due to a lack of time and money to participate in social activities as before the divorce. Therefore, their social life post-divorce is not able to raise the needed support by divorced women. The economic and social problem of divorce creates a psychological problem on divorced women which directly affects the children. This is as explained by cases due to the frustration to cope and handle life after divorce, especially with children. Furthermore, as cases of women divorcees explained they have the problem of getting easily angry. Therefore, it greatly affects their health, social relationship, and their strength to deal with their sole responsibilities with their children.

Child distress is also the main factor seen to have a significant association with age, educational status, income level, and occupational status. Similarly, Age, divorce handling age, and income level are observed to have statistically significant effects on academic performance. And this was found to be consistent with qualitative observations made from FDG interviews and parent response.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

Divorce is the big social issue however it has never been gotten attention by concerned bodies either to reduce rate of divorcing or to find a solution for children who suffered by its effect. After the divorce parents are socially victimized and left to take responsibilities for their lives and children, Therefore, the role of social workers in crisis intervention, care management, mediation, connecting people to resource, awareness-raising, and advocacy is needed in many ways to reduce the divorce rate and its negative consequence on the lives of divorcees and their children.

The preventive work should start before the formation of a family to reduce divorce. The promotion of family education and information will enable the community from maladjustment and enhancing the healthy function of individuals, families, and society. The target should focus to increase the engagement of youths in the educational awareness of healthy behaviors about relationships through premarital counseling service. In addition, promoting the value system of the legal, traditional, cultural, and religious will strengthen family roles.

The rehabilitative process in post-divorce is to alleviate the socio-economic and psychological impact of divorce on divorcees and their children. It includes rendering appropriate and sustainable care and support to the divorcees and their children by creating easy access to all kinds of basic services through the network with other helping organizations. The rehabilitative work in the process of divorce and its settlement by social workers most importantly include the role of reconciliation and mediation. To reduce the divorce rate reconciliation of couples should be considered as one alternative before pronouncement of divorce. Furthermore, to reduce the effect of divorce on the divorcees and their children in the process role of mediation is important. Mediation will help to re-establish contact between the parties and to provide a neutral forum where the parties may meet face to face.

In the process, the social worker can provide within that forum an impartial presence supportive of negotiation. This will facilitate the exchange of information between the parties within a structured framework. Comparing the background of women in general with their ex-husband, they have lower educational attainment and participation in formal employment than their ex-husband. However, married women have a better educational background than the divorced Women so the government & other bodies should involve empowering a woman. Since women are the basis of the family as a whole. School counselors should see themselves as parents and

guides to the students. Some level of friendliness should exist between them and the students so that the students will be free to confide in them.

The government, community, organization, courts, and religious organizations should work together to ensure that all unhappily married couples have access to mediation and counseling service before the divorce. Healthy parenting invariably begins with emotionally healthy parents. Encourage people to establish effective relationships; classes of relationship and marriage skills should be incorporated in schools when the children's age is ready. As a result, the parties should examine their common interests and objectives and the possibilities for reaching agreements that are practical, acceptable, and beneficial mainly to their children.

Finally, this research presents the view of custodian parents and children. If the non-custodial parent perspective can be collected and evaluated, a more comprehensive result can be achieved. Thus, it is recommended to run the same research but with the inclusion of non-custodial parents.

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## **Appendix: Questionnaire**

**Addis Ababa university**

**College of education and behavioral science**

**Department of social psychology**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Dear Respondent

This questionnaire is prepared for assessing the psychosocial well-being of children in divorced families. The objective of this questionnaire is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Social psychology.

The data collected from this questionnaire is used for the purpose of the research. In addition, note that all the collected data will be kept only in the hands of the researcher. I hereby request you to be open and honest while responding so that the research could succeed and achieve the intended goal. Please write your response by indicating the number in the proper place and for open questions write in the given space.

Finally, dear respondent, I appreciate your cooperation and willingness in the name of Addis Ababa University Graduate School of Social psychology, thank you.

**PART I.** reasons of divorce and its impact on their children.

**Background information**

code...A1...

Sub-city.....

Wereda.....

Occupational Status.....

age.....

Date of interview.....

1.What is your relation to the child?

- Mother       Father

2. what is your educational level.

- Up to grade 4     middle school     high school     university degree     master's  
 None                       other.....

3.What best describes your employment situation?

- currently employed.  
 Currently unemployed  
 student

4. Do you feel that age has a major factor in how children cope with divorce?

- Yes               no

5.How many children do you have from your ex-husband/wife?

- One               2-4               above

6.Did you get remarried? If yes does your current husband/wife has children

- Yes                       no

7. Do you think family marital background has an effect on children's future life in relation to marriage?

- Yes               no

8. What is the amount of income for the household?

Below 1000    1000-4000br    4000-8000br    8000-12000br    12000-above

9. Did you get financial support from your ex-husband/wife?

Yes                      no                     

10. If so, is it enough for those child expenses? (Education, health, clothing, food, and others)

Yes                      no                     

11. All of your school age children attend school?

Yes                      no                     

12. How is the academic performance of your school attending children after divorce?

better than before    lower than before    same as before

13. What do you say about the following if the lifestyle of your children has been changed after divorce?

<input type="checkbox"/> They could get what they want	<input type="checkbox"/> They move from private school to gov't.
<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes they face a food shortage	<input type="checkbox"/> They haven't enough cloth as before
<input type="checkbox"/> They couldn't visit entertainment places	<input type="checkbox"/> they don't play with their friends
<input type="checkbox"/> They couldn't get tutor/support on there education	<input type="checkbox"/> they get stressed

**14.** Do you think that children from divorced families are more distressed than children from intact families?

Yes                      no                       not sure

## **PART II. Questions for divorced parents**

1. How the divorce settled and how did the process happen? Explain the situations of your children and yourself.
  
2. What do you think are the main reasons of divorce?
  
3. What are your feelings regarding marriage?
  
4. What statement best describes your feelings regarding divorce?
  
5. What are the social, economic, psychological impacts of divorce?
  
6. Do you think your children are happy and satisfied with your support and care? If not could you please explain?
  
7. What they feel about their father/mother?
  
8. Are they free to talk to you about him/her?
  
9. Have you ever observed any particular pressure on your children that are emotionally and psychologically difficult? (For Example: easily upset, angry, feel sad, inferiority, stress, depression, loss of confidence, etc.)

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**College of education and behavioral science**  
**Department of social psychology**

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Please write your response by indicating the number in the proper place and for open questions write in the given space.

Finally, dear respondent, I appreciate your cooperation and willingness in the name of Addis Ababa University Graduate School of Social psychology, thank you.

### **Part I Questionnaire to be completed by children of divorced parents (school-aged with assistance) Background information (code...A2...)**

age.....,Sex.....Education level.....Date of interview.....

1. Who received custody?

Mom       Dad       Other

2. Do you have access of the necessary things for your life after your parents' divorce?

I. School       better than before       same as before       worse than before

II. Friends       better than before       same as before       worse than before

III. Food       better than before       same as before       worse than before

IV. Clothing       better than before       same as before       worse than before

V. Housing       better than before       same as before       worse than before

3. Did you get financial support from your father/mother?

Yes       no

4. How do you explain your relationship with your family members?

I have close relation with my mother than father because she loves me more

I have close relation with my father than mother because he loves me more

I have close relation with both parents.

I haven't as such relation with both parents      other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you think you have better life if your parents didn't get divorce?

Yes       no       Never thought of it

6. Do you feel that you lost the most important person/s in your life?

Yes       no       Never thought of it

7. Have you got enough meal on time after parents' divorce?

Yes       no       The same as before

8. Are you satisfied with all that you have got?

Yes       no       partially       other .....

9. Has the divorce changed how you view your relationships with the opposite sex?

Yes       no

10. Were your academics affected negatively by the divorce?

Yes       no

11. Do your parents get along now?      Yes -----      no.....

## **Part II**

Semi-structured questions for **children of divorced parents (school aged with assistance)**

1. Please tell me about your life, by comparing the situation before and after your parents' divorced?
2. How do you explain the effects of your parents' divorce on your life?
4. How do you remember the process of your parents' divorce?
5. How do you differ from your peers who live with their two parents

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**College of education and behavioral science**  
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The data collected from this questionnaire will all be used for the purpose of the research. In addition, note that all the collected data will be kept only in the hands of the researcher. I hereby request you to be open and honest while responding so that the research could succeed and achieve the intended goal. Please write your response by indicating the number in the proper place and for open questions write in the given space.

Finally, dear respondent I appreciate your cooperation and willingness in the name of Addis Ababa University Graduate School of Social psychology, thank you.

**The following questions to be Responded by FGD participants (social workers, psychologists, lawyers...)**

**PART I. General Information**

Occupational status.....

Date of interview.....

1. What are the major consequences of divorce on children's life?
2. How children's wellbeing is affected by parents' divorce?
3. What are the economic, social and psychological impacts of divorce on children. wellbeing?
4. Do you think children whose parents are divorced will get quality food after family dissolution? If not why?
5. What kind of risks could be happened on children during and after parents got divorce?
6. Do you think those children have got all services (health, education, etc) adequately as children of intact family?
7. Are they active in social interaction (playing with friends, working with others, etc.)?
9. What do you think about their academic performance? Are they better, same as or lower than after parents have got divorce? Why?
10. Have you ever seen children of divorced parents who in particular pressures of emotional and psychological difficulty? (Probe: depress, stress, anxiety, disappointment, low confidence, etc)
11. Do you think those children have strong relation with their parents after divorce? Why?
12. Do you think those children are happy after the family's dissolution?

**This question to be asked to key informants**

**Back Ground information**

Sub-city.....

Wereda.....

Sector/responsibility.....

Educational level.....

Occupation.....

Tel.No.....

Date of interview.....

**Part I question to be asked for key informants**

1. What do you think are the major causes of divorce in this community?
2. What are the social, economic, cultural reasons of divorce?
3. Do you think family marital background has an effect on children's future life in relation to marriage?
5. How do you explain the impacts of divorce on children's live in this community?
6. How psychological, social and economic conditions affect children's wellbeing because of parents' divorce?
7. How parents' divorce affects children's life in their childhood and future life? Brief Explanation in terms of social, economic and psychological aspects.
8. When and how children of divorced family are more likely to exposed at risk?
9. Among the major domains of capacity (economic, social and psychological), which one of them more affects children's life?