

Impact of Divorce on Children in Kashmir

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Abstract: Parents going through divorce may have children who experience increased likelihood for problems with social skills, behavior issues, and academic achievement. Parents who share similar views and practices for role expectations, discipline, and time spent with children may diminish the negative impact divorce often has on children. Divorced parents who live separately but focus on ways to create stability in the home, help smooth transitions between homes, and offer good communication help the social and emotional development of their children. The issue of divorce is a very crucial area of investigation due to its effects on the social development of the pre-schoolers, adolescents and young youths. The study will survey on the effects of divorce among pre-primary schools, primary schools and secondary schools. The objectives of the study was to find out ways in which pre schoolers social development (age nine and below) are affected by divorce, to find out ways in which adolescents social development (age 9-13) are affected by divorce, to find out ways in which young adults are affected by divorce (age 15-25), and to establish ways in which parents living together influences the children's social development. The study concluded that pre-schoolers (aged 0-9 years) are affected by divorce and this is expressed by them showing distress and behavioral problems both in school and at home. The study further concludes that divorce affects the young adults (15-25 years) and this is shown by the choices that they make. The utilization of mediators programs, adoption of parenting education can reduce divorce effects on children social development during the divorce process.

Key words: divorce, age, group, parents and childre

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I. INTRODUCTION

"To be separated from his mother is to lose a part of himself, as to be separated from a hand or foot" (Bums cited in Owusu-Bempah, 2007,). Divorce is a recurrent event in the United States that has impacted more than one-third of America's children (U.S. Bureau of Census cited in Owusu-Bempah, 2007). For many children, the effects of divorce can have instantaneous and long-lasting results. According to Robert Hughes (2008), there are two factors influencing the rising divorce rates in the United States. The first factor is both men and women are relying less on one another for economic survival. As women gain status in the workplace, they often qualify for their own medical and retirement benefits enabling them to be less dependent on the male head of household. Women who are gainfully employed and self-sufficient may be more willing to dissolve a marriage because they are not perceived as a financially dependent spouse. Financial stability allows for the female head of household to have more flexibility to exit a broken marriage. Secondly, the "childless-by-choice" impact of birth control allows couples to divorce without worry for the emotional stress on a child. Couples without children may have less desire to stay in a failing marriage for the sake of the children if there are no children. It is important to remember that as divorce rates continue to increase so does the likelihood that children of divorced parents may have a greater risk adjusting in areas of social relationships, educational achievement, psychological adjustment, self-concept, behavior/conduct, and social relations, according to Amanto and Keith (cited in VanderValk et al., 2005). There have been numerous studies (Dykeman, 2003; Jeynes, 2001; Wallerstein, 2005), that have documented the impact divorce may have on children. Sun (cited in ValderValk et al., 2005) found children of divorced parents may have a lower sense of psychological well-being than children who grew up with intact families. Research also confirms that children of divorced parents may experience emotional problems such as loneliness and depression (Asetline & VanderValk cited in VanderValk et al., 2005). Children may also feel the impact of divorce as it carries over into the classroom. "Studies comparing the school records of children from one-parent and two-parent families have found that children raised in one-parent homes have an increased risk of poor academic achievement" (Burns & Brassard cited in Hargreaves, 1991). Whitmarsh (2008) found that educators are often the first to notice a change in behavior when a family is in transition. Teachers have observed that some children from divorced families may show

decreased functioning in academic performance and display oppositional behavior, or signs of anxiety and depression.

children display problems during a variety of stages of family deterioration including times during this alteration period, either before parental separation, or directly subsequent to a parental separation. Children will sometimes experience delayed stress responses occurring years after a divorce in a form of post-traumatic stress (Hargreaves, 1991). These issues further spill over into the school setting, raise concern for classroom teachers, school administrators and school counselors. Awareness of the stages of family transition, age-appropriate behavior plans, and support for the victims of fragmented families are topics helpful for school counselors to know when advocating for all children.

Statement of the problem One-third of school age children in America experience changes in family dynamics that show up in the school setting. Indicators such as depression, decline in academic achievement, poor attendance, loss of confidence, and disorganization may signal adjustment issues pertaining to divorce in a child's home. School counselors are key players in helping children with personal issues, social needs, and academic success. Knowing human developmental stages, emotional needs during separation and divorce, and strategies to support children who are dealing with feelings pertaining to divorce are critical to the role of school counselors. The problem therefore becomes this: how can school counselors recognize warning signs for children struggling with divorcing parents and in turn help children whose parents are going through separation and divorce

Purpose of the study The purpose of this literature review is to gain a better understanding of the current research regarding the impact divorce has on children. Literature will be explored to determine strategies to assist children as they cope with the stress related to their parents' separation or divorce. The literature review will be conducted during the fall of 2008.

Limitations and assumptions of the study It is assumed that some children may be negatively impacted by divorce that may result in behavior problems, depression, conflict within families, and academic problems. The change in the child's functioning is assumed to be caused by divorce, but may also be caused by other reasons. It is assumed that the literature was from credible and reliable sources. The study is limited to the impact of divorce on school-age children. Although there may be additional issues of remarriage, blended, and step-family issues, this literature review will focus on families in divorce transition and the impact it may have on school-age children.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the research design to be used, the target population of the study, the sampling design, data collection methods, and data analysis.

2.2 Research Design

The study will employ descriptive survey design. This will involve using a survey design as a strategy for collecting and analyzing data to answer research questions, to gather information, summarize, present and interpret data for the purpose of classification. According to Bryman (2008), a research design provides a framework for collecting and analyzing data. According to Marshall, and Rossman, (2014) a descriptive survey research is intended to produce statistical information about the aspects of population that interest policy makers without manipulating any data. The method collects information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. The researcher will use primary data.

2.3 Target Population

Target population is the list of all the elements from which the sample is drawn Cooper and Schinder (2003). The target population will be 35 secondary schools, 45 primary schools, 100. The distribution of the population of the schools in different categories is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 2.1 Population of schools

School Category	Number of Schools	Population
Pre-primary	20	770
Primary	45	18,350
Secondary	35	11,400
Total	100	30,520

The targeted schools will be classified into three strata. They include pre-primary, primary and secondary.

2.4 Sampling Design

Stratified Random Sampling will be used to select schools from which data will be collected. The various strata in the population will be grouped as in the table below. A population is divided into sub groupings called strata and sample collected from each strata. The sample size will be 10 schools which will represent 10% of the total population of the schools

Table 2.2 Sampling Frame

Stratum	Population size	Sample Size
Pre-primary Primary 1	770	77
Primary	18,350	1,835
Secondary	11,400	1,140
Total	30,520	3,052

In each school the respondents will be drawn from the school administration (Head teachers), Teachers and Students. From each stratum the study will select one head teacher, one teacher and one student.

Table 2.3 Selection of Respondents

Stratum	Target Population		
	Head-teachers	Teachers	Students
Pre-primary	-	15	6
Primary	10	150	200
Secondary	12	450	125
Total	22	615	331

2.5 Data Collection

Primary data will be collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires will comprise of questions which seek to answer questions related to the objectives of this study. The questionnaires would be both closed to enhance uniformity and open ended to ensure maximum data is obtained.

2.6 Data Analysis

Results will be analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative data generated will be subjected to the descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics will include means, and percentages of selected respondents.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data collected from the field, analysis and interpretation. The study sought to establish the effects of divorce on Children's social development in Kashmir. To achieve this; the study was guided by four objectives: ways in which pre-schoolers social development (age nine and below) are affected by divorce; ways in which adolescents social development (age 9-13) are affected by divorce; ways in which young adults are affected by divorce (age 15-25) and to establish ways in which parents living together influences the children's social development. Data was collected using questionnaires as the data collection instruments whose presentation and interpretation is given below through the use, mean and percentage.

3.1 Response Rate

Table 3. 1 Response rate

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Response	790	76
Non Response	250	24
Total	1040	100.0

3.2 Personal information

4.2.1 Position in the school

The researcher sought to know what position the respondent held in the school. The findings revealed that 24% of the respondents were head-teachers in Primary and Secondary school; teachers were 15%, students were 36% and parents accounted for 25% indicating that the response would be varied

4.2.2 Length in associating with the school

The study sought to know the length in time the respondent had been associating with the school. The research findings showed that majority of the respondents had associated with the school for 2-5 years at 40%; less than 1 year was 17%; 6-9 years at 13% and at 10 years and above at 23% indicating that they had enough information on the social development of the children.

4.3 Influence of Divorce of Pre-Scholars

The study sought to find out the effect of divorce on pre-scholars. The findings are revealed on Table 4.2.

Table 3. 2: Influence of divorce on pre-scholars

Parameters	Mean
Shaken trust in dependency on parents	5.1028
Poor performance in school	5.5399
Low self-esteem	5.3146
Behavior problems	5.9325
Distress	5.2198
Adjustment difficulties	5.5142
Difficulty falling asleep at bedtime	5.8211
Difficulty sleeping through the night	5.7368
Decline in the standard of living in the custodial household	5.1604

The respondents agreed to a great extent that divorce affect pre-schoolers as shown by behavioral problems at a Mean of 5.9325 and it also strongly affected the performance of pre-schoolers at a Mean of 5.5399 .The pre-schoolers had difficulty falling asleep at bedtime in cases of divorce was agreed at a great extent with a Mean of 5.8211; they also showed difficulty sleeping through the night at Mean of 5.7368. The respondents agreed to some extent that divorce led to shaken trust in dependency on parents by the pre-schoolers at a Mean of 5.1028 and they showed decline in the standard of living in the custodial household at Mean of 5.1604 .

3.4 Ways in which Adolescents Social Development (Age 9-13) are affected by Divorce

The study sought to know how divorce affected the social development of adolescents who are aged between 9-13 years. The research findings are as shown on Table 3.3.

Table 3. 3: Influence of Divorce on adolescents (Age 9-13)

	Mean
Early loss of virginity	5.8399
Decision to start abusing drugs	5.7168
Low self-esteem	5.9432
Poor performance in school	5.4304

Anti-social behavior (withdrawal)	5.3272
Wanting self discipline	5.1056
Interpersonal relationships worsen	5.2511

The respondents agreed to a great extent that divorce affected adolescents; they strongly agreed that divorce led to the adolescents aged 9-13 years to have low self esteem at a Mean of 5.9432 and it also led to early loss of virginity at a Mean of 5.8399. Divorce also affected their social development by influencing their decision to abuse drugs at a Mean of 5.7168 and to a great extent it led to poor performance in school at a Mean of 5.4304 and it was also evident that divorce to some extent caused anti-social behavior like withdrawal at a Mean of 5.3272. It was also found that divorce causes wanting self discipline to a great extent among adolescents at a mean of 5.1056 and. In addition, it was found that divorces worsen Interpersonal relationships to a great extent at a mean of 5.2511.

3.5 Ways in which Young Adults are affected by Divorce (Age 15-25)

The research study sought to understand the effect of divorce on the social development of young adults aged 15-25 years; the findings of the study is as shown on Table 3.4

Table 3. 4: Ways in which Young Adults are affected by Divorce

Parameters	Mean
Strong desire to fix what their parents could not within their own adult lives	5.8968
Desire to have stable families and relationships	5.7325
A delayed reaction to an event	5.2342
Fear to get into relationships	5.5142
Exhibiting weird sexual behavior	5.1438

The respondents agreed to a great extent on the statement that the young adults showed a strong desire to fix what their parents could not within their own adult lives with a Mean of 5.8968. They also agreed to a great extent that the young adults had a desire to have stable families and relationships at a Mean 5.7325. They equally agreed to some extent that the youth from divorced families showed delayed reaction to an event at a Mean of 5.2342 and they had a fear getting into relationships at a Mean of 5.5142. Some youths may exhibit weird sexual behavior due to the influence of divorce at a Mean of 5.1438.

3.6 Ways in which parents living together influences the Children’s Social Development

The study sought to establish the influence of parents who are living together on the children’s social development and the findings are as indicated on Table 3.5

Table 3. 5: Ways in which parents living together influences the Children’s Social Development

	Mean
Longer concentration period	3.2469
Good performance in academics	5.8257
Highly social	5.8150
Are always happy	3.4210
Have majority of their needs catered for	5.2462
Have a friendly nature	5.0237
High intelligence levels are realizable	5.4624
levels of anxiety are managed	5.1984

When asked about the ways in which parents living together influenced the children's social development, the respondents agreed to a great extent that it had an impact. Specifically it led to good performance in academics at a Mean of 5.8257 and led to the children being highly social at a Mean of 5.8150. The respondents agreed to some extent that majority of their needs are catered for with parents living together at a Mean of 5.2462. The respondents also argued that the children were always happy at a Mean of 3.4210 and social development of children living with parents to an extent made the children to have longer concentration period at a Mean of 3.2469. The study found that children staying with their parents realizable high intelligence levels at a mean of 5.4624. Lastly, it was found that levels of anxiety are managed when parents live together with Children at a mean of 5.1984

3.7 Ways of reducing effects on social development

The study sought to establish ways of reducing effects on social development and the findings are as indicated on Table 3.6.

Table 3. 6: Ways of Reducing Effects on Social Development

Parameters	Mean
Utilization of the services of a mediator	5.2948
Adoption of parenting education programs	5.3210
Implementation of Co-parenting responsibilities after divorce	5.3685
Usage of children divorce support groups	5.9237
Children prioritization during and after divorce	5.2482
Proper communication during the divorce process	5.4326

When asked about the ways that can be used to reduce the effects on social development. The respondents indicated that there has been utilization of the services of a mediator to a great extent at a mean of 5.2948. It was also shown that there has adoption of parenting education programs to a great extent at a mean of 5.3210. The respondents agreed to a great extent that implementation of co-parenting responsibilities after divorce reduces divorce effects at a mean of 5.3685. The respondents held the view that usage of children divorce support groups reduces effects to great extent at a mean of 5.9237. It was also shown that there is proper communication during the divorce process to a great extent at a mean of 5.4326. There was also fulfillment of children needs and concerns to a great extent at a mean of 5.2482

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