EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

South African society may have erased the stigma that once accompanied divorce, but its massive effects cannot be ignored. Hence, the purpose of this research was to determine the causes, nature and impact of divorce on children.

From the literature, it became evident that social scientists tracked successive generations of South African children whose parents have ended their marriages. Literature further indicates that divorce is a traumatic experience, characterized by emotions, relief and excitement, shame that you had failed in your marriage, guilt that your children would not have the ideal childhood you had envisaged and fury at your spouse. Its effects are obvious in family life, educational attainment, job stability, income potential, physical and emotional health, drug use, and crime (Search 1983:11).

Literature further revealed that each year, over one million South African children suffer as their parents divorce. Moreover, half of all children born in

wedlock see their parents divorce before reaching their nineteenth birthday (Search, 1983:11). This fact alone should give policymakers and those whose careers focus on children reason to develop policies that will protect children from the devastating effects of divorce.

Divorce has pervasive ill effects on children and the five major institutions of society: the family, church, school, marketplace, and government itself. If the family is the building block of society, then marriage is the foundation. This foundation however, is growing weaker with fewer adults entering into marriage, more adults leaving it in divorce, and more and more adults avoiding it altogether for single parenthood or cohabitation (Mitchell 1979:21).

Divorce occurs in a context that is usually characterized by chronic parental conflict, pre-occupied parents who may be less sensitive to their child's needs, a reduced standard of living, post separation, chronic stress for the child and parents (Hodges, 1991:8).

The following are some major findings revealed in this study:

- absent parents or non-custodial parents are never in contact with their children and hence continuously fail to maintain their children.

- Extra marital relations, alcohol abuse, and physical abuse are main causes of divorce.

- Divorce has long term effects on children. These sometimes they carry along to adulthood.

Not all marriages fail for the same reason, nor is there usually one reason for the breakdown of a particular marriage. Nevertheless, some reasons are more heard than others, such as, poor communication, financial problems, a lack of commitment to the marriage, a dramatic change in priorities and infidelity. All in all, children are at the receiving end. They are the victims of divorce.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Divorce is stressful for parents and children alike. It brings with it a lot of changes and a very real sense of loss. Children and parents grieve the loss of the kind of family they had hoped for, and they especially grieve the loss of the presence of a parent (Morton,1994:54). That is the reason why some children, even after the finality of the divorce has been explained to them, still hold out hope that their parents will someday get back together. Sometimes a separation is a necessary transition to final divorce. It can facilitate reasonable amicable postdivorce relations and minimize unnecessary bitterness that would likely react unfavourably on the children caught in the middle.

A good marriage according to Green (1984:14) is the ultimate act of the imagination. This suggests that good relationships are no accidents, and that marriages are consciously created and resembles an excellent art. Marriage is a process, it is a dynamic entity always changing, and rarely

holds still enough for analysis. No two marriages are identical, and no marriage is the same from one moment to the next. Because of these changing fortunes in marriage, people don't always stay married.

The concern of the researcher about the negative impact of divorce on children urged the researcher to conduct this project.

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1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Morton (1994:54) divorce is a traumatic experience, characterized by emotions, relief and excitement, shame that you had failed in your marriage, guilt that your children would not have the ideal childhood you had envisioned and fury at your spouse.

Caplovits (1983:77) mentions that divorce is increasing at an alarming rate and is considered by social scientists and policy makers alike to be a major social problem. Inspite of the considerable attention that has been given to this problem and the growing amount of research that has been done on it, relatively little is known about the causes and consequences of divorce for the partners and their children.

Divorce today is reaching epidemic proportions. One in three marriages now end in divorce, and though most people do marry again, the failure rate for second marriages is even higher (Green, 1984:20).

For most children divorce is by no means a solution to their parents' problems. For them an unhappy marriage is infinitely preferable to a divorce and they simply cannot envisage a situation where one parent will be permanently absent from home (Gillis, 1994:165).

Divorce destroys the children's sense of safety and security. Many are forced to fill the vacuum left by their missing parent. They are asked to assume greater responsibility and provide emotional support, comfort and companionship for their custodial parent (Morton, 1994:74). Since divorce is devastating for most people, parents who are overwhelmed with changes often become preoccupied with their own needs. The children may be both neglected and thrust into the role of surrogate spouse.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research is to gain knowledge regarding the causes of divorce and to generate data that will help professionals and public to provide programs that would meet the needs of children from divorced families. The following are the objectives:

1.3 OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 To determine the nature, extent and causes of divorce

1.3.2 To determine the effects of divorce on children

1.3.3 To device interventive measures to alleviate the impact of divorce on children.

1.4 ASSUMPTIONS

The researcher assumes that the following might be possible contributing factors to deviant behaviour to children of divorce:

1.4.1 Divorce is a possible contributory factor to deviant behaviour amongst children.

1.4.2 Children who are not prepared or even aware of the divorce proceedings may suffer from behavioural, emotional and cognitive effects.

1.4.3 Divorce has detrimental effects on the family more especially children.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The study will benefit children from divorced parents in that it will help them use their coping skills to deal with their emotions towards divorce. This is the case because nowadays divorce has become the order of the day as hundreds of couples are divorcing everyday. It is further hoped that the research will benefit the counselors because they will know how to help children experiencing such problems.

It is also hoped that through research of this nature, stakeholders such as social welfare, psychologists and legal firms will be advised about the contemporary issues of divorce and problems experienced by children from divorced families.

Finally, this research will benefit the couples. Not all couples would benefit directly from the study but from knowledgeable helping professionals. Again they will learn that when intending to take such an action, they must take their children along through the entire process.

1.6 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations are anticipated:

1.6.1 Since the study is confined to Mmabatho, inferences cannot be made about the general population.

1.6.2 Since divorce may be too sensitive and personal to some respondents, it was not easy to find receptive respondents.

1.6.3 Because divorce is a sensitive matter, the parents with the custody of the children were not prepared to admit that the children suffer detrimental effects, as it may be a reflection on their parenting skills.

1.6.4 Because of the absence of legal registry for divorced couples, the researcher experienced a problem of finding sufficient number of respondents.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.7.1 **Divorce**

Mitchell (1979:215) defines divorce as the process by which a marriage, recognized as valid, can be revoked in the life-time of the partners who then revert to single status and are free to remarry.

1.7.2 **Child**

A child according to the Child Care Act, No. 74 of 1983, is any person under the age of 18 years. Cambridge International Dictionary of English defines a child as a boy or a girl from the time of birth until he or she is an adult, or a son or a daughter of any age.

1.7.3 **Family**

Fisher (1972:382) defines family as a kinship which provides for the raising of children, and for certain other needs varying from society to society, whereas according to Zastrow (1989:380) a family is a social institution with many functions. The family provides support and nurturance needed by its members. The family also provides economic support to the children in particular and it has the responsibility of transmitting culture to the children.

There are two kinds of families namely: nuclear and extended families. The former consist of a father, mother and children if any, and the latter consist of the nuclear family plus grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and so forth.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

According to Babbie (1995:18) methodology might be called "the science of finding out." Methodology basically encompasses techniques, procedures and skills the researcher uses to manipulate data to acquire knowledge. Bailey (1987:33) cited in Qalinge-Okoro (1998) defines methodology as the philosophy of the research process. This involves the assumption and values that serve as a rationale for research and the standards or criteria the researcher uses for interpreting data and reaching conclusions. Methodology includes the research design, method of data collection, sampling, analysis and interpretation of data.

1.8.1 Research Design

Tripodi in Grinnell (1981:198) declares that research design includes the entire process of research. He states that, "the purpose of research design is to provide a set of systematic procedures for producing data pertaining to the development, modification or expansion of knowledge". The research design applied in this research project is the descriptive

design. This design not only emphasise the in-depth description of a specific situation, interaction or social objects, but also the causality between variables and events (Mouton, 1996:43). Reaves (1992:2) cites that the purpose of a descriptive research is to describe a particular phenomenon, situation or event.

1.8.2 Methods of data collection

1.8.2.1 Literature studies

Literature studies are a unique research step in that they encompass two partially overlapping purposes; firstly, they serve to support the conduct of empirical studies and secondly as a type of non-empirical research.

Literature studies are essential data collection methods as it helps the researcher to obtain data pertaining to the study (Wilkinson and McNeil, 1996:47).

1.8.2.2 Questionnaire

De Vos (1998:156) defines a questionnaire as a data-gathering device that elicit from a respondent the answers or reactions to prearranged questions presented in a specific order.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used personally administered questionnaires with structured questions in order to gather information from respondents and also to explain what they do not understand. It is also advantageous to interpret questions into the language the respondents understand better.

1.9 SAMPLING

According to Nachmias cited in Morwe (2002:15), "a sample is any subset of sampling from a population. A subset is any combination of sampling units that does not include the entire set of sampling units that has been defined as the population". Therefore a sample has to be a

reciprocal identity of the population under study. It is important for a sample to be an image of the population in order to make generalizations in the analysis phase of the study.

1.9.1 Sampling procedure

The non-probability judgemental and snowball sampling techniques were used in this study. Non-probability sampling refers to the case where the probability of including each element of the population in a sample is unknown (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:86).

In the case of judgmental sampling the researcher selected cases to be included in the sample on the basis of her familiarity with the situation combined with her presumed expert judgment. In other words, the respondents in the sample had to adhere to certain characteristics to suite the research purpose. This implies that only divorced parents were included in the sample.

Furthermore, snowball sampling was used where the researcher talked to a small sample of the community and asked the given respondents to

indicate divorcees known to them. The ultimate goal was to question at least 40 respondents.

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of data analysis is to provide answers to the research questions being studied (de Vos, 1998:204). Information derived from respondents was quantified, categorized, arranged and summarized. Data collected was analysed using univariate and bivariate frequency distributions and presented in table form and bar graphs.

CHAPTER 2

NATURE, CAUSES AND EXTENT OF DIVORCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Divorce is a dissolution of marriage. The experience of divorce causes emotional strain second in severity to death. The divorced individual is cut off from traditional support systems while experiencing conflicting emotions of guilt, fear, anger, and resentment. The impact of divorce is likely to affect every aspect of an individual's life such as social, emotional and economic. Divorce is a process and takes many different degrees of change for everyone concerned. Emotions run high during and after the divorce (Braude and Francisco-La Grange, 1993:7).

Divorce is viewed as a phenomenon which is brought about by factors and conditions in society, and which in turn brings its own further changes to impact on society (Cigler cited in Bruade and Francisco-La Grange, 1993:10) Divorce is not the death of a family but rather creates an alternative family form (Calvin in Braude and Francisco-La Grange, 1993:10). One parent, the non-custodial parent, no longer lives together

with the custodial parent and the children. Divorce does not imply that the ties between children and parents are or should be severed. The rights and responsibilities of parents continue whether or not a divorce has occurred.

Divorce occurs in a context that is usually characterized by chronic parental conflict, pre-occupied parents who may be less sensitive to their child's needs, a reduced standard of living, post separation chronic stress for the child and parents (Hodges, 1991:8).

2.2 NATURE OF DIVORCE

During and after divorce children experience loss in many different ways. One parent may move out of the common home, the other may move out of the common geographic area, children may be relocated to a totally new area, both parents or one of them can abandon the children. Being separated from one or both parents, may result in emotional upheaval within the growing child.

2.2.1 Separation

Separation is not a euphemism for desertion. Desertion is a fault ground for divorce in most states (Fullerton, 1977:410). Separation is a nonfault ground that means that the couple have been living apart by mutual agreement, for a specified period of time. The time required to establish separation as a ground for divorce varies from two to seven years, depending on the state statute. Separation is clearly not a ground for quick divorce, but rather a means by which a marriage that is dead can be legally buried, with as little bitterness as possible.

Separation, of course, does not always lead to divorce. An estimated one of every six couples separate for at least two days at some time in their relationship (Kitson, 1985 in Lauer & Lauer 2000:416). The separation can be a cooling-off period that allows couples to deal more rationally with their differences and effect a reconciliation. Other couples get involved in a long-term, unresolved separation.

Separation and divorce represent failure on the part of marital partners, perhaps an even more serious form of failure than losing one's job

(Caplovitz, 1983:77). Failure in turn is extremely damaging to the egos and self-images of those who experience it.

2.2.2 Single parenthood as a result of one parent moving out of the common home

Single parenthood can be categorized as a loss, whether the causal factor is death, divorce or unwed parenthood. This is true in a sense that each of these occurrences signifies an alteration of the relationship that one previously had. The loss of companionship and love is always significant in the case of divorce. Due to the significance of loss accompanying this social status, it is clear that negative circumstances and feelings can never be isolated from the losses (Morwe 2002:38).

The single-parent situation inhibits parental authoritarianism, likewise, the co-operative and consultative environment found in two-parent families disappears with divorce. The remaining parent loses someone with whom they can talk, share responsibility and compare perceptions (Berner, 1992:4).

According to Demo and Adcock in Bezuidenhout (1998:22) the absence of one of the parents, when it is the result of divorce, makes the child feel insecure. The child may feel that he has been discarded by the parent who leaves or else blames the parent with whom he stays for the absence of the other, because the child often comes to idolize the missing parent, remembering only his or her good points. The emotional maladjustments of childhood may continue into later life. The internalization of these experiences in the child can be so strong that years after separation and divorce of the parents the basic insecurity may persist.

Bezuidenhout (1998) points out that children may find it difficult to adapt to visiting the other divorced parent, usually the father. Children find it difficult to return to a structured family pattern and may also find the demands that are placed on them by two "family-home" settings difficult to cope with. This may cause further adjustment problems. The children may also have problems in coping with the unseen demands of loyalty towards either spouse when they have to leave one behind to visit the other.

2.2.3 Custody, visitation and child support

Joint custody might be the best option for children of divorce. Trekking from mother's home during the week to father's on the weekend may seem like a hassle for some children of divorced parents, but it just might be best for them in the long run. (Journal of Family Psychology, 2002).

Bauserman in his study found that children in joint-custody arrangement had fewer behavioral and emotional problems, higher self-esteem and better family relationships and school performance compared with those in sole custody situations. Furthermore, he found no significant difference in adjustment among children in shared custody and those living in intact family situations. Joint-custody children probably fare better because they have ongoing contact with both parents.

Bauserman further indicated that couples with joint-custody agreements tend to experience less conflict. In fact, it was the sole-custody parents who reported higher levels of conflict.

Obviously, joint custody isn't always preferable to sole custody. When one parent is abusive, neglectful or has serious mental health problems or trouble adjusting after divorce, sole custody could be the best option for the children.

It is recommended by most judges and lawyers that parents review their custody, visitation and support arrangements/orders at least every two years to make sure they reflect what actually exists or should exist, keeping the best interest of the children at the forefront. Whether or not parents agree, custody, visitation, and support can be changed. If a person and his/her ex-spouse agree to the changes and they have already implemented them, it is necessary to file with the court the request to legalise those changes. This way the changes are on record and are recognized by the courts. If a person and his/her ex-spouse do not agree to the changes, the one must file his/her requests with the court in hope they will grant him/her the changes based on the evidence and circumstances presented (Bauserman).

Maclean in van Zyl (1997:91) points out that the importance of the issue of child support in divorce negotiations is borne out by recent research

findings that children of divorce are at an economic disadvantage that sometimes lasts well into their adult lives. Throughout the world there is a low rate of compliance with maintenance orders. In South Africa, according to Maclean in van Zyl (1997:91), 85% of blacks and 30% of whites default on maintenance payments. However, the Maintenance Act of South Africa has recently been amended to ensure enforcement.

If the family was of father-dominant type and after divorce the children are placed in custody of the mother, this not only demands reorientation and adjustment on the part of parents but also on the part of children (Bezuidenhout, 1998:22).

According to Demo and Adcock in Bezuidenhout (1998:22) it is necessary for the socialization and full development of the children that they have both a mother and a father.

2.2.4 Divorce, children's rights and human rights

In the South African Bill of Rights it is stated "a child's best interest is of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child". The "best

interests of the child" or the welfare principle is also acknowledged as the guiding principle in divorce legislation. In practice, when parents divorce, children are affected, inter alia, by decisions relating to custody, access and money matters (van Zyl, 1997:5). Van Zyl (1997:6) mentions further that because the "best interests" principle is notoriously indeterminate, it is necessary to try to pinpoint exactly what it means. Because of the indeterminacy of the best interests standard, judges in divorce matters have an extremely wide discretion in applying it. This discretion casts on them a burden that many dislike. Certain jurisdictions have addressed this problem by devising guidelines that narrow the scope of the best interests criterion. Not only the judge, but many other people, including other professionals, such as social workers and psychologists, the parents and even the child itself, may have a voice in determining the child's best interests. How competent they are to do so, independently or in co-operation with others, must be considered. Finally, it is necessary to decide whether the best interest serves a useful purpose, or whether other criteria should replace it.

In recent years various human instruments have alluded to children's rights. In its Interim Report on Group and Human Rights, the South

African Law Commission referred to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, other international conventions and the conditions of various countries, all of which make provision for the protection of children and/or the family. It should, of course, be borne in mind that the interests of the child and the interests of the family do not necessarily always coincide (van Zyl, 1997:14).

In Chapter 2 of South Africa's Constitution, which is the Bill of Rights, Section 28(1) provides, inter alia, that every child has the right to family, parental or appropriate alternative care, basic nutrition and shelter, and to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation (van Zyl, 1997:14-15). It remains to be seen whether these provisions improve the quality of children's lives, or whether they remain pious wishes.

2.3 CAUSES OF DIVORCE

In recent decades, the proportion of people who say their marriage is "very happy" declined (Glenn in Lauer & Lauer, 2000:417). The decline occurred in the context of high rates of divorce. Compared to the past,

only fewer marriages brought high levels of satisfaction and more broke up.

Finding the reason why a marriage comes apart is like finding the cause of a war. Strained relations and growing expectations of hostility build a situation in which both sides are in a perpetually defensive mood and any small incident can trigger open aggression (Fullerton, 1977:413). When your enemy is someone you once loved dearly, there are no simple solutions.

There is no point at which a marriage suddenly turns sour. There may be a sudden recognition that something is terribly wrong, but it is usually an awareness that has been suppressed for a long time (Fullerton, 1977:413). Husband and wife can create a surface of the kind they want the world and the children to see, and may come to believe that it is real. But suddenly the point may be reached when at least one of the spouses can no longer pretend to live in the best of all possible marriages. Fullerton further says the recognition may be held off until a marriage has reached the point of no return. Counseling helps, but it needs to

come while there is still a possibility for each to put some trust in the other's good will. The following are some of the major causes of divorce:

2.3.1 Transition from lover to husband/wife

According to Fullerton (1977:413) some marriages are a failure from the outset. The transition from the role of lover to the role of husband or wife is never accomplished. The expectations of one may be too different from the expectations of the other; one or both may be unwilling to put away the role behaviors of the single individual and act married. There must be a minimum reciprocity in role behavior for a marriage to survive, and one or both may have been unwilling to adapt to the role behavior required by marriage. This is made worse if a child is born at this point. This result in the parent being burdened by child care duties. The heavy burden may eventually lead to divorce living one parent to take care of the child. The child eventually grows up in a singleheaded family. This deprives the child the opportunity to grow up knowing his/her father.

2.3.2 Teenage marriages/Early marriages

Teenage marriage is related to unusually high divorce rates, although only a small number of divorces are granted to teenagers. The reason for this apparent paradox is the length of time that it takes to get a divorce (Fullerton, 1977:414). If either husband or wife is eighteen when they marry, the slowness of the legal process means that even if the couple separate within the year, either or both are likely to have reached the age of twenty before the divorce decree is granted.

The younger you are when you marry, the greater are your chances of divorce, particularly during the first five years of marriage (Booth cited in Lauer & Lauer 2000:417). In part, younger age at marriage is associated with higher rates of breakup because early marriage is detrimental to high education attainments. The effects of age are however, not the same for all races.

The teenage bride and bridegroom, for whom marriage is a rite of passage to adulthood, may find the transition to adult roles difficult. If they are the first in their group of age peers to marry, they may also find

that this is a transition they have to make alone (Fullerton, 1977:415). Eventually they feel isolated, ostracised and very empty.

Early divorce may be precipitated by a pregnancy that comes early in the marriage mentions Fullerton (1977:415). A premarital pregnancy may leave husband or wife, or both, feeling trapped. Whether premarital or not, a pregnancy that comes early in the marriage may be bad timing since it comes at the time before the couple have had much opportunity to develop marital roles, and hence they are forced to add the complexity of parental roles. In this case the wife may increasingly see herself as mother, while the husband is not prepared to take on the role of father, and in most cases the first child is an emotional crisis as well as an economic burden to the new couple. Children been out of such marriages normally suffer from tension, depression and stress of the parents. Such relationships, normally do not last for long as they are prone to end up in a divorce court.

2.3.4 Lack of support system

Lack of supportive relationships with friends as well as family may be a factor in divorce. A young woman who lives with her parents until the day of her wedding is highly aware that she is leaving home; she sheds a ritual fear with her mother, but is prepared to make the transition away from her family (Fullerton, 1977:415). Forced by the ties of marriage, she finds herself having to leave the family home to face life alone with the partner. This is sometimes aggravated by hostile in-laws who fail to offer support and acceptance.

2.3.5 Socio-economic status

According to Lauer and Lauer (2000:417), an inverse relationship exists between socioeconomic status and divorce rates. That is, the higher your status, the less likely you are to divorce. Higher status, of course, means higher income and vice versa. Thus, when the wife works but has a low income, or when the wife is not working and the husband has a low income, the chances of marital disruption are higher, (Ono cited in Lauer & Lauer, 2000:417). Undoubtedly, the financial pressures on

those in lower income brackets add to the instability of their marriages. The pressures are so severe, in fact, couples with children who live below the poverty line are nearly twice as likely as those above the poverty line to divorce within two years (Hernandez in Lauer & Lauer 2000:417).

Although divorce rate have increased throughout the population, divorce seem disproportionately high for those who marry before the age of twenty, those of lower educational status, those who are socio-economically disadvantaged and members of a minority group (Barker,1984:120) .

2.3.6 Race

According to Glenn and Supanic in Lauer and Lauer (2000:418) Africans are more likely to separate and to divorce than whites. The greatest differences between Africans (blacks) and others occur in the lower socioeconomic levels. Some researchers have suggested that because of their experience of low income, job instability, and high unemployment rates, Africans have learned to depend less on marriage and more on

the extended kin network for support. This may have established a cultural tradition in which marriage is less central and in which there is less commitment to the marital relationship. An alternative explanation is that Africans still have to deal with overt and covert discrimination and rejection, leading them to be more likely to have a pile-up of stressor events in their lives. The pile-up, in turn, places greater strains on their marriages than on those of other races.

2.3.7 Religion (Different belief systems)

Frequency of attendance at religious services (not necessarily the depth of belies) tends to be associated with the divorce rate. Among black males, the rate of divorce for those who never attend religious services is three times as high as for those who attend two or three times a month. By religion, the lowest divorce rate is for Catholics and then protestants. The greater the involvement in religious activities, the less likelihood there is of divorce (Guttman in Strong, De Vault & Sayad 1998:493-494).

2.3.8 Fear to acknowledge failure

Because there are many divorces, some people may assume that divorce is a fairly easy way out for those whose marriage does not give them what they had hoped for (Landis & Landis, 1975:319). But outside observers cannot know the bitterness that almost inevitably is a part of divorce. People who have married, intending to love and cherish each other until death, and who have tried for months or years to make a permanent union of their lives, cannot easily break their relationship and publicly acknowledge failure. Even the worst of marriages usually have some bonds that can be broken only through a painful process of disillusionment and struggle. The longer they stay in a marriage because of fear the more damage is caused to the children who experience violence or discontendness everyday of their lives. Holding on for fear of failure eventually become useless as the marriage is bound to disintegrate.

2.3.9 Personality Problems

Landis and Landis (1975:319-320) pointed out that the habitual ways people have for reacting to life situations will have much to do with what kind of partners they will make in marriage. Before a person marry it is the time to examine their behavior patterns and begin working to change ways or habits that are handicaps. The roots of unhappiness might already be present in some people before they even marry. They will create problems for themselves and for others wherever they go. Divorce will not solve their problems; therefore, one good way to avoid divorce is to avoid marriage to a person who has personality problems. Census data on marriage and divorce show that people who have failed in one marriage are more likely to fail in a second, and those who have failed in two marriages are more likely to fail in a third.

Not all marriages fail for the same reason, nor is there usually one reason for the breakdown of a particular marriage. Nevertheless, some reasons are often more heard than others. These problems are mainly due to personality problems such as poor communication, a lack of

commitment to the marriage, a dramatic change in priorities, and infidelity (Marital Crisis and Coping with Adultery).

2.3.10 Extra-marital relations and drinking problems

There are many different causes of divorce, but it was found that extra-marital relations and drinking problems are main and common cause of divorce.

Adultery is an absolute violation of every marriage. It totally devastates an innocent spouse and often leaves permanent scars with no chance for trust to ever exist again. An innocent spouse may feel rejected, humiliated, angry and vindictive. A vindictive spouse is capable of almost anything and most of the time their main motivation is to "get even." Normally, the innocent spouse asks herself/himself many questions like: How could they do this to me? Why did they do it? They made a fool out of me and they are not going to get away with it, as a result the innocent spouse, immediately after discovering that his or her partner is having an affair, runs to a lawyer with intention of filing for divorce and asking for custody of children. The husband or wife was

motivated by hurt and pride, not by what was in the best interest of the children (Marital Crisis and Coping with Adultery).

Drinking causes so much suffering in marriage. Besides being physically and emotionally harmful to drinkers themselves, drinking is also harmful to those whose lives touch them. Alcohol addiction makes people insensitive to the feelings of those who care most for them, and they will stop at nothing to feed their addiction. They commonly engage in their most painful habits while under the influence such as sexually abusive behavior toward their daughters.

2.4 EXTENT OF DIVORCE

As in most other countries, the incidence of divorce in South Africa started gradually during the twentieth century and then steadily increased (Louw, van Ede and Louw, 1994:556).

According to HRCP Census 2001, marital status in South Africa is recorded as follows:

Married civil/religious	7 369 082*
Married traditional/customary	3 127 026*
Polygamous marriage	31 392*
Living together like married partners	2 389 704
Never married	29 228 835
Widower/widow	1 803 182
Separated	318 298
Divorced	552 268*
Total	44 819 778

According to the census there were 552 268 divorces and 10527500 marriages in South Africa, i.e. 552 268 ÷ 1 052 7500 = 5.2%.

Therefore divorce rate makes 5.2% of the total number of marriages. Divorce rate of 5.2% of the existing marriage comprise of civil/religious marriage, traditional/customary marriage and polygamous marriage.

The divorce rate should not, however, be interpreted as an indication of the rejection of marriage as an institution. The majority of divorcees remarry, suggesting dissatisfaction with a particular partner, rather than with marriage as such. On the other hand, the divorce rate is not

necessarily an accurate reflection of the incidence of marital discord or marital breakdown, since not all unhappy marriages end in divorce.

The rate of divorce in the United States, particularly of divorce involving children, has increased dramatically since 1965. The country's divorce rate doubled between 1965 and 1978. In 1979 it was 5.3% divorces per thousand population, the highest divorce rate in the world (Henderson, 1981:34).

The number of divorces in Russia increased to 38.2% in the first quarter of 2002 versus the corresponding period 2003 and reached 224,300 (as compared to 186,100 in the first quarter of 2001). The number of marriages went up to 12,5%, from 192,200 in the first quarter of 2001 to 204,700 in the corresponding period last year.. This means that the number of divorce surpassed the number of marriages by 19,600 from January to March 2003. In the first quarter of 2001, the number of marriages was 6,100 more than that of divorces (Marriage Agency Scam).

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with factors leading to divorce and the extent to which it takes place. It became apparent that the impact of divorce is likely to affect every aspect of an individual's life such as social, emotional and economic factors. It is also proven that divorce is a process and takes many different forms.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

According to Search (1983:11), during the last decade a large number of children under age 19 live in one-parent homes. The number of children raised in two-parent families has been decreasing substantially and steadily. Divorce has become a first resort not the last. Ending of a marriage is never neat, clear-cut and short in duration.

It was mentioned in the Mail & Guardian (2001) that divorce has also been associated with economic deprivation, which causes a disrupted home life which, in turn, is associated with subsequent diminished academic achievement, low occupational attainment and poverty. But the main problem associated with divorce is its passing down through the generations. Research has shown that children of divorce are more likely to divorce themselves.

Feldman and Schertz (1967:2) indicate that psychological changes within the individual exist prior to the actual divorce, perhaps contributing to the divorce. Often it is difficult to determine whether such psychological changes emerge as the marital break-up become more imminent or whether they represent reactions to the divorce itself. As family and household break-up, the lives of the children are significantly altered. Most often the mother receives custody of the children, and form a single parent household. The father typically receives visitation rights, allowing him to see his children at specified intervals. Attention will be focused on father-absent homes, resulting from divorce. According to the research findings conducted by Feldman and Schertz, children from such homes may represent a high risk for social and psychological problems as delinquency and criminal behaviour.

Feldman and Schertz (1967:2) further indicated that marital and family are viewed as systems. The family is made up of relationships that are relatively stable, to some extend the behaviour and characteristics of each family member are determined by the family as a whole. Since family members are interdependent, change in one member affects the entire family. Feldman and Schertz point out that the divorce of parents

affect the children either positively or negatively, most of the time they are affected negatively. Viewing the family as a system, attention is focused on the interaction among individuals, rather than the characteristics of the individual. The system orientation changes the thinking about causation. Instead of viewing causes as occurring in one direction, they are seen as operating in a circular form. In pursuing the systems approach, understanding the way in which relationships are established and maintained is very important.

One of the reasons given by some people for remaining in an unhappy marriage is to protect their children. Most people are aware that divorce can be a very painful experience for children (Lauer & Lauer, 2000:426). They further mention that divorce has short-term and long-term effects on children.

3.1.1 Short-term effects

In short term, children are likely to suffer a variety of physical and emotional problems when their parents divorce (Lauer & Lauer, 2000:426). In some cases, such as a family in which there was abuse or

intense and constant conflict, the separation and divorce may be a relief rather than a traumatic experience. Most of the time, however, the short-term effects will be negative. In fact, parental separation is likely to create a crisis for the child but one that will diminish within the first six to twelve months (Kelly in Lauer and Lauer, 2000:426).

Among the negative consequences of divorce identified by researchers are:

> "Initial reactions to parental separation may include intense anger, self-blame, fears about the future and loyalty conflicts as the child is pressured to take sides in the parental battle" (Bonkowski, Boomhower and Bequette in Lauer and Lauer, 2000:426-7).

Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw in Lauer and Lauer (2000:427) maintain that physical health ratings of children from divorce families are lower than those from intact families.

Children from divorced families are more likely to be anxious, depressed, and withdrawn than those in intact families (Peterson and Zill in Lauer and Lauer, 2000:427). They are also more likely to have eating problems and disorders (Wynn and Bowering in Lauer and Lauer, 2000:427).

According to Kline, Johnston and Tschann in Lauer & Lauer (2000) children tend to receive less maternal warmth and empathy. The conflict and pain of most divorces leave little energy for nurturing children, which contributes to various emotional and behavior problems. Adolescents from divorced families tend to have higher rates of drug use including alcohol and premarital sexual activity, poorer academic performance and higher rates of dropouts from school.

The various consequences are understandable. Disruptions in intimate relationships are very stressful and common (Lauer & Lauer, 2000:428). Children are likely to be even more stressed because they have no control over what is happening to them and see no long-term benefits to the disruption. Thus, they react with anger, depression, and anxiety, and this emotional turbulence interferes with other aspects of their lives.

3.1.2 Long-term effects

Fortunately, the picture is not as bleak when we look at long-term consequences. There may be some positive outcomes for the children (Demo and Acock, 1988:626-627). For example, children in single-parent homes are more likely to be androgynous in their behavior. The pressure towards traditional gender roles do not seem to be as prevalent in single-parent families as they are in two-parent home. In addition, adolescents in single-parent homes tend to be more mature and to have a greater sense of their own efficacy. This is probably due to the fact that they take more responsibility for family life and doing some things that might otherwise be done by the absent parent.

In those cases in which family life was marked by intense conflict, the children are likely to be better off in both the short and long run. Rates of depression, withdrawal, and other problems are higher for those who live in a home of persistent conflict and unhappiness than those in single-parent homes, (Peterson and Zill cited in Lauer & Lauer, 2000:428). Where the level of parental conflict is high, children have lower levels of well-being as young adults if parents divorce. Where the level of

parental conflict is low, the children are better off if the parents stay together. If the parents do not divorce, the more their conflict the lower the level of well-being of the children as young adults.

However, there may be some negative long-term consequences. The severity of the consequences depends on a number of factors. In both the short and the long run, children will adjust better if the custodial parent functions well, the children have regular contact with the noncustodial parent, and the children's exposure to conflict between the parents has been minimal, (Furstenberg and Cherlin in Lauer and Lauer, 2000:428).

3.2 GENERAL EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON BOTH PARTIES AND THE CHILDREN

Most people who go through a divorce experience it as a severe crisis, a period of extensive disruption that continues for at least a year or longer. Most individuals experience feelings of failure, hostility, anger, anxiety and self blame (Booth & Amato; Kitson & Morgan in Louw and Louw, 1998:559).

Melichar and Chiriboga in Louw and Louw (1998:559) point out that the role of the spouse in the ending of the marriage influences his or her behaviour, feelings and general adjustment.

Since most divorces are not mutual, the divorce is even more stressful, particularly for the rejected spouse. Feelings of humiliation and powerlessness are common. In many cases, the rejected spouse is totally unprepared for his or her partner's decision and therefore experience shock. Spouses who institute the divorce proceedings usually experience mixed feelings of relief, sadness, guilt and anger, however, they experience more control and are generally better equipped emotionally than their spouse. However, both spouses must now revise their identities, that is from that of married status to that of single status. Both spouses also often feel socially isolated, since their social circle usually shrinks.

Friends and family often find it difficult to remain involved with both members of a divorced couple, while colleagues tend to distance themselves. The result is that divorcees experience a loss of friendship and much needed support (Berger in Louw & Louw 1998:560). Women

could experience the additional stress of a reduced income that may force them to go to work in order to care for their children.

Psychological stress also affects divorcees' parenting styles. Parents who receive custody of the children, usually the mother, are often overloaded, irritable, insensitive to their children's needs, and less inconsistent, sometimes they tend to be too strict and other times too lenient (Louw and Louw, 1998:560). The parent who does not receive custody often tries to overcompensate and is often inclined to set too few demands and to be too permissive. This situation cannot be conducive to the children's development (Hetherington in Louw and Louw, 1998:560).

Parents who do not receive custody of the children are often in a better position financially than those who receive custody. The reason for this is that they are burdened less with the daily financial demands of child care (Berger in Louw and Louw, 1998:560). These parents are, however, affected in another way, since there is no continuous interaction between them and their children, it is often difficult for them to adjust to the changes that their children undergo as they grow up.

Further they often feel left out or left on the "side line" regarding the rearing of their children.

One of the interesting conclusions to emerge from research is that girls tend to adjust more easily to divorce than do boys. Boys from divorced homes exhibit significantly more problematic behavior than do boys from intact homes; no such differences are found among girls, (Demo and Acock in Lauer & Lauer, 2000:430). Boys who live with a divorced mother have even higher levels of depression and withdrawal than boys who live in an intact family with high, persistent conflict. Boys also take a longer time to adjust than do girls. However, if the conflict between their divorced parents is relatively low boys' problems are less (Amato and Rezac in Lauer & Lauer, 2000:430).

The unhappy home is destructive to children. Whether the unhappy marriage is ended by divorce or continues is not the main consideration as far as the children are concerned (Landis & Landis, 1975:331). There is some evidence to suggest that the children who continue in an unhappy home are more disturbed than are the children who are freed from the unhappy home through divorce.

According to Landis & Landis (1975:331) the breakup of the parent's marriage is almost always painful to the children. There is a tendency for those looking at divorce to think that all children from divorced homes are affected in the same way.

Some children exhibit severe or sustained disruptions in development, other seem to sail through a turbulent divorce and stressful aftermath and emerge as competent, well-functioning individuals. It seems likely that temperamental variables, the child's developmental status, the sex of the child, and cumulative stress in the past experience of the child all contribute to individual differences in coping with divorce (Henderson, 1981:37).

3.2.1 Effects of divorce on boys

According to Calhoun, Selby and King (1976:250) the behaviour of boys in divorced families appear to be less masculine than boys from intact families. Boys with absent fathers tend to show extremes of aggressiveness coupled with dependency on adults and homosexual

tendencies. Boys from father-absent homes have been described as less self controlled, more impulsive, and less able to delay immediate gratification. They conform less to rules, they seem to evidence less guilt and being unwilling to accept blame for their own behaviour.

3.2.2 Effects of divorce on girls

The most striking effect appear to develop during adolescence, when father-absent girls appear to have difficulty in heterosexual relationships. Adolescent girls from divorced families reported earlier and more frequent sexual contact with males. They also seemed inappropriately assertive in social situations with males. They display more attention-seeking behaviour and initiate more physical contact with males in contrast to girls whose fathers have died. The latter tend to be more shy and uneasy when in the company of males (Calhoun et al, 1976:252). Girls whose parents have been divorced and those whose fathers are deceased, tend to have problems interacting with the opposite sex (Lauer, 2000:454).

3.3 EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS

According to Calhoun, Selby and King, (1976:250) the children often get embroided in the conflict of divorced parents. The child often serve as a hostage. The child may be used to ensure continued contact by one parent with the other. The custodial parent may hinder contact between the child and other parent in retaliation for personal grievances. Divorced parents are less likely to control their children's behaviours.

The incidence of physical and emotional health problems are evident. They are more likely to deviate from the prevailing social norms of conduct. Delinquency, substance abuse, truancy, lower grades and greater frequency of running away from home are all well-known variables which correlate with divorce. Children suffer social, psychological and economic problems, and face added burdens of being powerless to alter their circumstances. They are often confronted with contradictory rules and expectations from their parents. Frequently one

parent will use the children to form a coalition against the other parent (Barker, 1984:125).

Children often believe they have caused the conflict between their parents. Many children assume the responsibility for bringing their parents back together, sometimes by sacrificing themselves. Vulnerability to both physical and mental illnesses can originate in the traumatic loss of one or both parents through divorce. With care and attention, however, a family's strengths can be mobilized during a divorce, and children can be helped to deal constructively with the resolution of parental conflict (Children's Manual).

Parents should be alert to signs of distress in their child or children. Young children may react to divorce by becoming more aggressive and uncooperative or withdrawing. Older children may feel deep sadness and loss. Their schoolwork may suffer and behaviour problems are common. As teenagers and adults, children of divorce often have trouble with their own relationships and experience problems with self-esteem (Children's Manual).

Marital conflict and divorce can create serious instability in the family and insecurity in a child (Katherine Bain in Mail & Guardian 2001). This immense disruption in the home life can create a situation that serves as a dysfunctional learning experience in all aspects of a child's life.

Katherine Bain in Mail and Guardian (2001:20) says that poorer-parent-child relationships due to divorce and interparental conflict can cause these children to have less secure attachments with parents. The happier they perceive their parents' marriage to be, the more secure they are. Studies have come to the conclusion that parental divorce is indeed associated with interpersonal and intimacy problems in adulthood. Young adults of both sexes from broken homes experience difficulty in establishing intimate interpersonal relationships.

Children from divorced families rate themselves lower in social Competence, and, in fact, are likely to be less sociable and less responsive at home, school and play (Devall, Stoneman and Brody in Lauer and Lauer, 2000:427).

The trauma of marriage failure is not necessarily limited to the divorcing pair. How much their children may be adversely affected depends upon many factors in the family situation (Landis and Landis, 1977:373). If the divorce occurs very early in the children's lives, even in some cases before birth, there is no reason why their experience should be any different from that of children reared by a single parent. If the mother remarries and the second marriage is a good marriage, the children cannot be considered, in effect, children of divorce.

Landis and Landis (1977:373) point out that in an unhappy marriage in which an inadequate father deserts when the children are small and the mother takes all responsibility for rearing the children, the children may have little trauma unless the mother is bitter and resentful. The mother's capacity for being a good mother determines whether the children suffer any ill effects of the separation or the divorce.

Although divorce may be the best solution to a destructive family relationship and may offer the child an escape from one set of stresses and the opportunity for personal growth, almost all children experience the initial period in the transition of divorce as painful (Henderson,

1981:36). Even children who later are able to recognize that the divorce had constructive outcomes at first undergo considerable emotional distress. The most common early response by children to divorce are anger, fear, depression, and guilt. It is usually not until after the first year following divorce that tension reduction and an increased sense of well-being begin to emerge.

According to Henderson (1981:36) a crisis model of divorce may be most appropriate in conceptualizing the short-term effects of divorce on children. In the period during and immediately following divorce the child may be responding to changes in his or her life situation, the loss of a parent, to the marital discord and family disorganization that usually precede and accompany separation, to alterations in the parent-child relationship that may be associated with temporary distress and emotional neediness of family members. In this period stresses associated with conflicts, loss, change, and uncertainty may be the critical factors as discussed above.

3.4 EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ACCORDING TO DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF CHILDREN

Children's Manual mentions that children according to their developmental stage react differently towards their parents divorce. These stages are discussed as follows:

3.4.1 Infant (0-1)

When the child of divorce is an infant, he will pick up the mother's grief and depression. The mother's mood is conveyed by changes in her pattern of care for the child. She may not be as relaxed or warm with the child, or the child may experience a change in eating or sleeping patterns. The child may react to this by changing his or her own eating and sleeping habits. It is important for the mother to maintain the usual routine as closely as possible during this time (Children" Manaual)

According to Stuart and Abt (1981:27) children who are aged between one and two years of age mainly respond to divorce with acute

regression in toilet training, are irritable, have acute separation anxiety, sleeping problems, and also portray an increase in aggressive behavior.

The incidence of regression is more prevalent in those children who were not given reasons for the parent's abrupt departure. Stuart and Abt point out that "the children with the above stated symptoms were in families in which there was continued parental discord and parents were unable to adequately take care of their children". There is a sense of acute helplessness for a child at this stage, as own security is threatened by the departure of the other parent.

3.4.2 Preschool child (2½-6)

The preschool child experiences both loss of a parent and a break in daily routine. The child may revert to infantile behaviour, lose bowel and bladder control, eat poorly, or have temper tantrums and nightmares. Anger and harsh discipline are not suitable in this situation. The child is mourning in reaction to the loss. The later preschool age child begins to form a strong feeling towards the opposite-sex parent. They often see

the same sex parent as a threat to this new relationship, and may secretly wish the same sex parent dead (Children's Manual).

Preschool children are egocentric in their reasoning and therefore their response to parental divorce is self-blame. The self-blame is attributed to the fact that they cannot isolate the parental issues from their own. Children at this stage are unable to understand that there is continuity even after marital breakdown as they perceive a family as people sharing a commune (Stuart and Abt, 1981:27). These children are aware of their feelings but their limited cognitive ability makes it challenging for them to reflect on those which is often a source for their suffering.

3.4.3 Early latency (7-8 years)

Goldstein and Solnit (1984:18) are of the opinion that early latency, i.e children between seven and eight are openly able to admit their sadness. However they are less able to admit their anger, particularly to their fathers. The reason for this is rooted in the social-cognitive developmental perspective which explains that these children are at a subjective level of reasoning. For these children it is not possible to have

conflicting feelings towards the same person. Self-blame is insignificant in these children as they have a broader understanding of the inner motives and behavior of others. The significant feelings of these children is fear of abandonment and rejection. To the children the departure of the father signifies rejection, and whilst in the custody of their mother they fear that they would make their mother angry as their father did and then be chased out of the home. Goldstein and Solnit (1984) further mention that children at this developmental stage fear that they may be deprived of their physical needs such as food, shelter and physical care. The dependency on others for need satisfaction poses as a source of frustration as the child is aware of these but is unable to meet them for himself or herself.

Primary school children realise that they are not being abandoned, but their more realistic attitude make them feel the loss more intently. The sense of mourning has been likened to the pain felt when a beloved pet dies. Following divorce the child will most frequently live with the mother, who serves as the custodian parent. However the child cannot see the parents as separate entities. To the child the mother and father are still his parents (Children's Manual).

3.4.4 Late latency (9-12 years)

Children in this stage are aged between nine and twelve years old. These feel no responsibility for their parents divorce, but instead feel rejected by the departing parent. These children are capable of verbalizing their feelings and recognize their anger towards one or both parents, though they are likely to hide their feelings in order to present a courageous front to the world. This result in children being torn between anger and loyalty towards their parents (Morwe, 2002:48).

Unlike children in the egocentric and subjective reasoning stage, these children are ashamed of their parents divorce. This is due to their understanding of how society perceives and labels divorce. The children experience profound loneliness as their parents are also engrossed in their own emotional turmoil and cannot provide sufficient support to them. The parent's withdrawal of emotional support has a negative effect on the parent-child relationship as this may signify that the parents no longer loves or cares for the child, therefore their major fear is that of not being loved. Due to being at a self-reflective level of social

reasoning, the children are increasingly sensitive to the subjective feelings and intentions of others. It is for this reason that their reactions may correspond more closely to that of their parents (Morwe, 200:48).

According to Children's Manual specific responses for the late latency age group to divorce include:

- **Slipping Grades:** This may be an attempt to get the parent to focus attention on the child, so that the parents will work together on his behalf. The parent who has the responsibility of caring for the child should encourage the child to work harder but not allow it to affect their relationship. Slipping grades could be as a result of preoccupation with the divorce and a call for love and security in the new home situation.

- **Fear of Sleeping Alone:** In some instances the children may respond by developing fear of sleeping alone. To help the child go through the fears the child's bed may be moved into the parent's room but this can have a negative long term effect. Options are for

the parent to move into the child's room or have the child sleep on the floor of the parents room on a thin mattress.

- **Delinquent Behaviour:** Surveys have shown that it is more emotionally broken families that produce delinquent kids than actual broken homes. The emotional divorce or disharmony preceeding the divorce is more the cause of delinquent behaviour than the actual parting.

- **Need for a Role Model:** The child looses out on a healthy role model as the parent cannot act as a mother and a father. This may lead to problems in development unless a substitute role model is found.

3.4.5 Adolescence (13-18 years)

Adolescents reflect a trend of increasing awareness and expression of their feelings of anger, sadness, a sense of loss and betrayal, shame and embarrassment (Stuart and Abt, 1981:29). It must be borne in mind that parental divorce interferes with the adolescent's resolution of

developmental conflicts, with the need for love being a significant life task.

Due to being ashamed of their parents divorce, teenagers tend to shy away from sharing their feelings with their peers. The reason for withdrawing from peers is rooted in the adolescent's need for approval and acceptance, thus unfavourable familial circumstances make the teenager perceive self as less attractive. Parental power and discipline are weakened by divorce which may result in recurrent parent-child conflicts. The adolescents recognize that their parents are individuals with unique needs and interests and this ability to discern their parents individuality is characteristic of the third person's level of social cognitive development. It is this reasoning that allows adolescents to be aware that their parents marriage is mutually dissatisfactory. This level of cognitive development may conscientise teenagers to identify that their parents are sexual objects, which may result in the child forming heterosexual relationships at an early age as a way of meeting their need to be loved (Swart, 1997:127). Their fear is based on their capability to maintain marital relationships that are based upon mutual concern, respect and interest. This fear is in a way reality in that divorce

is more common among children whose parents have divorced (Van Zyl, 1997:52). For any teenager the parental relationship represents the ideal to strive for and therefore its dissolution is an indication of failure on the side of parents to model what is appropriate and desirable.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In many societies there has been an enormous increase in the incidence of parental separation and divorce. Many children are involved in the aftermath of such family break ups. It is still not clear which of these children are most adversely affected by their parents' divorce (Maddison & Kellehear 1963:291). Certainly a significant number of children are presented to child psychiatric services by single, separated and divorced parents who describe a variety of complaints concerning the children's behaviour. In some cases the effects of the divorce are clearly discernible through the emergence of reactive, neurotic and psychosomatic disorders in the child.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study focused on the assumptions that :

- Divorce is a possible contributory factor to deviant behaviour amongst children

- Children who are not prepared or even aware of the divorce proceedings may suffer from behavioural, emotional and cognitive effects

- Divorce has detrimental effects on the family and more especially on children

The assumption of the study was used as the framework for data collection, analysis, and presentation. The assumption reflected the overall problems experienced by children from divorced families. The

outcome of the presentation and analysis of data can be used by professionals to disseminate information and implement effective programs that will meet the needs of these children.

To obtain information the following methods of data collection were used:

i) Literature studies and,

ii) Questionnaire

Questionnaires were distributed amongst forty respondents around Mmabatho/Mafikeng area, using snowball method of data collection.

4.2 SECTION A

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, data is presented and interpreted in tabular form. It is divided into two sections. Section A is interpretation and analysis of information collected using quantitative data collection method, and

Section B is an analysis of information collected through qualitative data collection technique.

4.2.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Table 1(a): Age by gender at time of divorce

Age	Male		Female	
	At time of divorce		At time of divorce	
	No.	%	No.	%
16-25	4	10	4	10
26-35	3	7.5	8	20
36-45	2	5	4	10
46-55	4	10	3	7.5
56+	4	10	4	10
Total	17	42.5	23	57.5

Table 1(a) shows that the majority of respondents 57.5% were female compared to 42.5% of males. This implies that the sample constituted of more females than males.

Table 1(b): Age by gender at time of collecting data

Age	MALE		FEMALE	
	At time of collecting data		At time of collecting data	
	No.	%	No.	%
16-25	-	-	-	-
26-35	4	10	4	10
36-45	3	7.5	3	7.5
46-55	6	15	6	15
56+	4	10	10	25
Total	17	42.5	23	57.5

Table 1(b) also shows that majority of female respondents were between age 26-35 (20%) at time of collecting data as compared to 7.5% of males who are between the age of 46-55.

Table 2: Number of children by gender

Number of children	Male		Female	
	No	%	No	%
0-2	9	**22.5**	9	**22.5**
3-5	8	20	10	25
6+	0	0	4	10
Total	17	42.5	23	47.5

Table 2 shows that majority of respondents have between zero and two children as indicated by 45% of the respondents. Twenty five percent of

female and 20% of male respondents have three to five children, and only 10% of female respondents have six or more children.

Table 3: Religious affiliation

Religious affiliation	**No**	**%**
1. Protestant Church	10	25
2. Roman Catholic Church	10	25
3. Zion Christian Church	14	35
4. Pentecostal Church	4	10
5. Other	2	5
Total	40	100

It follows from the above data that the vast majority (95%) of respondents do belong to a church. The table shows that 35% of respondents affiliated with Zion Christian Church, followed by Protestant Church and Roman Catholic Churches with 25% of respondents as compared to 10% of Pentecostal Church and the least being 5% which affiliated with other religious groups.

Table 4: Educational status

Education	**No.**	**%**
No Schooling	-	-
Primary School	4	10
Secondary	23	**57.5**
Tertiary	11	**27.5**
Technical	2	5
Total	40	100

According to the above table the majority of respondents (85%) fall within the secondary and tertiary educational level. Ten percent of respondents have only primary education and 5% with technical qualifications. The implication here is that majority of respondents have some form of education and should therefore be able to understand the meaning of divorce as well as its implications especially on children.

Table 5: Occupational status

Occupation	**No.**	**%**
Unemployed	15	**37.5**
Labourer	10	**25**
Professional/ Administrative	13	32.5
Pensioner	2	5
Total	40	100

Despite the satisfactory educational level of the majority of divorced parents as indicated in table 4, the contrary is reflected in their occupational capacities as the majority (62.5%), are either unemployed or working as labourers. The reason for this may be the high unemployment rate which is currently at 3.2 million and with women accounting for 60% of the total figure (Department of Labour, 1999:38). This is an indication/or it can be assumed that children in single parent families might find themselves living in poverty or being denied some of their basic needs, as the parents do not have sufficient financial power.

This is further aggravated by those parents who are not prepared to maintain their children. This is confirmed in table 12 on page 74.

Table 6: Residential area

Residence	**No.**	**%**
Urban/Township	30	75
Rural	5	**12.5**
Informal housing	5	**12.5**
Total	40	100

Table 6 shows that 75% of the respondents are from urban/township areas. The remaining 25% comes from rural and informal settlement areas. However, this issue cannot be regarded as mutually exclusive as informal housing may be found both in rural and urban/township areas.

Table 7: Informing children about their parents divorce

Informing children about divorce	**No**	**%**
Before divorce proceedings	20	50
After divorce proceedings	20	50
Total	40	100

Table 7 shows that 50% of the respondents agree that children be informed of the pending divorce proceedings before the actual divorce, reason being that children have the right to know from the beginning

what divorce is all about and what is going to happen to them as children, whilst the other 50% agree that children be informed after the proceedings. The reason amongst those who said children must be informed after proceedings might be that they need to protect children from going through such tedious process of court hearings and also want to protect them from the likelihood of suffering from psychological and emotional problems, e.g. being depressed, traumatized, etc.

Table 8: Preparing children for their parental divorce

Preparing children for divorce	**No**	**%**
Both parents explaining	30	75
Assuring them of the attention of both parents	10	25
Total	40	100

It is evident from table 8 that two third (75%) of the respondents believe that both parents have to explain the situation to their children. Involvement of children in their decision making process will assure them that both parents care about them, care about their feelings, and that parents are not divorcing them as their children. This 75% of respondents who believe that both parents have to explain to their children concur with 50% of respondents in table 7 who are of the

opinion that children should be informed about their parents divorce before divorce proceedings.

Table 9: Main prevention measures for divorce

Main prevention measures of divorce	**No.**	**%**
Pre-marital counseling	9	22.5
Post-marital counseling	9	22.5
Divorce counseling	10	25
Life skills education	12	30
Total	40	100

Table 9 indicate that 30% of the respondents believe that life skills education can serve as a preventive measure in the sense that children are empowered with knowledge that enable them to withstand any problematic situation, followed by 25% of those who would go for divorce counseling, and the remaining 22.5% recommend premarital counseling and another 22.5% post marital counseling respectively.

Table 10: People's attitude regarding divorce

People's attitude regarding divorce	**No**	**%**
Not against it	5	12.5
Totally against it	35	87.5
Uncertain	-	-
Total	40	100

Eighty seven point five percent of the respondents are totally against divorce, reasons being that firstly, divorce is stressful for both parents and children alike and secondly, children are the ones who are mostly affected in the sense that suddenly children have to learn to live with one parent, change schools, and make new friends. This may happen on the situation where the custodial parent relocate to a different area. 12.5% of respondents are not against divorce especially when the marriage is characterized by abuse and trauma such as in case of domestic violence.

Table 11: Contact with absent parent

How often does the absent parent contact children	**No**	**%**
Regularly – at least once a fortnight	10	**25**
Sometimes – one to six months	10	**25**
Never	20	50
Total	40	100

Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that absent parents are never in contact with their children. This means that children have to be exposed to only one parent. The impact on the children continually missing one parent can result in emotional and/or psychological

problems. From the other 50%, at least 25% contact their children regularly and the other 25% once in six months, this is not enough because when parents divorce, they are not divorcing their children, but divorcing each other. Therefore this confirms the need for pre and post divorce counseling for such children.

Table 12: Support of children by absent parent

Support of children by absent parent	**No**	**%**
Fully	4	10
Sometimes	16	40
Never	20	50
Total	40	100

Half (50%) of the respondents do not financially support their children. The reasons can be two fold, firstly, it might be due to high rate of unemployment as indicated in table 5; secondly, in many instances, men tend to quit their jobs as a way of avoiding maintenance when they loose custody of children. This information collaborates with information in table 11 where 50% of absent parents never visit their children. Failure to maintain children means that children should resort to being street kids or breaking into people's houses in order to get something to eat or survive. Forty percent do so partially and only 10% fully maintain the children.

ANNEXURE B

Dear Respondents

I am studying Masters in Life Skills and Counselling (MA LFC) at the North-West University in the Department of Social Work. I am supposed to conduct a research/mini-dissertation to fulfill the requirements of the mentioned degree.

As stated above, the purpose of this dissertation is for academic reason. I therefore humbly request you to participate in completing the attached questionnaire. Information supplied will not at any stage be published anywhere, and will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you.

.....
M.E. MATSAFU

Table 13: Handling of separation of parents by children

Handling of separation of parents by children	**No**	**%**
Accept the separation	-	-
Take advantage of the separation	4	10
Unhappy about separation	30	75
Hope that parents will again unite	6	15
Total	40	100

Table 13 shows that majority (75%) of the children are negatively affected by their parents divorce, and this response emphasize that children are greatly disturbed by divorce of parents. As indicated in the literature review, children from divorced families perform poor in school, have low self-esteem because of self-blame. Some children feel ashamed of the divorce and hence experience the following: slipping grades, fear of sleeping alone, delinquent behavior, etc. 15% have a hope that parents will reunite. This is an indication that children never give up on their parents. 10% of them take advantage of the situation.

From table 14 to table 16b, percentages are calculated following the number of responses given in that factor. The reason being that it was required for the respondents to choose more than one response.

Table 14: Main causes of divorce

Main cause of divorce	No.	%
Extra-marital relations	30	75
Lack of finances	2	5
Age differences	2	5
Interference by in-laws	10	25
Physical abuse	30	75
Verbal abuse	4	10
Communication problems	5	12.5
Drinking problem	30	75

Table 14 shows that extra marital relations, physical abuse and drinking problem are the main causes of divorce as indicated by 75% respectively, then followed by interference by in-laws (25%). Lack of finances, age differences, verbal and communication problems are also contributory factors of divorce but at lower percentage or rate and therefore not very much significant.

Table 15: Main effects of divorce on children

Main effects of divorce on children	No.	%
Behavioral problems	20	50
Emotional problems	10	25
Cognitive problems	5	12.5
Scholastic failure	36	90
Abuse of drugs	40	100
Playing truancy	10	25
Withdrawal	10	25
Denial	30	75
Poor social adjustment	22	55

This table shows that children are affected by all of the above factors. Abuse of drugs (100%), scholastic failure (90%), denial (75%), poor social adjustment (55%), and behavioral problems (50%) are amongst the highest. This table confirms the assumptions that divorce is a possible contributory factor to deviant behaviour amongst children. Because of behavioral, emotional and cognitive effects children tend to perform poorly in school as indicated by 90% of respondents. This table correlates with tables 10, where it is indicated that 87.5% of respondents are totally against divorce because divorce is stressful for both children and parents alike. Another correlation is in table 11 where it is indicated that 50% of absent parents never contact their children; and 50% of absent parents never support their children as indicated in table 12. As such all these factors lead to behavioral, emotional and psychological problems on the part of the child, and lastly, 75% of children as indicated in table 13 are unhappy about separation of their parents as they are the most affected by the permanent separation.

Table 16a: Short-term problems exhibited by children during and shortly after the divorce according to their developmental stages

Short-term problems	0-1 yr		2½-6 yrs		7-8 yrs		9-12 yrs		13-18 yrs		Total %
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Depression	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	12.5	20	50	75
Guilt feelings	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	25	13	32.5	57.5
Anxiety	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	25	16	40	65
Anger	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	37.5	20	50	87.5
Emotional condition	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	32.5	16	41	72.5
Blame	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	30	25	62.5	92.5
Concentration	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	25	15	37.5	62.5
Shame	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	25	30	75	100
Denial	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	32.5	16	40	72.5
Dissociation	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	12.5	25	62.5	75

This table shows short-term problems the children portray during and shortly after their parents divorce according to their developmental stages ranging from birth to 18 years. Children exhibit all the problems mentioned in table 16a such as depression, guilt feelings, anxiety, anger, emotional condition, blame, concentration, shame, denial, and dissociation. However, these manifest themselves mostly from the age of 9 and become more pronounced at ages 13-18. Adolescence is a difficult stage for children because at this stage they are striving to discover who they are, striving to cope with the demands of this stage and their parents divorce aggravate the problem. Children between 0-9

do not portray any of the above problems, probably as it is assumed that they are too young to comprehend the divorce.

Table 16b: Problems the children exhibit three years after the divorce (long-term effects)

Long Term problems	0-1 yr		2½-6 yrs		7-8 yrs		9-12 yrs		13-18 yrs		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Depression	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	25	20	50	75
Guilt feelings	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	12.5	30	75	87.5
Anxiety	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	12.5	20	50	62.5
Anger	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	37.5	20	50	87.5
Emotional condition	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	12.5	20	50	62.5
Blame	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	25	30	75	100
Concentration	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	12.5	15	37.5	50
Shame	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	25	10	25	50
Denial	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	50	20	50	100
Dissociation	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	12.5	25	62.5	75

Tables 16a and 16b show the same factors that children more especially adolescents exhibit in short-term and long-term after their parents divorce. In most cases children tend to blame themselves for the breakup as in indicated by (100%) of respondents. Some children go into denial stage as indicated by all the respondents. Guilt feelings and anger (87.5%) towards parents is also very significant.

Table 17: Relationships in the family

Response	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
1. It is better for children to live in a single parent family than in a home where parents live in disharmony	25%	50%	25%
2. Stepparents are not always kind, and supportive to stepchildren	60%	30%	10%
3. Divorce affect parent-child relationship	80%	5%	15%

Majority (50%) of the respondents are not sure whether children should live in single parent families. Twenty five percent agree and the other 25% disagree.

Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents agree that stepparents are not supportive and kind to stepchildren. Only 10% agree to the statement.

Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents have shown that parent-child relationship is negatively affected by divorce because children are exposed only to one parent and continually miss the other parent especially when the absent parent does not visit nor support the children. Therefore, the relationship between the parent and the children becomes strained.

4.3 SECTION B

In this section, qualitative data is being analyzed: during data collection, the researcher managed to record some of the conversations from four of the respondents (Two males and two females).

Respondent 1 female

'This whole issue of divorce is too painful especially on children. When I heard my son asking me when is his father coming, I felt so heart broken because I did not inform him about the process. This kind of question usually comes when he sees my neighbour's child playing or going with his father. My child looked so worried. Even if you could try to give him what ever he needed, he seems so distant and thinking a lot. He sometimes does not talk.'

Respondent 2 Male

'This is a process which affects everyone – it affected me, my parents, children etc. In most instances, my children are the ones who are affected. Their mother left them with me and it is so difficult to cope. They are asking me almost everyday why we divorced. Despite my attempts to explain, I realize that these children are emotionally and socially affected. The youngest, usually cry for no reason and needs to see his mother'.

Respondents 3 female

'I recall one day when my husband was beating me. It was terrible. Children were screaming. This has affected my eldest son. He is now emotional in the sense that he gets upset very easy. He is short tempered and violent. This hurts me most. The children are the ones who are caught in the middle of the whole process. I was grunted custody of the children. It was so difficult to allow their father to see them because he was not a good role model. I woul better live with my children rather than putting them through such ordeal.'

Respondent 4 male

'The most difficult moment of divorce is when children are used to live with both parents. It becomes better after the divorce when children are brought up by a custodian parent at least away from the place where they used to live in harmony with both parents. But divorce itself is painful to both parents and children. Children are the ones who get mostly hurt. My son, once told me that he is missing his mothers cooking. I could give him everything, but I couldn't be a good cook as the mother is. His way of socializing with other kids, and even at school, has changed. He seems reserved.'

From this conversation the following can be deduced:

- That divorce has a negative impact on the general well being of children such as the way they think, play or socialize with other children.

- Children have to be informed and prepared at the earliest convenience for the impending divorce and eminent separation of the parents. However, there is a difference of opinions with regard

to informing children about divorce before the proceeding and after the proceeding. This is concluded from table 7 where 50% agree to informing them before and the other 50% agree to informing them after divorce.

- That divorce affects the academic performance of children as indicated by 90% of respondents in table 15.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In general, many children, no matter what age, have an intense traumatic response to their parents' conflicts: they fear the fighting and worry about possible abandonment; they often *feel they are responsible* for the arguments and for one parent leaving home. The children long for the missing parent. During and long after the divorce, the children, especially those going through a custody battle, suffer a variety of psychological problems such as shock, denial, physical problems, anger, panic, depression, guilt and self-criticism, low self-esteem, and misbehavior.

CHAPTER 5

MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on literature review and empirical study.

5.2 RECAPITULATION OF THE OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the study was to gain knowledge regarding the causes and effects of divorce on children and to generate data that will help professionals and public to provide programs that will meet the needs of children from divorced families. This was achieved through literature review and questionnaire. The following are the objectives of the study:

5.2.1 To determine the nature, extent and causes of divorce.

5.2.2 To determine the effects of divorce on children

5.2.3 To device interventive measures to alleviate the impact of divorce on children

5.3 FINDINGS

5.3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

- The study uncovered that most female respondents divorce between the ages of 26-35 while with males there is no significant age as the distribution is fairly distributed across the age range.

- Most respondents had between 0-2 children. This may be attributed to early divorce.

- Most respondents are fairly educated as indicated by 85%, but unemployed.

- Most respondents reside in urban areas i.e. Mafikeng/Mmabatho metropolitan area.

5.3.2 CAUSES OF DIVORCE

From the research undertaken, the researcher found out that the main cause of divorce is extra-marital relations, physical abuse, and drinking problem. Interference by in-laws was also seen as a contributory factor. Some respondents felt that all of the causes in table 14 were contributing in one way or the other to divorce.

The researcher also found out that people are aware of the causes of divorce and its impact on children and that the most affected children are adolescents because they understand what divorce is all about.

5.3.3 EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

The following effects were uncovered:

- Children tend to abuse substances

- Poor scholastic achievement
- Denial – not wanting to accept the permanent separation of parents
- Poor social adjustment
- Behavioral and emotional problems as a result of depression, anxiety, anger, guilt feelings, self-blame, and dissociation.

5.3.4 INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN THE DIVORCE PROCESS

Respondents were divided on the issue of informing the children about the divorce in that half of them felt that children should be informed before divorce proceedings whereas the other half were of the opinion that children should be informed after the divorce proceedings. Robinson (1981:109) cited that the need to involve children was espoused as children have to be prepared for the imminent separation of the parents. The study further confirmed that it is the responsibility of both parents to explain the divorce situation to their children. Generally all respondents are against divorce because divorce is stressful for both parents and children alike.

5.3.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AFTER DIVORCE

The study revealed that the absent parent has a tendency to severe ties with children after divorce as some never visit the children or only do so once in six months. This issue is confirmed by the finding that 50% of fathers fail to financially maintain/support their children. This therefore makes the children to be unhappy about the separation.

5.3.6 PREVENTION MEASURES

Life Skills is found to be the best programme to help children to adjust before and after parents divorce. These programmes should focus on coping skills, self-esteem and self-worth.

5.3.7 ATTITUDES TOWARD DIVORCE

Generally respondents are against divorce and view divorce as stressful for both parents and children alike. Children are equally very much unhappy about divorce.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 INTERVENTIVE MEASURES

Social support networks are necessary for both children and their single parents. A parent who openly discusses the challenges she/he faces as a parent within a supportive environment is more likely to be offered alternative solutions by her/his peers. Children should also be given the chance to vent out their feelings and frustrations.

5.4.1.1 NEEDS FOR SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

Brown in Braude and Franscisco-La Grange (1993:18) makes the distinction between informal and formal helpers. Informal helpers are family, friends and neighbours. Formal helpers are physicians, therapists, lawyers, religious leaders, self-help groups and professional organizations.

5.4.1.1.1 Family as a support network in a divorce situation

The best known and most easily available support system in all societies is the marital and family group. According to (Gola cited in Braude and Francisco-La Grange, 1993:18) "the family probably ranks first among natural support systems". Definite rules are developed by most cultures which determine the reciprocal obligations to keep the family together. Caplan in Braude et al, (1993:18) identifies certain elements which must be present for a family group to act as a support system. These elements include attitudes of sensitivity and respect for the needs of all family members and effective communication. Caplan stresses the importance of communication in families in giving members a sense of security and of being supported. She compares communication to a huge umbrella that covers and affects all that goes on between human beings.

According to Drake (1981) cited in Braude and Franscisco-La Grange interventions can be indirect or direct. Indirect interventions involves

working with those who have direct contact with the child such as parents or school personnel. Direct interventions such as individual or group counseling or classroom discussions.

To make classroom discussions effective, Carlile (1991) made the following suggestions for school teachers: know the children and the most important family details, encourage an open expression and acceptance of feelings, use bibliotherapy, that is, read books about divorce to children, demonstrate to children that they are not alone, be tolerant of changes, demonstrate an acceptance of a variety of family structures and modify letters and assignments to demonstrate this, and finally keep communication open with parents.

According to Duvall and Miller (1985) family enrichment programmes could be valuable. There are various enrichment models that can be used by agencies. Programmes in general include personal, marriage and family enrichment courses, parents guidance course, course for engaged couples, divorced people and single parents and parenting education. Divorce counseling will help parents and children to adjust after divorce, and to reduce the impact of divorce.

5.4.1.1.2 Professional helpers

Professional helpers are often chosen when all else fails. Professional intervention may take a number of forms such as direct work with individuals, family therapy, group services and structured educational programmes. Some programmes are provided within established agencies as part of ongoing services for groups of divorcing adults or children whose parents are divorced (Golan in Braude and Francisco-La Grange, 1993:23).

5.4.2 LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMES

The introduction of life skills programmes, a preventative measure as part of the school curriculum, would be of great benefit to children of divorce. These programmes have a potential to reduce insecurity, uncertainty and possibly low performance at school. Implementation of these services should be from grade one upwards to be maximally effective. In this regard life skills involve personally responsible choices, when people are being personally responsible, they are in the process of

making choices that maximize their happiness. By being equipped with life skills children would be able to cope and deal with the demands of their daily lives (Anderson and Okoro, 2000:18).

5.4.3 FAMILY ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMES

According to Duvall and Miller (1985:338) family enrichment programmes could be valuable. There are various enrichment models that can be used by agencies. Programmes in general include personal, marriage and family enrichment courses, parents guidance courses, course for engaged couples, divorced people and single parents and parenting education. Divorce counseling will help parents and children to adjust after divorce, and to reduce the impact of divorce.

5.4.4 Based on the above intervention strategies the following recommendations are made:

5.4.4.1 Pre and post-marital counseling as well as marriage enrichment programme must be encouraged.

5.4.4.2 Pre and post-divorce counseling for children must be introduced to help children to cope and be prepared for divorce.

5.4.4.3 Programmes to strengthen family ties/relations need to be established at local levels such as life skills and counselling programmes.

5.4.4.4 Promote community-wide marriage programs for couples planning to get married and marriage-mentoring programmes for couples in troubled marriages.

5.4.4.5 Introduction of Life Skills programme at schools to be made compulsory at all levels.

5.5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Couples should be encouraged through pre-marital counseling to share responsibilities, and need to share childcare.

The researcher recommends that it should be the responsibility of parents to review their custody, visitation and support arrangements or order at least every two years to make sure they reflect what actually exists or should exist, keeping the best interest of the children at the forefront.

5.6 CONCLUSION

From the literature review and findings in this study, it became apparent that divorce is a possible contributory factor to behavioral and emotional problems and has detrimental effects on family and children. Hence, the implementation of recommendations may work as a device and interventive measures that could be of assistance to the community.

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ANNXURE A

TOPIC: EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

1(a) AGE BY GENDER AT TIME OF DIVORCE

Age	Male		Female	
	At time of divorce		At time of divorce	
15-25				
26-35				
36-45				
46-55				
56+				
Total				

1(b) AGE BY GENDER AT TIME OF COLLECTING DATA

Age	Male		Female	
	At time of collecting data		At time of collecting data	
15-25				
26-35				
36-45				
46-55				
56+				
Total				

2. NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Number of children	Male		Female	
	No	%	No	%
0-2				
3-5				
6+				
Total				

3. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Religious affiliation	No	%
1. Protestant		
2. Roman Catholic Church		
3. Zion Christian Church		
4. Pentecostal Church		
5. Other		
Total		

4. EDUCATIONAL STATUS

EDUCATION	No	%
No Schooling		
Primary School		
Secondary		
Tertiary		
Technical		
Total		

9. MAIN PREVENTION MEASURES FOR DIVORCE

Main prevention measures of divorce	No	%
Pre-marital counseling		
Post-marital counseling		
Divorce counseling		
Life skills education		

10. ATTITUDE REGARDING DIVORCE

Attitude regarding divorce	No	%
Not against it		
Totally against it		
Uncertain		

11. CONTACT WITH ABSENT PARENT

How often do children contact the absent parent	No	%
Regularly – at least once a fortnight		
Sometime – one to six months		
Never		

12. SUPPORT OF CHILDREN BY ABSENT PARENT

Support of children by absent parent	No	%
Fully		
Sometimes		
Never		

13. HOW THE CHILD(REN) HANDLE THE SEARATION OF THEIR PARENTS

How children handle separation of their parents	**No**	**%**
Accept the separation		
Take advantage of the separation		
Unhappy about separation		
Hope that parents will again unite		

14. THE MAIN CAUSE OF DIVORCE

Extra-marital relations	
Lack of finances	
Age differences	
Interference by in-laws	
Physical abuse	
Verbal abuse	
Communication problems	
Drinking problem	

15. MAIN EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

No obvious detrimental effects		
Behavioral problems		
Emotional problems		
Cognitive problems		
Scholastic failure		
Abuse of drugs		
Playing truancy		
Withdrawal		
Denial		
Poor social adjustment		

16(a) SHORT TERM PROBLEMS EXHIBITED BY CHILDREN DURING AND SHORTLY AFTER THE DIVORCE (Short term)

	0-1 yr	2½-6 yrs	7-8 yrs	9-12 yrs	13-18 yrs
Depression					
Guilt feelings					
Anxiety					
Anger					
Emotional condition					
Blame					
Concentration					
Shame					
Denial					
Dissociation					

12. PROBLEMS THE CHILDREN EXHIBIT THREE YEARS AFTER THE DIVORCE (long term)

	0-1 yr	2½-6 yrs	7-8 yrs	9-12 yrs	13-18 yrs
Depression					
Guilt feelings					
Anxiety					
Anger					
Emotional condition					
Blame					
Concentration					
Shame					
Denial					
Dissociation					

16(b). PROBLEMS THE CHILDREN EXHIBIT THREE YEARS AFTER THE DIVORCE

Long Term problems	**0-1 yr**	**2½-6 yrs**	**7-8 yrs**	**9-12 yrs**	**13-18**
Depression					
Guilt feelings					
Anxiety					
Anger					
Emotional condition					
Blame					
Concentration					
Shame					
Denial					
Dissociation					

17. RELATIONSHIP IN THE FAMILY

Response	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**
1. It is better for children to live in a single parent family than in a home where parents live in disharmony			
2. Stepparents are not always kind and supportive to stepchildren			
3. Divorce affect parent-child relationship			

ANNEXURE B

Dear Respondents

I am studying Masters in Life Skills and Counselling (MA LFC) at the North-West University in the Department of Social Work. I am supposed to conduct a research/mini-dissertation to fulfill the requirements of the mentioned degree.

As stated above, the purpose of this dissertation is for academic reason. I therefore humbly request you to participate in completing the attached questionnaire. Information supplied will not at any stage be published anywhere, and will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you.

M.E. MATSAFU