

Review of Literature

This chapter is a summary of literature reviewed related to the main theme of the research and the research questions. The chapter begins with the discussion on the meaning and significance of marriage, divorce and separation followed by a focused discussion on Hindu marriage, the Hindu Marriage Act and the status of women within it. Additionally, the chapter highlights studies on the themes: determinants and causes of divorce and separation, consequences of divorce and separation, coping and adjusting with divorce and separation, social networks of divorced and separated women and separation and divorce in India in the contemporary times. In the end the chapter discusses the rationale of the study, followed by the conceptual framework, research questions and research objectives.

Meaning and Significance of Marriage, Separation and Divorce

In order to understand the meaning and significance of divorce and separation in any society it is extremely important to understand marriage in that particular context.

As defined by Uberoi (1993) marriage is a socially sanctioned relationship between a man and a woman, usually involving economic cooperation and residential and sexual cohabitation, and ensuring the legitimacy of the children born of the union.

The word divorce is derived from a Latin word *divortium* which again is derived from *dis* which means ‘apart’ and *vertere* which means ‘to turn’. Thus, divorce means to turn apart. Divorce is the dissolution of the tie of marriage (Sanctuary, Gerald, and Whitehead, cited in Pothen, 1986). According to United Nations Demographic Yearbook (2013) divorce is defined as a final legal dissolution of a marriage, that is, the separation of husband and wife which confers on the parties’ right to remarriage under civil, religious and/or other provisions according to the laws of each country.

Separation may be an informal preliminary step towards divorce, a temporary measure to lessen the immediate conflict or a legally recognized decision to live separately without divorcing (Pothen, 1986). In the state of Gujarat, divorce is referred as *chuta cheda* in the local language. It means that the bond of the husband and wife which was tied during *saat pheras* (wherein a knot is literally tied to a piece of cloth draped around the man and woman depicting a sacred tie) no longer exists.

Marriage is one of the most important stages of the family life cycle of a human being. A good marriage is one of the most fulfilling experiences in the life of an individual. For ages, the institutions of marriage and family have been the pillars of the basic structure on which the very edifice of society and nations are built. It is through these institutions that an individual's physical and social needs are met and his/her growth enhancement occurs (Patil, 2003).

Although, the status of women since the ancient times and till date has progressed considerably, whether it be marriage or divorce, the strong pillars of the traditional patriarchal social structure continue to place women in a disadvantageous position in most aspects of their lives. It will be interesting to peep into the journey of a women's status within the social and legal system of India.

An earliest known instance of marital separation was that of Rama and Sita in the Indian mythological text of Ramayana. Rama (the king) is known to have sacrificed his personal happiness and his wife Sita, for the performance of his duty for his fellow countrymen. Whereas Sita (the queen) is known to have extended her full cooperation to Rama (Kishwar, 1997). According to Kakar (1981) for both men and women in Hindu society, the ideal woman is personified by Sita, the quintessence of wifely devotion, the heroine of the epic of Ramayana. Kishwar (1997) claims that Sita continues to demand similar reverence even today, even among the modern educated people in India.

Marriage in the *Vedic* period was considered as a *Sanskara* and women had more or less equal status in the society whereas marriage in the *Smriti* period was considered as a sacrament and women's status was seen deteriorated in that period (Basu, 2001). Padia (2009) notes that Hindu women enjoyed equal rights to men in most aspects of their lives in the ancient period. She adds that a woman was regarded as *ardhangini*, that is, one half of the very being of man and in no way subordinate to him. She also goes on to say that the *Smriti* writers did give women the right to divorce and remarry though not equal to men. The *Dharmashastras* which are concerned with the do's and don'ts, the detailed codes of conduct in the daily life of the community mention about eight types of marriages, that is, *Bhrama*, *Daiva*, *Arsa*, *Prajapatya*, (which were considered approved forms and wherein no divorce was permitted) *Asura*, *Ghandharva*, *Raksasa* and *Paisaca* (which were considered unapproved and detailed rules for its dissolution were laid down)(Padia, 2009).

However, Sarma (1931) has discussed how the *Smriti* text writers made conscious efforts to preserve the sacred tie of marriage and allowed it to break only under dreadful circumstances.

He further states that the *Smriti* text writers accorded a higher status to men compared to women in the power to decide whether to remain in the marital bond or not. Below is a quote from his article about what the *Manusmriti* had to say.

“A childless wife should be divorced in the eighth year of marriage. A wife loosing children soon after birth should be abandoned in the tenth year after marriage. A wife who gives birth to only female children should be divorced in the eleventh year of marriage. A sharp tongued woman should be immediately abandoned. A wife addicted to intoxicants, pursuing deliberately a course of immoral conduct just for the sake of romance and the thrills concomitant with that sort of life, a wife who persistently does what is unpleasant and unfavorable to her husband, who suffers from diseases like leprosy, who ill-treats the household servants and who squanders away her husband’s hard earned wealth, should be divorced without delay” (Sarma, 1931, pp. 335).

Thus, women in the ancient times at any stage of their lives had to observe a set of prescribed duties and sacraments in their lives. In the ideology of most *Smriti* text writers the home and the family constituted the bedrock of society and woman was that figure on whom the stability and sanctity of the home and household life depended (Padia, 2009).

Further, the foundation of marriage is based on religion. All religions delineate a moral and social code of conduct. Every religious text provides for the method of a valid marriage, the duties of the spouses and the nature and circumstances that entitle a spouse to a divorce (Walikhanna & Rao, 2005). Yarhouse and Nowacki (2007) found that although meanings and importance associated with marriage vary across the major world religions (Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism) marriage in most religions is highly esteemed and valued whereas divorce is less appreciated and accorded only under special circumstances. This high view of marriage contributes to a low view of divorce and separation.

As the present study is focused on understanding the experiences of divorced and separated Hindu women, it will be useful to have a detailed understanding of marriage and divorce in Hinduism.

The Hindu Marriage and Divorce

A Hindu marriage is a sacrament. It is considered sacred because it is said to be complete only on the performance of the sacred ties accompanied by the sacred prescriptions. A Hindu male goes through the performance of several sacraments during the course of his life. Similarly, a marriage

is said to be essential for a woman because that is the only sacrament that can be performed for her. Because marriage is said to be sacred it is irrevocable and the parties to marriage cannot dissolve it at will (Kapadia, 1958). Further, Kapadia adds that the aims of a Hindu marriage are said to be *dharma* (duty), *praja* (progeny), and *rati* (pleasure). Therefore, when Hindu thinkers regarded *dharma* as the first and the highest aim of marriage and procreation as the second best, *dharma* dominated marriage. The demands of personal gratification and pleasures are subordinated and the individual is called upon to make the marriage a success by means of compromise and adjustment. Most rituals before, during and after marriage are centered on maintaining the marital ties for lifetime.

Among the Hindus, all over India, while the upper castes prohibit divorce and remarriage of divorced and widowed women the lower castes do not have these prohibitions. Unlike the upper caste a woman in the lower caste may just leave or run away from her husband's home as a result of some bitter quarrel. The formal divorce proceedings are likely to begin later, which are rather simple, mainly involving the return of bride price which is usually a small amount given by the girl's father to the husband's father (Shah, 1998).

The Status of Married versus Non Married Women in India

According to Dube (1997), marriage is a destiny for all women in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Paksitan. Similarly Karve (1993) states that in India, marriage is a sacrament and no normal man or woman must die without receiving this sacrament. Sen, Dhawan, Mukhopadhyay, Sengupta, and Dutta, (2009) in a study on 'renegotiating gender relations in marriage' highlight that most respondents across class chose to marry because there was no alternative to marriage. Additionally, the respondents of their study unanimously criticized women who did not want to marry and did not want to bear children. Women experience the compulsion to marry more forcefully than men not only from parents but from the rest of the society as well. The choice not to marry does not seem to exist. There is a popular notion that marriage is necessary to carry forward the family lineage. In Hindu patrilineal South Asia, marriage is looked upon as the necessary and only honorable means of managing female sexuality. Both the future roles of a woman—those of wife and mother are tied to this (Dube, 1997). Dube (2001) has elaborated how women are socialized towards getting into marriage as she refers to an Oriya proverb which equates a daughter with *ghee* (clarified butter): both are valuable but both begin to stink if not disposed of in time. She discusses how girls grow up with a temporary membership in their natal home and internalize the fact that their relationship with their natal home will break forever once

they are married. She further highlights the impossibility of young girls to escape marriage and the rituals and ceremonies which accord very high status and value to only married women and which the single, divorced or widowed women are not allowed to participate in. Motherhood according to her is the highest achievement in a woman's life. Marriage is the gateway to motherhood. Everything else is secondary to these two goals. Dube goes on to state that it takes years for a married woman to acquire any powers of decision making or any autonomy in her conjugal home and yet her identity as an outsider is not easily forgotten. Patel (1994) on similar lines reports from her research that the domination of filial over conjugal bond is so striking that a daughter in-law is considered an alien grafted to the conjugal household. The wife is considered dispensable while it is impossible to substitute one's parents. Motherhood integrates the daughter-in-law in the conjugal household.

Hence, a woman within the marriage and family is at the last position of authority and importance in comparison to other family members but definitely is at a much more valuable position than a single never married woman. Though not much has been researched and written on divorce and separation in India, the inferior and stigmatized status accorded to divorced, separated and single women is on the other side of high value and respect accorded to the married women. In other words, the social life of a divorced or separated women in India is even worse than a single never married women.

Hindu Women and the Laws Related to Marriage, Separation and Divorce

Although the constitution of India states that India is a secular country marriage and its dissolution in India is regulated by personal laws, which are supposed to be based on the religious beliefs and traditions. In every ethnic group in India, marriage and divorce continue to be regulated almost entirely by numerous customary rules (Shah, 1998). There exists a total of four personal laws in India namely the Hindu personal law, the Muslim personal law, the Christian personal law and the Parsi personal law. Two problems with the Indian legal system (related to marriage and divorce) which are worth taking note of at this juncture are:

1. There is no uniform civil code homogenizing the personal laws in India. However, the special marriage act 1954 was enacted by the legislature in 1954 and it provides a uniform law for any citizen of India and by all the nationals in foreign countries irrespective of the faith, which either party to the marriage may profess (Walikhanna & Rao, 2005).

2. The laws governing marriage and divorce are piece meal in nature which slots divorce, maintenance and custody as independent causes of action. As a result of this women have to face and initiate the legal process in multiple fora (Walikhanna & Rao, 2005).

For the purpose of this study the Hindu personal law will be discussed in detail with special focus on women's rights within it.

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955

The Hindu personal law has been codified in the form of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and it is applicable to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.

In the Hindu society, women suffered from various social disabilities, were victims of many evil practices and did not have the right to separation, annulment of marriage and divorce. Prior to the passing of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 women had fewer or no matrimonial relief within a bad marriage. Vadodara was the first city to bring in legislature permitting the dissolution of marriage in 1942 (Ross, 2015). The right to divorce was granted to women by the Hindu Marriage Act (Basu, 2001). Basu adds that the Hindu Marriage Act after its implementation, no longer regarded marriage as indissoluble and provided for four types of matrimonial reliefs:

- Restitution of conjugal rights
- Judicial separation
- Declaration of nullity and annulment and
- Divorce

She goes on to say that the implementation of this act was the result of exhaustive and lengthy efforts by social reformers and few broad minded lawmakers. The conditions required for divorce (stated in the law) are more stringent than those necessary for judicial separation. Keeping in view the moral ideals which the Hindu community has always aspired for, the aim of most law makers was to make divorce difficult and to frame the law accordingly so as to provide opportunities for mutual adjustment.

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, since its implementation has undergone a journey of four main theories. It will be interesting to have a glimpse of each theory and situate the status of women within each theory.

1. **The traditional fault theory.** As per this theory a person can be granted divorce if it is established that the spouse has committed adultery, or has treated the person cruelly or

deserted the spouse for more than two years. Divorce can only be sought by the hurt or aggrieved party who has been at the receiving end of the other party's offending conduct (Law Commission of India, 1978).

Women are socialized to be submissive and tolerate violence and abuse in the name of family honor. Therefore, although the theory in the act gives a provision for women to file for a divorce if she is a victim of cruelty, the question is does the society and socialization permit a woman to file for a divorce, if such circumstances arise?

2. **Theory of frustration.** Some circumstances may arrive in a marriage which may not be a result of the fault of any party but may render dissolution of the marriage necessary. Thus, under this theory divorce was granted on the grounds like; change of religion of the spouse, insanity, disease, renunciation and absence of the spouse for a long period of time (Law Commission of India, 1978).

This theory goes a step further and allows individuals within marriage to file for divorce if they are victims of frustration within marriage due to various factors. But, as far as women are concerned, socially they are expected to serve the sick husband and wait for him if he has absconded. Socially a woman is expected to change her last name as that of the husband and in some cases also the first name. At times a woman is also expected to change her religion to prove her love and loyalty towards her conjugal family.

3. **Theory of consent.** This theory was recognized with the amendment of the Hindu Marriage Act in the year 1976. This theory holds that parties to marriage are as free to dissolve a marriage as they are to enter it. If marriage is a contract based on free will of parties, the parties should have equal freedom to dissolve it. The theory believes that just as an individual may err in entering into some transaction, similarly he or she may err in entering a marriage (Law Commission of India, 1978).

According to, Walikhanna and Rao (2005) the provision of divorce by the theory of mutual consent reflects the social and legal acceptance of the fact that marriage is not eternal and individual happiness of the spouses outweighs the social significance of marriage. Unfortunately, given the unequal social status of women in our society only educated and independent women can take complete advantage of this provision.

4. **Theory of irretrievable breakdown.** This theory advocates that there is no use of keeping two persons tied by matrimonial relationship when they cannot live peacefully. It further

states that if the marriage ceases to exist in substance and in reality then there is no reason for denying divorce and the parties alone can decide whether their mutual relationship provides the fulfillment which they seek. (Law Commission of India, 2009). The amendment in the act as per this theory is yet to be passed by the Parliament of India.

In similar lines to the theory of mutual consent advantage of this theory can be availed only by few educated and independent women.

Thus since its formulation in 1955 the Hindu Marriage Act, has evolved to represent a progressive and satisfactory picture in line with the changing context, time and attitudes regarding marriage and divorce. However, it is noteworthy that the act still has a far way to go in matters like women's equal right in the marital property, ease in seeking maintenance for self and children after separation or divorce and the legal right to live in the parent's home after being divorced or separated.

Despite the groundbreaking amendments in the act, what drives most individuals towards seeking or not seeking a divorce is the powerful social system. Hence, socially speaking marriage continues to remain a sacrament. The bill supporting the theory of irretrievable breakdown as grounds for divorce is being opposed by many with an argument that it will ruin the institution of marriage (Sen, Dhawan, Mukhopadhyay, Sengupta, & Dutta, 2009).

The next section of the chapter discusses research studies done in India and other parts of the world especially relevant to the research questions of the study.

Determinants and Causes of Divorce and Separation

As noted earlier out of all the studies carried out on divorce and separation in India, most of them directly or indirectly focus on the causes. Due to high prevalence of divorce in the Western societies it is not surprising that a large number of studies in the West are also devoted to understanding the factors that determine and cause divorce and separation. Some major determinants and causes of divorce and separation are as below.

Changes in the family structure. White's (1990) review of researches conducted in the eighties suggests some major determinants. These were: the shift in divorce laws from fault to no-fault, increase in women's labor force participation, smaller families and declining social integration. It is worth considering that the Indian society in the recent times is also undergoing changes in similar spheres. The change in legal theories regarding granting of divorce has already

been discussed earlier. Besides that, Chakraborty (2002) notes that the Indian family is undergoing various changes because of modernization. According to her, although the joint family continues to be the norm the range of kinship within it has narrowed. Further, unlike the past, women from all the segments of the society more or less share the men's (traditionally assigned to) burden of providing for the family and many women also participate in the family decision making process. She further adds that these developments in the Indian family have created a sort of egalitarianism within the family in comparison to the traditional family authority structure which was characterized by hierarchy on the basis of gender and age.

Demographic and life course factors. White's review further finds some demographic and life course factors which increased the risk of divorce in the eighties. These were: unstable remarriages, negative influence of parental divorce on the marriage of their children, cohabitation of couples before marriage, early marriage, premarital child bearing, marital unhappiness and childlessness. Though not all but few of these trends are also witnessed in India. For example, as per the Supreme Court judgment of 2010, live-in relationships are now legally recognized in the country. Lawyers and counsellors report that an increasing number of urban couples in live-in relationships are opting to enter contractual agreements on issues ranging from sharing of wealth to custody and upbringing of children. Live-in relationships they say, that end on a sour note can be as painful as divorce and a special legal contract is one way to avoid those painful protracted fights (Birajdar, 2011). Likewise, Riessman (2000) finds in her study on childless women in South India that motherhood is a sacred duty of an Indian woman. The normative social biography for an Indian woman mandates child bearing after marriage and childlessness is associated with heavy stigma. Bearing and rearing children are central to woman's power and well-being and the child solidifies a wife's often fragile bond with a spouse in arranged marriages and improves her status in the joint family and larger community. Similarly, Patel (1994) notes that status graduation through motherhood is so marked that barrenness is a dreaded condition. If a woman does not produce children then her husband has the prerogative to divorce her or marry another woman. Further, Bose and South (2003) report that India is a country with marked preferences of sons over daughters. Their study finds that having at least one son is associated with statistically significant and substantively important reduction in the risk of marital disruption among Indian women. They believe that it is unlikely that the influence of children's sex composition on marital disruption in India will abate sharply in the near future even with increasing economic modernization and urbanization and improvement in women's educational status.

Changes in gender roles. Spitze and South (1985) observe in their study that time spent by the wife working outside the home impedes the completion of tasks necessary to the maintenance of the household and hence increases the probability of divorce. Lueptow, Guss, and Hyden (1989) state that nontraditional women are less happy and are more likely to be divorced or separated. Poortman (2005) observes that the way the couple organize their working lives may also affect the stability of their relationship. He found in his study that if the wife works for more hours than the husband in the first year of marriage divorce is more likely to occur. He goes on to say that couples spending less time together and those facing financial problems have a higher divorce risk. Similarly, Kalmijn and Poortman (2006) in their study on gendered nature of divorce and its determinants found that; 1. The more hours the wife works, the more likely it is that she will end the marriage. 2 Couples with financial difficulties are more likely to divorce than other couples. 3. Couples with children and especially young children are less likely to divorce than other couples. 4. The longer the couple is acquainted, before living together, the less likely the divorce will be.

Both Indian and Western studies have noted that women more often take the initiative to divorce (Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006; Singh, 2013; Vasudev & Doshi, 2005). Nevertheless, it is also important to acknowledge that an individual will choose to divorce only if the expected utility from future alternatives is greater than the utility from remaining married (Fan & Lui, 2001).

An important point argued throughout the review of causes and determinants, in both Indian and Western studies is that women's education and employment increases the risk of divorce and separation. Whether this factor is a determinant of divorce or separation or whether it gives women a respite from bad marriages is debatable. Sayer and Bianchi (2000) in their longitudinal study report that wives' economic independence is an indicator in exiting bad marriages and not exiting all marriages. However, this is not the only determinant of divorce and inflating it as a determinant without in-depth understanding distracts our attention from one of the main causes of divorce and separation, that is, cruelty towards women.

Violence against women. According to Pothan (1986), some of the major causes of divorce among the participants of her study were cruelty (by husband, in-laws or both) to women, interference by in-laws, extra-marital affairs of either spouse, stressful lifestyle, educational and economic independence of women, conservative attitudes of husband and in-laws towards the wife, intellectual, mental and sexual incompatibility of the spouses etc. A recent study by Singh (2013) found that 83 percent of women were separated due to cruelty or domestic violence in their

marital homes. The main reasons for cruelty/domestic violence were dowry, extra-marital affairs, and second marriage of the spouse and suspicious nature of the spouse. Though Pothan's study was carried out only with Hindu respondents and Singh's study was carried out across religions in India, a comparison of both studies reflect that nothing much has changed in many years and till date cruelty and domestic violence remain the major cause of divorce in India.

As Kakar and Kakar (2007) note, the persistence and importance of the identity of the Indian woman is much associated with the cultural ideal of *jodi* that is, a single two-person entity. This helps us comprehend why many women in spite of their economic independence, chose to suffer humiliation rather than leave an oppressive husband and why some women in times of extreme marital stress and burning rage towards the spouse, exercise the option of suicide rather than separation. It is the persistence of this ideal according to him that women from any class deny the persistence of marital problems and hold aloft a portrait of happy couple, because to confess an unhappy marriage is not only to reconcile one's self to the loss of a cherished personal goal but also betray the powerful cultural ideal. Kakar adds that an Indian woman whether traditional or employed views domestic and maternal obligations as central to her identity. Her first commitment towards her children and second commitment towards her husband do not seem to be influenced by her educational and occupational status.

Desertion. Finally, another grave problem related to causes of divorce in India is the desertion of the wife by the husband. A study of 621 deserted women in a village in India revealed that after deserting their wives husbands of 595 women had found new wives for themselves without divorcing their first wives (Shivurkar, 1991). Further, Asagi and Kazi (2013) studied 400 deserted women and their problems. Their study revealed that the status of deserted women in the society is poor, low and full of humiliations. Desertion is more prevalent in low socioeconomic classes but in the recent times, desertion of the wife by her Non Resident Indian (NRI) husband is emerging as a unique form of violence against women (Verma & Sharma, 2012). This reflects the poor status of women within the Indian families.

It is noteworthy that although many researches focus on causes of divorce there exists till date a normative legal and social support for intact marriages and patriarchal ideologies. The following section deals with how divorce and separation impacts the lives of women.

Consequences of Divorce and Separation on Self

Divorce and separation are associated with a variety of social, psychological, economical and many other consequences and therefore require an individual to cope and adjust with it. Amato (2000) notes that the literature review on divorce is challenging because of the long ongoing debate over the consequences of marital disruption in the West. On one side there are those who see divorce as an important contributor to many social problems. On the other side are those who see divorce as a largely benign force that provides adults with a second chance for happiness. He affirms that both these views represent one sided accentuations of reality, that is, the increase in marital instability has not brought society to the brink of chaos, but neither has it led to a golden age of freedom and self-actualization. More studies though in India and West have been conducted on negative consequences of divorce and separation rather than positive consequences. Some major consequences are discussed below.

Financial. One major consequence of divorce and separation was found to be financial instability. Albreth (1980) reported that most experiences of divorce are in favor of men and the trauma and stress of divorce are significantly greater for women than for men; especially in the aspects like property settlements, social participation and income. In line with Albreth, Sheets and Braver (1996) observe that although divorce obviously occurs to as many women as men, the experience is remarkably gender based. The most striking difference according to them between men and women concerns economics: Women (and children who live with them) appear to suffer a significant decline in standard of living after divorce.

Similar results have been derived in some Indian studies as well. Pothan (1986) in her study with 200 divorced individuals in the city of Indore, found that in the post-divorce period the incidence of employed women increased considerably. The reason according to her being; divorced women were left with no choice but to support themselves financially. A large number of women participants in Pothan's study supported themselves financially in the post-divorce period and some received support from parents and few received alimony from their ex-husbands. Those women who did not have any economic support led a miserable life. Singh's (2013) survey on divorced and separated women in India also reports that distressed financial situation of divorced women made them more vulnerable. Women were burdened with household tasks on returning to the maternal home and lacked financial security for themselves and their children. Singh's study further highlights that 58.5 % of the women surveyed were able to work outside their homes but their earnings were often too low for them to survive independently. On the

contrary 93.5% of divorced men were employed and were financially independent. Zargosky's (2005) longitudinal study reveals that men are better off financially both in marriage and in divorce. Divorce according to him can result into some lifestyle changes, wherein women who leave their jobs to take care of home and family on getting married and have to re-enter the labor force on being divorced.

Social. Mehta (1975) in her study with 50 divorced Hindu women living in Delhi, Mumbai and Udaipur found that it was difficult for the majority of the respondents to establish a satisfactory social life after their divorce. They were for most part confined to the home meeting only their relatives. Most respondents felt that they would be in a better position if they lived away from their community but at the same time found it emotionally more satisfying and felt greater security living with the known group. Although the stigma associated with divorce is gradually declining (Vasudev and Doshi, 2005) the divorced individuals themselves devalue others who are divorced and sustain the idea that to be married is to be “normal” (Gerstell, 1987). In India, a divorcee is treated with great social stigma and he/she finds it extremely difficult to face people as a consequence of which many individuals avoid social contact, especially during the period immediately after the divorce. The divorced women, though, face more social disapproval and blame than divorced men (Pothen, 1986). A divorce or separation though is a legal dissolution of the marital tie between two individuals, it isolates an individual from the society at large. Some other dimensions related to social consequences are highlighted in the section of social networks of divorced and separated individuals.

Psychological. A range of researches have been conducted on the relationship of happiness or well-being with marital status, but not many in India. Most studies find positive effects of marriage and negative aspects of divorce and separation, but the debate remains about whether men and women benefit and suffer equally (Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006). A study conducted by Women's Health Training Research and Advocacy Cell (WOHTRAC) in collaboration with Bapu Trust Pune in the year 2004 found that marriage and post marriage roles of women significantly contributed to their poor mental health. The study also highlighted that single status of women which resulted from various factors like divorce, separation, widowhood and singlehood determines the poor mental health of women. It was observed that women attached high value to their status in the family and they painfully realized that if they did not do what they were supposed to do, that is, playing the traditional role of a homemaker, then they were considered “good for nothing” for their family members (Khanna, Kapadia, & Joshi, 2008). This implies that women find their value and well-being in playing their traditional roles within their

families, a loss of which would contribute towards loss of self-worth and happiness. Marriage poses tremendous contradictions for women. Culturally marriage is conceptualized around romance and love, and support and interdependence, but socially marriage is the site where gendered roles and their consequences are played out and experienced (Ballantyne, 1999).

In contrast to the above studies, Gardner and Oswald (2006) argue that although divorce is like a leap in the dark; marital dissolution eventually produces a rise in psychological well-being and both men and women gain approximately equally. This finding is in congruence to the theory by Lucas et al. (2003) described in the theoretical framework which states that eventually people adapt positively even after major life events. Additionally Gardner and Oswald note that though divorce is traumatic in the short run, the divorced individuals eventually report reduced mental stress and reap noticeable psychological gains.

In Marks' (1996) study of marital status and psychological well-being it was revealed that overall single women in their midlife fare more poorly on the measures of psychological well-being than married women. However, in many cases no difference was found in the psychological well-being between married and singles. For example, both separated or divorced and never married men and women scored higher than their married peers on autonomy. Further, separated or divorced women indicated higher levels of personal growth. Similarly, Sharma (2011) who studied mental and emotional impact of divorce on women found that divorce does dampen women's self-esteem and a divorced woman undergoes very significant amount of strain. However, with the passage of time women experience better mental health. She also found that women in the age group of 20 -30 years experienced less emotional and mental strain compared to women in the age group of 30-40 years.

An examination of the literature on marital status and well-being highlights variations in possibilities and differential benefits and costs of marriage and divorce to men and women. Myers (2000, cited in Rotter, 2000) states that married people are reportedly happier and at less risk of depression than unmarried or divorced people, but even less happy than the latter are those in unhappy marriages. This may mean that sometimes separation or divorce may be the path in pursuit of happiness and psychological well-being.

Workload and physical health. Another consequence of divorce and separation is role accumulation and role strain. Gahler (2006) points out that considering the fact that men do a minority of the household tasks, it is not obvious that whether the burden of domestic work increases or decreases for women after divorce. However, divorced and separated women must

increase their labor supply to compensate for the economic loss following divorce. He further adds that women often receive custody of children and they lose a resource, that is, the partner who previously contributed to the household maintenance. This situation demands time, energy and concentration in addition to what is already being used for domestic tasks.

Dupre and Meadows (2007) indicate that women who marry before the age of 19 or experience one or more divorce are at an increased risk of developing serious health conditions. Nayak (2014) also reports from her study that even after ten years of their divorce women were in worse physical health. Not many studies were found which explored the above areas in detail.

Consequences on children. Kashyap (2003) believes that in a family where a couple is in marital conflict or is in the process of separation or divorce, the impact of marriage breakdown will be felt not only by the couple but by all the family members. She adds that children are most often the forgotten victims of the marriage breakdown. According to her, parents have been known to make children take sides in quarrels, overprotect or overindulge in them with a fear of losing their affection, make them victims of anger displacement and resentment, blame children or send them off to a boarding school or to live with a relative.

Western studies also reflect that children of divorced and separated parents exhibit higher levels of anxiety/depression and antisocial behaviors (Stroshchein, 2005), lower academic achievement (Potter, 2010) and are at a risk of divorce in their own relationships (Amato & Booth, 2001). Hetherington (1989) has observed that depending on the characteristics of the child, the available resources, subsequent life experiences, especially interpersonal relationships, children in the long run may be survivors, losers or winners from their parental divorce or remarriage. Though the study does not directly aim to study the effect of divorce on children but children are the most significant in the lives of divorced women and if children are in distress it will eventually cause distress to the divorced women who also become a single mothers after divorce or separation. Therefore, whether a divorced woman is a parent or not is a useful dimension to understand the consequences of divorce. Hughes (1989, cited in Gahler, 2006) believes that the effect of it is complex. The presence of children creates both burdens and ‘meaningfulness to one’s life’, whereas the absence of children relieves burdens but could cause frustration and a sense of longing.

Other dimensions related to single parenting and consequences of divorce on social networks have been discussed in detail in later sections of the chapter.

Coping and Adjusting with Divorce and Separation

As noted by Pestonjee (1999) most individuals under stressful situations will adopt some or the other strategy to deal with the situation. This section deals with studies on coping and adjusting with divorce and separation.

Wang and Amato (2000) carried out a 17 year old longitudinal study with 208 individuals to identify factors that facilitate divorce adjustment. Their study found that adjustment after divorce was positively associated with income, dating someone steadily, remarriage, having favorable attitudes towards marital dissolution prior to divorce and being the partner who initiated divorce. In addition, older individuals showed some evidence of poorer adjustment than did younger individuals. They further state that adjustment to divorce depends on three factors: the pile up of stressful events following divorce, people's resources for coping (including personal and social resources) and people's perceptions and definitions of divorce.

Indian studies do claim that more women initiate divorce than men (Singh, 2013; Vasudev and Doshi, 2005) but that may be more so because they initiate divorce in terms of claiming maintenance or custody of children and not actually the divorce itself. Also, doubt remains whether initiating the divorce may help women in adjusting better with their divorce given the status of women in the Indian society and the social stigma attached to divorce and separation.

Berman and Turk (1981) studied problems and coping strategies for divorce adaptation among 65 women and 25 men who were divorced or separated and had children. Some problems and concerns of divorced individuals which were highlighted in their study were: dynamics of communication with the former spouse and parent child interactions, interpersonal relationships with others, financial concerns, facing practical problems like cooking meals, feeling lonely etc. The strategies which the divorced individuals adopted to cope with their situation were: indulging in social activities like developing new friendships, dating and developing intimate sexual relationships, improving their qualifications by learning new courses and skills, visiting therapists and counselors, establishing a new life for themselves by becoming positive towards life, becoming independent, seeking an employment, keeping oneself busy with home and family activities like taking care of the home, doing more things with children and organizing the home. Participants also reported expression of feelings to adjust with their situation like blowing up, allowing themselves to get angry and cry. An Indian study by Faye et al. (2013) reports that divorced individuals who were unemployed adapted the emotion-based coping methods like; submission to fate and accepting life events as inevitable and not taking any initiative to change

the situation. Those individuals who had children and good parental support used the problem solving method for coping with their situation.

Social Support. An important dimension of adjusting with divorce and separation is social support provided to the individual. Kitson, Babri, Roach, and Placidi (1989) have revealed that the theme of most researches on social support after divorce and widowhood is that the individual's link to others is important for physical mental and emotional adjustment. Not many studies in India and otherwise have been conducted which directly connect social support and post-divorce adjustment.

Changes in the living arrangement is an important consequence post-divorce/separation. The living arrangement of divorced women is also one aspect which indirectly reports social approval and support of their condition and therefore it is discussed in this section. Shah (1998) notes that unlike in the West, divorced men and women usually return to their respective natal homes rather than set up individual households. Studies in India by Shrinivasan (1987) and Fonseca (1964) (cited in Desai, 1991) reflect poor support from family and friends to a divorced and separated women. Participants from Fonseca's study were from a residential institution in Mumbai called '*Bapnu Ghar*' (father's home). They were driven to these intuitions due to no social and economic support. Singh's (2013) study shows that most of the separated and divorced women in India are economically dependent and have no place to live. They live at the mercy of their husbands during the subsistence of marriage and thereafter with their parents, brothers, etc. She found that, 63.1% lived with their natal families and 31.4 % of the survey participants were living alone whereas 3.96% were living with others including major children.

Pothen's study reflected similar findings that parents and relatives were more supportive and sympathetic to the divorced men rather than divorced women. Many parents held the idea that women should have tried hard and better to adjust themselves in the marital home. Participants were victims of social disapproval and criticism especially women. Muzumdar (1996) states that family support has prevented as well as promoted, divorces/conjugal separations. She finds in her experience of counselling that family ties in India, joint or otherwise generally play an insignificant role in supporting the victim of marital conflicts especially if it is a female victim. She further reports that in dowry cases the harassed daughter who returns to her parental home is soon sent back to her husband/in-laws in order to safeguard the social status and prestige.

Remarriage. Some studies described earlier stated that remarriage and relationships after divorce aid in coping and adjusting with divorce. According to Goetting (1982) divorce carries

within it the seeds of remarriage. Shah (1998) has stated that chances of remarriage are greater in case of men. An analysis of matrimonial advertisements and marriage bureaus by Sen, Dhawan, Mukhopadhyay, Sengupta, and Dutta (2009), found divorce to be a greater stigma for women than for men especially in the case of remarriage. The analysis of the matrimonial advertisements by them found that the response for matrimonial advertisements for divorcee men were varied. Almost 60 % of the responses to advertisements of a divorcee man were from never married women, whereas only ten percent of the responses to advertisements of a divorcee woman were from never married men. The marriage bureaus too reported a demand for 'never married' girls as brides for divorcee grooms, which could not always be met. Further, good looking women were always in demand. Divorced women with children were lower in the wish list compared to divorced women without children who have a comparative advantage in the marriage market. Age was also an important factor for spouse selection especially for divorced men. They preferred never married younger women or a woman who 'looked young' even if she was a little older. For divorced women, the most important criteria for spouse selection were 'income' and 'stability' and looks of the groom were not taken into consideration.

Pothen's study also found that majority of men remarried after divorce and majority of women did not. She also found that remarriage occurred mostly within three years of marriage. Sweeney (2002) reported similar results in her study where she found that initiators of divorce tend to enter subsequent unions more quickly in comparison to non-initiators within the first three years of separation. She also found that opportunity for women to remarry declines with age and that older women may be more likely to delay ending an unsatisfying marriage until prospects for forming another relationship are good.

Pothen (1986) further found that out of those divorced women who remarried majority of them did not have children. Presence of children, advancing age, bitter experiences and frustrated feelings from previous marriage discouraged remarriages of women. Thus, if at all remarriage helps in coping with divorce and separation, women are at a disadvantageous position compared to men.

Regarding the caste differences pertaining to remarriage after divorce Dube (1997) states that although divorce and remarriage have been permitted among the lower castes and many middle castes, a clear distinction is made between the primary marriage and the secondary marriage. A secondary marriage is performed with a very simple ceremony or with no ceremony at all.

This trend of remarriage in India is different from the West where recent high divorce rates of divorce have increased the significance of remarriage in American family life with approximately one third of all Americans expected to marry, divorce and remarry (Cherlin & Frostenberg, 1994 cited in Sweeney, 2002).

Counseling. When discussing coping and adjusting with divorce and separation it is important to understand the nuances of counseling. Mane (1991) has reported that marriage and divorce counseling in the West is very common and readily sought for. She further adds that in India some appropriate ways of handling a marital relationship is through epic-poems, scriptures, advice and suggestions given by a wide range of persons including; family members, doctors, lawyers and priests. She adds to say that the focus of such counseling has always been on maintaining and strengthening the marital bond, through ensuring an equilibrium of the dominance-submission relationship, imaginative use of sexual relationship and compromise and adjustment as key words in marriage. According to, Muzumdar (1996) cultural taboos surrounded around exposing familial problems to outsiders inhibit people from discussing their family and marital conflicts with others. Further, paucity of marriage counselors compounds the problems, that is, even when there is openness to discuss family conflicts and tensions, trained counselors are not easily found. An India Today survey in 2015 claims that currently India has 3,500 practicing psychiatrists against the need of 11,500. Though there are now more counselors in metropolitan cities compared to non-metropolitan cities these are mostly part of family courts or Non-Government Organizations (Datta, 2015). Women may approach these counselors not to seek therapy or counseling for adjusting with their divorce but to seek help and advice related to legal matters (personal communication with a counselor in an NGO that works for women in Vadodara).

Social Networks of Divorced and Separated Individuals

Marriage is often regarded as the fundamental basis for support, creation of large personal network and integration in the society. This may have implications for a divorced and a separated individual, especially in cultures where marriage is highly valued. Since divorce is an event with large social consequences, the social network is very likely to change after divorce and separation. Following are the major domains of social network of divorced and separated individuals.

Family, friends and society. According to Plummer and Hattem (1986) a divorced individual remains a member of his/her family of origin and if there are children from the marriage a divorced person remains a member of his/her family of procreation, despite the change in his/her relationship with the children's other parent. Unlike this, in India a woman's status is as a guest

in her natal home because her real family is her husband's family (Kakar, 1981). Accordingly, a woman moves to her husband's house post marriage and is socialized to integrate herself completely in the family of procreation in spite of being considered an outsider for lifetime (Patel, 1994; Dube, 2001). Given this fact, there is little space for a woman to remain a member of her family of origin or even her conjugal family after her separation or divorce. Although Singh (2013) finds that most of the separated and divorced women in India are economically dependent and have no place to live and that they live at the mercy of their husbands during the subsistence of marriage and thereafter with their parents, brothers, etc., after being forced to leave their marital home, a deeper look at the quality of their relationships with the family members post-divorce/separation is required. Unfortunately, hardly any Indian study has explored this area.

Kalmijn and Groenou (2005) conducted a survey on social integration of divorced and married individuals. They considered four forms of social contacts (with friends, neighbors, family members and colleagues) and six forms of social participation (engaging in outdoor recreational activities, participating in social clubs and sports, doing voluntary work, attending church, entertainment and going to new age meetings) to find out how well is the person integrated in the society. They found that divorce does not have a clear general impact on social integration. Women were isolated after divorce in dimensions like recreational activities, attending social clubs and doing volunteer work. In dimensions like contact with friends and family, going to theatre, bar or restaurants and going to new age meetings, women felt liberated after divorce. It was further observed that divorce, especially for women, leads to decline in social integration because of the constraints faced in developing new lifestyles. For some women though, divorce contributed to a lifestyle in which spirituality and personal growth became more important.

Likewise, Terhell, Groenou, and Tilburg (2004) in their 12 year longitudinal research on network dynamics after divorce found that most individuals experienced network losses shortly after the divorce. In half of the cases these losses were not compensated for in the later years after divorce. However, for some individuals, divorce brought gains in the networks in the longer run. This reflects that a divorce or marital separation may not necessarily have a negative impact on one's social network especially in the long run.

The character and consequences of changes in the social network of men and women following a separation and divorce are different. For men, cultural traditions that prescribe the duties and obligations of husbands are thought to encourage the development of personal friendships while simultaneously encouraging independence, thus insulating men from the

possible benefits of social support following divorce. For women, the duties and obligations of wives as they are traditionally defined encourage women to accept responsibility for “kin keeping” before and after marriage while simultaneously discouraging bonds with friends. These circumstances are thought to isolate women from the unique benefits of personal friendship and ensure network that are dominated by kin, which are typically high in exchanges of both social support and interference (Milardo, 1987).

Regardless of the relationship status adult women in India, mostly do not socialize outside their homes. Kakar and Kakar (2007) note that the needs of friendship and intimacy of the traditional woman in the Indian family are fulfilled by the domestic, social and ritual activities. He adds that the modern middle-class woman’s bond with her own and her husband’s family are weaker, her friendships are intermittent and her social circles are narrower.

Divorced, widowed and single women are perceived as potential threats to existing marriages and thereby there is mutual exclusion from married networks. People who get divorced have fewer friends, become less popular socially and may be perceived as a social threat by married friends who worry about marital poaching or suspect their partner may be susceptible to infidelity (McDermott, Fowler, & Christakis, 2009).

In line with this, Sandfield (2006) states that divorced women are obliged to develop new networks and make friends with single again women. She goes on to say that divorced women feel dislocated from private social circles which mostly include married couples, feel uncomfortable and face difficulties in engaging in public social activities. Contrary to this Riessman (1990, cited in Sandfield, 2006) in her study observed that women, after divorce, continue to use the social network that they maintain throughout marriage.

Relationship with former spouse and children. According to a family lawyer from Mumbai, one of the unusual trends developing in India, is of former spouses continuing as friends. Difficult as it sounds, it is admirable that people can relate to their spouses on different levels. Many of these were couples who started out as good friends (Vasudev & Doshi, 2005). In Fischer, Graaf, and Kalmijn’s (2005) study of 1791 divorced individuals almost half of the respondents reported contacts with their former spouses even ten years after divorce. Contacts with former spouses differed in frequency and nature which further depended on variety of factors. Individuals reported antagonistic contacts with their former spouses which were a result of earlier conflicts between the spouses or were introduced by the divorced itself, like; custody of children, visiting arrangements and alimony payments. Some individuals had friendly contacts with their former

spouses which were a result of brief marriage without deep conflicts, joint children or because of simply learning to deal with the post-divorce relationship.

An important aspect of the social network of divorced and separated women is being single mothers to their children. Divorce brings about changes in the lives of mothers that can induce stress and diminish the capacity for warm, involved and consistent parenting (Cooper, McLanahan, Meadows, & Gunn, 2009). Mothers who were divorced during the first five years of their child's life experienced an increase in parenting stress. Some factors which added to the stress were less education, fewer socio-economic, social and health resources (Cooper, McLanahan, Meadows, & Gunn, 2009). Divorcees have low levels of economic well-being and one of their major problems in single parenting is financial problems (Amato & Partridge, 1987).

A key feature of single parenting during divorce is the child's contact with the non-resident father and the single mother's inhibition or facilitation of father involvement. Trinder (2008) finds that divorced and separated women restricted their children's contact with the father where there was mutual distrust with the father, whereas mothers facilitated children's contact with the father when father's elicited further support in child rearing and did not threaten the security of the maternal role. Both these actions were justified on child welfare grounds. Amato and Booth (1996) observed that divorce appeared to have a unique influence on lessening father's affection for their children but not necessarily lessening mother's affection. They believe this is largely due to the fact that children usually reside with their mother after divorce. The likelihood of children's overnight stays with the non-resident parent is lower when there is conflict and lack of trust between the parents (Cashmore, Parkinson, & Taylor, 2008).

Arditti (1999) studied family strengths and relationships between divorced mothers and their young adult children. Arditti observed that young adults appeared to have diverse relationships with their mothers, yet they were predominantly described as close and satisfying. Sometimes, mothers relied on children for emotional support or advice. Mother's leaning on children for emotional support contributed to a sense of equality, being needed, closeness, shared disclosures and friend status. Children valued these qualities in their relationship with their mothers.

Separation and Divorce in India in the Contemporary Times

It seems that in the past decade much has changed within the Indian society concerning marriage and divorce. The change in laws is a clear reflection of changes in social attitudes and experiences

related to marriage and divorce. Recently, in a rare order, the Gujarat High Court has waived off the six months ‘cool-off’ period for seeking divorce. An application forwarded by the wife who intended to marry someone living outside India was accepted by the judge (Ashok, 2015). This reflects changes in rigid attitudes towards divorce.

Marriage in India has moved from being a union between two families, to a situation where society looks upon marriage as the legal union between two consenting adults (Sen, Dhawan, Mukhopadhyay, Sengupta, & Dutta, 2009). Some other changes in the marriage patterns in urban India noted by Ross (2015) are increase in the age at marriage, freedom of choice in partner selection and an increase in extravagant wedding celebrations. Vasudev (2004) reports that matchmaking in India has shed its rigidity and has become practical, personal and adaptable.

Further, according to Nandy (2006) modern marriages are facing modern challenges like massive entry of women into new professions leading to demands of new kinds of adaptations and adjustments, especially in roles of spouses. Madan (2006) states that marriage is a story of unequal distribution of privileges and earlier most of the privileges were used up by the husband. With the rise of women, those rights have come to be contested. It is obvious that the beneficiaries of the old dispensation will not like it.

Moreover, it is also important to pay attention to what has not changed in the Indian society. Ross (2015) finds that the two things which have not changed till date are the system of dowry and the attitudes towards divorce. Ross believes that divorce has not gained general acceptance and that in the years to come many conflicts will center on the aspect of divorce. Likewise, a recent article in the Times of India by Bhadra (2015) reveals that dowry and the desire to have a male child remain the predominant reasons behind domestic violence against women in their marital homes and sending them back to their parental homes.

A study by India Today in 2005 reveals that an estimated 70 percent of divorces in India involve couples below 35 years of age driven apart by stressful lifestyle and intolerance. The underlying causes of divorce have been assuming a new dimension in comparison to the past (Vasudev & Doshi, 2005). India is also witnessing marriages ending over an SMS (Kabra, 2007) or on social networking sites like Facebook and over reasons like extramarital affairs of wives (Deshpande, 2014). Gujarat is slowly accepting the fact of divorce and separation which is portrayed in a popular daily soap *chuta cheda* (divorce) on the channel ETV Gujarati and an award winning play on single parenting “*Badhu Fine Che*” (All is Well).

Further, attitudes towards remarriage in India are slowly becoming liberal which is seen from the equal popularity of the website www.secondshaadi.com and a large number of columns for second marriages in matrimonial supplements of newspapers and caste based journals. A recent article in a newspaper mentioned about an organization in Gujarat that organizes marriage fairs for lonely and single individuals who want to remarry (Sharma, 2009). Another article mentions about how more and more children feel better if their divorced or widowed parent finds a companion (Devidayal & Choksi, 2011). This shows that although divorce is still a taboo and may bring dishonor to the individual and family, remarriage after divorce is welcomed and appreciated. In other words, the society is gradually accepting and acknowledging divorce and separation with an unsaid condition that one should ultimately show willingness to remarry.

Rationale of the Study

The review of literature suggests that although the effects of divorce and separation vary among individuals, cultures and societies, women experience more severe implications in comparison to men in majority of the domains.

Very few qualitative studies have been conducted on divorce and separation, and even fewer on women. Given the patriarchal context of the Indian society it is evident that a married woman is highly respected but a divorced and separated woman faces stigma and many other social and financial consequences which are much more negative in comparison to men. Such a situation contributes to difficulties in dealing with divorce and separation in the society. A variety of complexities make it challenging for separated and divorced women to remarry, especially if they are mothers. A general attitude exists in the Indian society that those women who are educated and employed are the reason behind the rising divorces in the Indian society. Since marriage is the norm and an established institution, the population of divorced and separated women (although small) is often neglected. If at all any researches are done these are remedial in nature. There are very few spaces or organizations in our society which may help women to cope with and adjust to divorce and separation. Overall there is an absence of women's voices expressing their outlook, feelings, predicaments and struggles during this experience.

This study expects to address these gaps and bring to light the experiences of women to present the insiders' perspective on this vital life experience.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

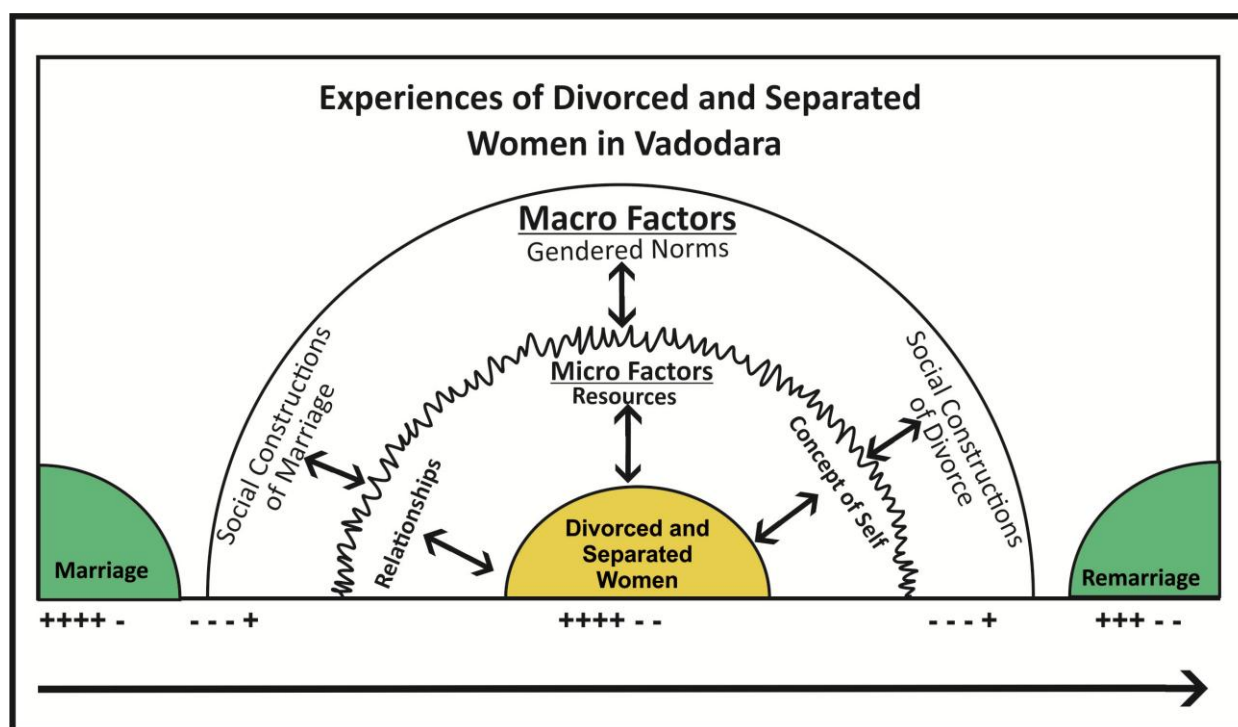


Figure1. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the study is described in the form of the figure 1 above. It explains that if we look at the experiences of divorced and separated women in Vadodara the following is what we can construe. The divorced and separated woman in the center of a social context and is influenced by several macro and micro factors. However, the boundary between macro and micro factors is fluid and both of these penetrate each other whilst further influencing the experiences of divorced and separated women. The macro factors include; social constructions of marriage, gendered norms and the social constructions of divorce. Within her immediate setting the woman is influenced by micro factors which include her significant relationships, resources available to her and her concept of self. Further, the plus and minus signs represent the costs and gains calculated by divorced and separated woman while she is single never married, divorced and separated and thinking about remarriage.

Ultimately, amidst all the experiences which bring major changes in their lives, impact their relationships, help them adapt to their situations, give rise to different needs and influence their well-being, women finally choose to comply with the macro factors which turn out to appear more powerful than the micro factors.

This research was guided by the following questions:

Broad Question

What are the experiences of women who are divorced or separated?

Specific Questions

1. How do women's lives change after divorce and separation?
2. How do women adjust and cope with the divorce and separation in their lives over time?
3. What are the needs of divorced and separated women?
4. What are the dynamics of the network of significant relationships in the lives of women and what impact do these have on women?
5. What is the perception of divorced and separated women regarding their happiness and success in life?

Below are the objectives of the study:

Research Objectives

1. Explore the experiences of women in the process of divorce and separation and understand how their life changes thereafter.
2. Identify factors, patterns and dynamics associated with adjustment strategies and coping with respect to time after divorce and separation.
3. Identify the physical, social and emotional needs of divorced and separated women.
4. Know the dynamics of social network, vis-à-vis immediate family members, children, extended relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and communication with ex-spouse.
5. Understand the perceptions of divorced and separated women, related to their happiness and success in life.