Divorce: Its Causes and Consequences in Mizo Society

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Abstract: Social scientists are becoming increasingly concerned about the rising incidence of marital dissolution around the world. Approximately 1.36 million people in India are divorced, according to the Census of 2011. The divorce rate in northeastern states is higher than elsewhere in India: Mizoram has the highest, with a 6.34 percentage of divorced and separated compared to the percentage of the ever-married population. The fact that divorce is a serious social problem has far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, and communities. The purpose of this study is to examine the consequences and the major causes of divorce in Mizo society. It aims at a better understanding of the risk factors and trends associated with divorce throughout history. Information was gathered through an in-depth interview with 50 divorced women selected using the snowball sampling method. According to the study, divorce is most certainly associated with several negative consequences. Divorced individuals have a higher level of economic difficulty, a lower standard of living, and are more socially isolated. The findings shed new light on the identity and status of divorced mothers, as well as broaden our understanding of divorce in general and specifically in Mizo society.

Keywords: Divorce, Mother, Consequences, Mizo, Society

Introduction

The increase in the rate of divorce is one of the most far-reaching outcomes in the changes of family life and remains a prominent issue of scientific research. The increase in marital dissolution has had significant implications for the settings in which children are nurtured and socialised. Slightly more than half of all divorces involve children under the age of 18. More than one million

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children experience parental divorce every year (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998, Table 160), and about 40 per cent of all children will experience parental divorce before reaching adulthood (Bumpass, 1990). Literature on divorce is an ongoing debate over the consequences of marital disruption. Some scholars view that the spread of single-parent families contributes to many social problems, including poverty, crime, substance abuse, declining academic standards, and the erosion of neighbourhoods and communities (Blankenhorn 1995; Glenn 1996; Popenoe 1996). In contrast, other scholars argue that adults find fulfilment, and children develop successfully, in a variety of family structures. The problem of adjustment to life after divorce or separation is a matter of great concern. The increase in divorce and the implications of divorce on individuals is an area of research that needs attention. The study focuses on the causes and consequences of divorce from a holistic perspective and it necessitates an understanding of societal values, social gender roles, the mentality that shapes woman-man relationships, and a thorough examination of society's general attitude to family, marriage, and divorce in Mizo society.

A Note on Methodology

The researcher restricted her field of study only to the divorced mother living in Aizawl city of Mizoram. Aizawl district was selected due to its greater urban concentration and having the highest population in Mizoram. The study's objective was to assess the causes and consequences of divorce in Mizo society. The researcher used the qualitative research method. A sample of 50 divorced/separated mothers with children below 18 years was selected using the snowball sampling technique because of the non-availability of records for divorced women separately. The snowball technique has been recommended by qualitative researchers (Bertaux & Bertaux 1981) for contacting potential subjects by asking them for the names of others in similar circumstances. Snowball sampling was most likely to be used when it is particularly difficult to identify potential subjects (Kirk & Miller 1986). Because of the difficulties in locating and knowing the availability and willingness to participate, the researcher used a snowball sampling technique when already identified candidates were asked for referrals to gain further participants and help identify subjects who were challenging to locate. This study used two main tools- structured interview schedules and observation. The interviews included some in-depth questions to ascertain their problems, feelings and attitudes towards divorce. The respondents were given preliminary information, and house visits were conducted to elicit the required information accordingly.

Few interviews were also conducted at the respondents' workplaces. All the interviews conducted and observations were noted and digitally recorded.

Understanding Divorce

The formal dissolution of a marriage is the most popular definition of divorce. Divorce is related to marriage and family which are the most important institutions of human society. Divorce is the word used to mean the legal ending of a marriage. The English term 'divorce' comes from the Latin word '*divortium*,' which is derived from '*dis*,' which means 'apart,' and '*vertere*,' which means 'to turn.' Divorce is the end of a married relationship (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1910). While divorce is not universally accepted in every culture and civilisation, it is a significant social fact that we encounter any place there has been a marriage in the past, legally and practically ending family union and causing family breakup and division. Divorce entails not just the dissolution of marriages that aren't working out, but also a shift in the family's structure (Goldenberg & Goldenberg 2002). As a result, it has an impact on the individuals, society and children are the worst sufferers of divorce.

Separation, desertion, and abandonment are all phrases that might be used to describe divorce. We used the term 'divorce' to refer to the formal dissolution of a marriage. 'Separation' can be an unofficial precursor to divorce, a short-term solution to alleviate acute tension or a legally recognised way to cohabitate without divorcing. 'Desertion' refers to a husband or wife leaving their family home and the relationship without reasonable cause. It happens suddenly and without consent or against the other spouse's will. Divorce, like marriage, is shaped by societal traditions, values, belief systems, social structures, and customs. The present study does not distinguish between separation and legal divorce, as there is no difference regarding her adjustment to society.

Feminist perspectives on divorce proceed from the ways in which women's positions at divorce systematically differ from men's positions. Although there has been a large-scale increase in mothers' labour force participation, there has been no corresponding increase in fathers' domestic contributions, and women continue to bear the overwhelming responsibility for child rearing. Carbone (1994) argued because of this division of labour within the family, divorcing women, on average, face bleaker financial prospects and enjoy closer emotional ties to their children than do their former husbands. Carbone (1994) brings out different feminist's perspectives on issues of divorce and gendered division of labour- "Liberal feminists" believe that women's domestic responsibilities will inevitably place them at a disadvantage and favour policies that encourage

men to assume a proportionate share of family responsibilities. "Cultural feminists," or "feminists of difference," believe that it is not the fact that women care for children but that child rearing is so undervalued which is the source of the problem. "Radical feminists" believe that it is impossible to know whether women's involvement in child rearing would differ from men's in a different society and focus on the ways in which marriage and work force policies perpetuate male dominance. All agree, however, that existing law contributes to the relative impoverishment of many women and children and that, even when the rules purport to be gender-neutral, they are administered in systematically biased ways.

Divorce Trends

Divorce has existed throughout human history, and it was until the 1970s, relationship dissolution, and specifically, divorce and separation, attracted the attention of social scientists. In the last fifty years in developed countries, there have been a high percentage of marriages ending in divorce and children born out of wedlock, which has resulted in a rapid increase in the number of single-parent families. Studies have observed that the rate of divorce is less common compared to developed countries. India has the lowest divorce rate in the world. Census of India (2001) reports have shown a slight rise in divorce rates during the last two decades. The percentage of divorce rose from 0.74 per cent in 1991 up to 1 per cent in 2011.

According to Census 2011, 1.36 million people in India are divorced. That is equivalent to 0.24 per cent of the married population, and 0.11 per cent of the total population. Although India's divorce rate is low from a cross-national perspective, the number of people separated is almost thrice the number of people divorced. 0.61per cent of the married population and 0.29 per cent of the total population are reported as separated, compared to 0.24 per cent and 0.11 per cent of the total population. More women are divorced and separated than men. Divorce rates in the northeast states are relatively higher than elsewhere in India. Mizoram has the highest divorce rate (4.08 per cent), more than four times that of Nagaland, the state with the second-highest rate (0.88 per cent) and over five times the highest non-North-east state (Gujarat, 0.63 per cent). The matrilineal structure of Meghalaya has the highest number of separation cases, more than double the highest non- North-east state (Kerala, 1.28 per cent). Also, conventional wisdom attributes a relatively higher status of women in this region, partly due to the practice of matrilineal kinship systems and matrilocal residence among some tribes (Jacob and Chattopadhyay 2016).

According to Census 2011, separated people account for over three times the divorced population, 0.61 per cent of married people and 0.29 per cent of the whole population are classified as separated, compared to 0.24 per cent and 0.11 per cent for divorced people. Jacob and Chhatopadhay's study of marital breakdown in India indicated a positive association between the two rates, with bigger separation-divorce gaps in the southern states and lesser gaps in the north-eastern states. Given the stigma involved with reporting divorce (Belliappa 2013) and the amount of time it takes for cases to be tried and resolved in Indian courts, separation rates are often higher than divorce rates (Kumar 2012).

Divorce in Mizo Society

Divorce or *Inthen* is permissible and accessible in Mizo society. Divorce among the Mizos is governed by the Mizo Customary Law and it does not require going to the, etc. The laws on divorce are usually in the form of payment (usually the unpaid bride price) which makes divorce an easy affair. The *'bride price'* is a token these days and the amount in most modern marriages is a one-time price of Rs. 420/- paid to bride's family by groom's family. At the time of marriage, the amount is shared across near and dear relatives and friends. Similarly, at the time of divorce, 'bride price' is returned by the bride to the groom's family depending on who initiated the divorce. The church plays a significant role in marriage and divorce in Mizo society. By the social norm and newfound religion, divorce is strongly abhorred by the Mizo; divorced men and women are automatically terminated from any position of responsibility in the Church (Gangte 2016). The Mizo Customary Law lays down various grounds of *Inthen* (divorce) or terminating marriage bond such as the following:

1) *Mak* (Divorce when initiated by the husband)

2) *Sumchhuah* (Divorced initiated by the wife)

3) *Peksachang* (Divorce by mutual consent)

4) *Sumlaitan* (Divorce by mutual agreement, bride price to be equally shared by the couple)

5) *Pasal awm loh hlana chhuak* (Divorce on account of long absence of husband from wife)

6) *Atna avanga inthen* (Divorce on account of insanity)

7) *Nupui Tlansan* (Abandonment of wife)

8)   *Kawngka sula Mak* (Divorce on account of the husband fallen in love with another woman and marries his new love on the very day or the next day)

9)   *Zangzaw* (Impotency)

10) *Chhu-ping* (imperforated vagina)

11) *Uire* (Adultery)

Either a man or a woman can initiate divorce on any one of these grounds. According to Sen (1992), if a wife wants a divorce, she is to refund the bride price to her husband. If it is sought by a husband for reasons other than barrenness, adultery, sickness of incurable diseases, he is to pay some fine to the village elders and his wife. This fine is settled after discussion by the parties concerned. If a couple does not get along they can separate by mutual consent or if the husband does not like his wife, he can send her back to her parent's house for good.

Women are ruled by patriarchal ideology inside the institution of marriage. The traditional rules against Mizo women are so strong in Mizo society that if a woman is divorced by her husband or says *ka ma che* (I divorce you), she loses her property and custody of her children, with only the customary *Hmeichhe thuam* (a mattress, two pillows, etc.) as compensation. If she is divorced for alleged adultery, she will not be returned these few items and will be forced to leave with only the clothes she is wearing. For example, if the earning wife purchased furniture with her own money during the marriage, she will not be able to take it until the law is properly passed and published in the state gazette, at which point divorcees will be able to claim the allowance. Otherwise, it would be with her ex-husband. The customary laws are often favourable to men and they enjoy the status which is provided to them by virtue of their gender and their superior status is reinforced strongly by the customary law (Gangte 2016:24). Recently, The Mizoram Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Bill, 2014 allows divorced women to inherit property and protects them from being divorced by their husbands at their will, with the exception of Mizoram's three autonomous districts (Lai, Mara and Chakma) in Mizoram (The Mizoram Gazette-https://landj.mizoram.gov.in/downloads/file/27).

A *nuthlawi* (divorcee) is a lady who has been divorced from her husband or who is an unmarried single mother. Perhaps unsurprisingly, such a woman's social status is poor, and her situation is associated with shame and stigmatisation, as it is in other tribal and non-tribal Indian civilisations. The patriarchy based socio-cultural structure of Mizo society is based on and

fostered by patriarchal principles. Mizo customs enable widows to remarry and divorcees to remarry. However, this may not be a realistic choice for women (especially older women), causing older women to remain single. Men, on the other hand, can readily remarry. If a woman becomes a single mother at a young age and is unable to remarry owing to cultural constraints (especially if she already has children), she may face economic hardship for the longest time possible. In Mizo society and elsewhere, there is sympathy for *hmeithai* (widow) because of the 'legitimate' cause of a single parent (death of husband), but a social stigma often lies with a divorced mother and her children. Even though remarriage is legal in Mizo society and open to both men and women, reasons such as children's futures, mental strain, men's lack of trust, social stigma, ignorance of how to locate a suitable partner, and lack of interest kept divorced women from marrying again. Similarly, in India, the attitude towards female divorcees and widows is often unfavourable and hostile to remarriage. For her, remarriage and gaining a piece of her husband's property are challenging encounters. The patriarchal structure of society and the reduced status of women are proven to exacerbate these issues.

Risk Factors

Different predictors, such as demographics, economics, and interpersonal/ relationship traits can be used to classify the risk factors for divorce. However, these predictors will never be able to accurately anticipate relationship instability. When a couple is at high risk of divorce, it doesn't mean the marriage will dissolve. There are a variety of demographic factors to consider, such as premarital birth, age of marriage, marital satisfaction, and educational achievement. The impact of female education has received a lot of attention. According to classic economic theories of the family, women with higher education (i.e., more human capital) have more opportunities to leave the marriage, which destabilises the relationship, and thus increases the risk of divorce (Becker 1981).

The risk factors for marriage dissolution may be also influenced by factors such as the intergenerational transmission of divorce. As divorce has become increasingly common, the number of individuals who experienced parental divorce when growing up also increased. It is well established that the experience of parental divorce when growing up is related to various adverse outcomes later in life, including ones own divorce. Intergenerational transmission of divorce (ITD) is found across country contexts and seems to persist over time (Bergvall and Stanfors 2022). According to the study conducted by Bergvall and

Stanfors (2022) divorce risks are highest when either the wife or both spouses have experienced parental divorce. The study also found that this transmission has been stronger and more stable for women than for men over time that have grown up in a divorced family are more likely to disintegrate their marriage as adults. Research has shown that the experience of parental divorce is associated with adverse outcomes in adulthood, and it is well-established that parental divorce increases an individual's divorce risks (Wolfinger 2005).

Factors such as spouses' income and participation in the labour force are crucial economic predictors. There has been discussion on whether a wife's occupation is a negative or positive risk factor for divorce. Women's employment, according to Amato's research on divorce, has the potential to create conflict between couples over the sharing of domestic responsibilities. On the bright side, research shows that spouses' earned money improves other aspects of marriage quality by reducing financial stress. Interpersonal predictors of marriage dissolution are attributable to domestic violence, frequent disagreement, adultery, a lack of commitment to marriage, a lack of love and trust between spouses, and alcohol and drug abuse. In addition to the aforementioned factors, divorce is also attributed to the presence or absence of children. Becker et al. (1997) referred children as a 'marriage-specific capital', which indicates that the 'costs' of dissolving the marriage are higher, both monetarily and emotionally, when children are involved. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that there are many other risk factors of divorce in addition to those discussed above. Likewise, Mortelmans (2021) noted that, when either of the spouses or their children have health problems (physical or mental), the risk of divorce increases. Domestic violence and alcohol or drug abuse are also positively associated with instability. A very recent domain of investigation has even been examining the role of technology – and, more specifically, of social media use – in relationship break-ups (Clayton 2014).

Findings and Discussion

Causes of Divorce as found in the present study

As divorce is frequently thought of as an once-in-a-lifetime occurrence, the subsequent bonding and relationship disintegration processes are poorly understood. The process of finding a partner and then leaving a partner could occur numerous times over a person's entire life course (Amato 2010). The current study focused on first-time divorces. Fifty divorce instances were observed, and data was gathered from these fifty divorced women. Women

were more likely than men to initiate divorce, according to the study. The dissolution of marriage to this group of fifty women is varied and difficult to ascribe to any one principal cause. Respondents were asked, 'What do you think precipitated the divorce?' The interviewers transcribed open-ended answers and categorised these answers in a set of categories as outlined (see Table 1) to better understand them.

Table 1: Causes of Divorce

Sl. No	Causes	No.	Percentage %
1.	Alcoholism	14	28
2.	Adultery/Extramarital affairs	9	18
3.	Incompatibility	8	16
4.	Financial Problem	6	12
5.	In-laws Interference	4	8
6.	Unhappy	4	8
7.	Physical Abuse	3	6
8.	Desertion	2	4
	Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork 2018

The percentage of responses that fall into each category is shown (see Table 1). Alcoholism is the most commonly cited cause of divorce or separation, followed by adultery and incompatibility. Less than 10 per cent of the individuals reported the remaining causes. The first reason for alcoholism is the partner's drinking habits, which lead to a negative family atmosphere and instability that cannot be accepted. Excessive drinking affects not only one's health but also one's behaviour, destroying domestic peace which ultimately leads to divorce- a prevalent problem among respondents. Adultery ranked second in the study showing that 18 per cent of the women obtained a divorce on the grounds of adultery. The majority of these women stated that they would have continued with an unsatisfactory marriage had there not been another woman. It was not causal adultery on the part of the men that ultimately resulted in separation, but a 'serious affair' that made it impossible to continue to live in the same house. As a result, this type of behaviour can wreak havoc on a couple's relationship, leading to divorce. Incompatibility ranked third in the study showing that 16 per cent of the respondent's divorce on such grounds. These women stated that their marriage turned out to be incompatible because of dissatisfaction with the relationship by spouses, differences in their bringing up and differences

in their attitude. The differences in the family status of the respondents also, to some extent, cause adjustment problems. A few respondents were unwilling to explain why they had gotten divorced or separated, but they cited incompatibility as the reason for their divorce or separation. According to Barooah (2012), divorce or separation is a personal tragedy, and marriage is an intimate exclusive relationship of the couple, therefore such respondent's privacy were respected and no further question was asked based on the causes of their marital breakdown.

Financial troubles, in-law interference, emotional problems (unhappy), physical abuse and desertion were identified as factors in their marital dissolution in addition to the above three reasons. Financial issues such as unemployment and inadequate income to support the family have been identified as major factors in marital dissolution. Lack of independence and being completely under the domination of their in-laws (both sides of the family), which is typically the result of early marriages without jobs, can become an issue, leading to marital breakdown. The majority stated that when a family does not have enough money to meet their fundamental requirements, and the constant demand to get money from their parent's, increases conflicts between the spouses', affecting marriage and eventually leading to divorce or separation. 12 per cent of the respondent's divorced on grounds of financial troubles.

In Mizo society, in-law interference is another prevalent cause of divorce/separation. This is likely to occur when there is an expectation of a traditional relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. The age of marriage and level of education of the respondents played an important part in determining their attitudes. Since many of them were young and not well educated, there existed dominance by the in-laws from the start of their marriage. In-laws who meddle too much in the lives of the couple became a problem. Women did not appreciate such intrusion into their partners' lives and did not accept their authority as absolute wherein husbands desire them to pay more respect to their parents, thus impacting their relations. The rebellious and intolerable act of these women towards the dictates of their husbands and in-laws ultimately drove the women out of their homes. Adjustment with the in-laws is an important problem of the Mizo married women, such that 4 per cent of the respondent's divorce on grounds of in-law's interference (parents-in-laws living with the respondents). Another 4 per cent of the respondent's divorced on grounds of unhappiness (emotional problem). This reason varied from lack of satisfaction in the marriage, lack of interest in family, conflict in

values, psychological immaturity, personal clashes, no sense of family, and long-distance relationship.

The study indicates that 3 per cent of the respondents suffer physical assaults at the hands of their husbands. These women stated that they were subjected to physical brutality and mental torture. Those respondents who suffered physical abuse reported that their husbands resorted to physical abuse when drunk in most cases. Separation can also occur as a result of desertion. Desertion is the wilful and voluntary separation of one party from the other without justification or the other's consent, and with no intention of going home. It leaves the woman in a state of uncertainty. This generated a lot of difficulty for women because the handling of home responsibilities as well as care for the children was exceedingly inconvenient and difficult. The study showed that 2 per cent of the women obtained a divorce on the ground of desertion. Divorce in Mizo society from the above discussion is found to be associated with interpersonal predictors of divorce- adultery, conflicts, relationship problems, alcohol and drug abuse.

Consequences of Divorce

Divorce has a wide variety of consequences. Divorce, in a sense, creates a situation of crisis. The intensity of crises is felt by different people in different ways, such as (i) men and women, (ii) young and old, (iii) marriage of short duration and those of longer duration. Divorce represents a fundamental change in status and role for all concerned (Pothen 1986). Compared to married people, divorced people have lower levels of psychological well-being, including lower happiness, greater symptoms of psychological distress, and weaker self-concepts, according to a large number of researches published in the 1990s. Amato (2000) studies on comparison between married and divorced individuals, divorcees have more health problems and are at a greater risk of mortality. According to the findings of the study, divorced individuals are more socially isolated, have a poorer standard of life, have less wealth, and face higher economic difficulty than married individuals. Familial ties are highly valued in Mizo society, and marriage is seen as a vital stage in life, particularly for women. It is a step that alters their social and economic status, as well as their entire identity. The ending of married life is almost always an unhappy experience when a marriage, legally proclaimed, has broken down by way of death, divorce, desertion, or separation. Women may see it as a life challenge, but the consequences offer several problems for the children and other family members. The current research focuses on the consequences of economic

and social insecurity of divorced women in Mizo community. Furthermore, divorced women are vulnerable in terms of their finances and social status.

Financial stress and economic hardships can lead to marital problems, and eventually, to the dissolution of a marriage. After divorce, the ex-partners most likely women experience disproportionate declines in household income (De Vaus et al. 2017; Smock 1994) and standard of living (Bianchi et al. 1999; Peterson 1996) as well as sharp increases in the risk of poverty (Smock & Manning 1999). Studies have shown that the burden of marital dissolution for women is greater and that it requires more help than its former partners. Divorce effects and gender differences extend into various spheres, including changes in economic status, health and well-being, domestic arrangements, and social relationships. According to the study, the most difficult challenge encountered by single mothers is meeting everyday costs. They are more likely to suffer financial troubles if they do not have a stable source of income or family assistance. The majority 95 per cent of the women did not receive maintenance from their ex-partners and had to deal with financial difficulties independently. Getting maintenance from the divorced husband by a woman and her dependent children is not easy. At times the husband is not solvent enough to make regular payments. At other times he wants to escape the responsibility. The majority of the respondents got divorced on the grounds of Mizo customary law rather than going through the legal process. The fact that they were certain that they would not receive financial assistance from their husbands meant that the legality of their situation was of no concern to them. Those divorcing couples who seek legal advice do so in the context of a property settlement after divorce and child custody arrangements for their children.

Research consistently shows that the economic consequences of divorce are more significant for women than for men (Bianchi et al. 1999; Hao 1996; Kitson 1992; Marks 1996; Peterson 1996; Ross 1995; Smock 1994). For example, Bianchi and colleagues found using matched couples that custodial mothers experienced a 36 per cent decline in the standard of living following separation, whereas noncustodial fathers experienced a 28 per cent increase. Overall, mothers' post-separation standard of living was only about one half that of fathers. Similarly, divorced women, compared with married women or divorced men, report more chronic financial difficulties, such as being unable to pay bills or purchase necessary goods (Fisher et al. 1998; Ross 1995; Shapiro 1996; Simons & Associates 1996).These differences exist because women, compared with men, have more interrupted work histories before divorce, experience

greater work-family conflict (due to their responsibility for children), and are more likely to experience employment and wage discrimination. The financial consequences of marital dissolution indicate that women suffer more from a divorce than men in terms of finances (Mortelmans 2021).

The social integration consequences of divorced have been measured in terms of the frequency of social participation; and frequency of contact with friends, relatives, and neighbours. According to the study, the majority of the mothers occasionally participate in social activities, one-third of the mother never participated in any social functions and a few mothers claimed that they participate regularly without hesitation. It has been observed that they do not actively participate in social functions due to their responsibilities as a mother and a bread earner. Besides these responsibilities, sometimes they do not want to be actively involved in public activities due to hesitation and uncomfortable experiences in society. Some avoid people for a long-time and then try to come back gradually. According to the study, divorced mothers are less likely to connect with other people, friends and neighbours where they have to mingle with people who would be not so considerate towards their status as a divorcee. The old values regarding respectability hampered them from being socially free (Pothen 1986). They often avoid social events since divorce involves not just the loss of a partner, but also the disruption of a shared social network and activities. However, in some situations, divorce may enhance the desire for social interactions to compensate for the loss of a spouse and to receive social support that helps in coping with the divorce process.

According to the study, most of the respondents agree that society views the divorced mother as a strange entity. They stated that 'society's perspective toward a divorced mother is not positive or welcoming. They draw judgments about divorced mothers' lives based on inaccurate notions about their character, clothing sense, and just about everything else. The result of this was that the vast majority of single mothers lost their confidence. The present study also demonstrated that a stereotype mind-set exists in Mizo society that a woman must adjust with her husband and his family and that marriage disintegration is most likely the result of the wife's bad behaviour. The social stigma attached to divorced mothers by society is seen to harm them. A significant number of divorced women in the study experienced inferior treatment by society, whereas a few did not experience such problems. The consequences of divorce, in addition to those discussed above, have been identified. A divorced woman experienced challenges in raising children as a single parent, such as lack of quality time, lack of attention towards checking unhealthy habits and education,

discipline, and providing emotional support. Since mothers are typically the ones who have custody of their children, they are faced with the issue of solo parenting and finding childcare (Goldberg et al. 1992). Furthermore, the emotional well-being of the divorcees has been significantly impacted. It is impossible to adequately express the extent of the trauma caused by a divorce.

The majority of studies show that divorce has negative consequences, although a minority number of studies show favourable consequences for both couples. Consistent with this notion, several studies show that divorced individuals report higher levels of autonomy and personal growth than married individuals (Kitson 1992; Marks 1996). According to the present study, a small percentage of the divorcees felt happier after their divorce, because they had a feeling of release from miserable situations. A few claimed they have never been in financial difficulty since they have their own business, family support, and a source of income. They are more optimistic about their children's prospects, believing that they will succeed in life. They also stated that their husbands were not financially supportive and that they spent their money on their own, but many single mothers do believe that paying day-to-day expenses was easier with their husband's help. According to Acock and Demo (1994), many divorced mothers reported increases in their employment chances, social lives, and satisfaction after their divorce. Similarly, Riessmann (1990) discovered that, after a divorce, women have higher self-confidence and a better sense of power. Women are now beginning to think about liberation because of the expansion of educational and employment options and the resulting social change in mental attitudes.

Results and Discussion

Divorce is a complex event that can be viewed from different perspectives and one of the social problems that are occurring in great extends. Divorce is most certainly associated with several negative consequences. In a male-dominated Mizo society, the greatest problem with divorced women is economic hardship and social adjustment. Agnes (1992) indicates that the gender division of labour within the family has widened the economic gap between husband and wife; she is more vulnerable when divorce takes place. Single-mother households are particularly vulnerable because coupled with mother's low income, the lack of a second provider places these families at increased risk for poverty (Lokshin, Harris & Popkin 2000).

The study identified various contributing factors for the occurrence of divorce. According to the study, alcoholism is the most common cause of

divorce, followed by adultery and incompatibility. Respondents strongly felt that if one person is abusing alcohol/drugs, it is likely to lead to marital dissolution and often lead to poor family environment and instability. Subsequently, the problems of alcohol and drug addiction are likely to escalate extra-marital affairs thus leading to marital discord. The third major causes of marital breakdown reported by the respondents 's is incompatibility, the researcher observed that due to modernisation and consequent lifestyle changes, Mizo women are also compelled to work more and thus placed a burden on themselves. With these changes, women and men became unable to relate to each other and this incompatibility has been a major source of marital tension. The data gathered from the respondents reveals that financial problems are also regarded as a major issue for marital breakdown. The respondents felt that lack of independence and being completely under the domination of their in-laws (both sides of the family), which is typically the result of early marriages without jobs, is likely to escalate tension within the family and such continued tensions are likely to affect the marriage between persons. Others factors such as in-law's interference, unhappy, physical abuse and desertion were reported by few of the respondents.

According to the study, majority of the respondents reported that economic hardships prevail after they were divorced. The empirical evidence collected reveals economic constraints such as problems in meeting everyday needs and unable to maintain same standards. The problem of negligence by the ex-partner and not receiving maintenance for child care has been reported by the majority of the respondents. The study revealed that many divorced mothers had been negatively affected by the economic condition caused by divorce. Divorce in Mizo society is interrelated with the issue of entitlement of the divorced wife. The absence of economic security of the bride in marriage payment contributes to the disadvantaged position of the single mothers. Except in divorces which arise due to the desertion of the husband as in *Nupui Tlansan* where the wife acquires the right over the house and property the husband leaves behind, there is no such economic provision for women in other forms of divorce.

Furthermore, from the study it is evident that divorce affects the extent into the sphere of social relationships. The respondents reported that divorce affects their relationships with relatives, friends and the community. Empirical evidence reveals that divorced mothers are less likely to connect with other people, friends, and neighbours. Most divorced women avoid social gatherings to avoid mingling with people who would not be considerate of their status as

divorcees. Divorce thus has an emotional consequence on divorced individuals, children and society at large.

On the other hand, divorce appears to be beneficial to some individuals, according to the study. Amato (2000) also claims that adults are given a second opportunity at happiness after divorce, and children are rescued from dysfunctional and toxic household circumstances. Likewise, Ralte (2019) reveals that divorced mothers often managed to improve their behaviour and transform their loss into gain, achieving a higher socioeconomic level than before the divorce.

This study then emphasises conditions such as poor income, social stigma, alcohol consumption, and poverty as crucial factors for divorce in Mizo society. Although the Mizo embraced Christianity, *Inthen* or divorce is not as stigmatised in the Mizo society (Gangte 2016) compared to elsewhere in India. However, a divorced woman's reputation suffers, and she is occasionally discriminated against. The number of divorce/separation cases is projected to rise as time passes. The time has come to pay attention to these women by focusing on employment programmes that will help them improve their economic situation. Individuals' pain can be exacerbated or reduced depending on the treatment they receive from society. Negative attitudes towards divorcees are highly detrimental to their psychological and emotional well-being. Therefore, the negative social image needs to be broken to give these women a sense of security. This will help them regain confidence in their abilities and ease their reintegration into society.

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