Abstract

Today families are facing unprecedented and varied challenges like urbanization, drug/alcohol abuse, breaking down of marriages, changing economic and social condition etc. Lack of family unity due to divergent objectives, ambitions, thoughts and ideas; decrease in the family control due to competition; lack of control and unity; conflicts between parents and children due to undue expectation of authority and freedom, and all such precarious areas have become a challenge of modern family. In addition, laxity in marital bonds, availability of alternative satisfaction, misuse of economic freedom etc. yielded up the cause of divorce.

With the changing concepts, values, added stress and challenging roles of Indian women, marriage in itself has become more of a challenge than ever. Marriage in Indian society is more a religious institution than a legal one. It is understood as a relatively permanent union of two peoples implying a number of interlocking status and roles. Muslim marriage is a social contract. Family is never merely a personal matter, because society is so much affected by the quality of its families.

We must acknowledge the fact that today large number of marriages fail some form an uneasy compromise and others in divorce or separation. The stability of marriage depends on many factors like adjustment, communication, expectation etc. There are many things that affect the future of any marriage.

The personality traits of two individuals, their family backgrounds, and the attitudes which they hold on a number of subjects are factors that affect the quality of marriage. Adjustment in marriage is a significant phenomenon. The relationship of man with a woman in marriage is perhaps the highest form of relationship because it involves physical, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of life. Marital adjustment is an adjustment of two personalities, who had
different socio-cultural backgrounds. Marital adjustment is complex than it appears. Two persons entering marriage must adjust to each other’s sensory, motor, emotional and intellectual capacities. On the personality level they must adjust together to their total environment, including such matters as a new household, situations, children, provision and preparation of food, relatives, friend’s relation and work (Fonseca, 1996). The success of marital life depends upon the success in marital adjustment by the husband and wife. Marital maladjustment results in conflicts and tensions and many a time in divorce.

In Malappuram, frequent divorces occur among Muslim community, because of trivial issues. The absolute right of a Muslim man to divorce his wife by uttering the word “talaq” is discrimination to the woman. Even though the world has entered a new millennium, from the dawn of civilization till date, the woman of patriarchal society of India continues to be oppressed and ill-treated. She is dependent, weak, exploited and faces gender discrimination in every sphere of life. She becomes very often a victim of cruelty of her own savior and confined within the four walls of her house. Divorce results in acute emotional trauma. In this aspect, women suffer much more than men. The home is the most significant part of an average Indian women’s life. Since divorce shatters her dreams, she became desperate. In the case of divorced women, usually parents, relatives and members of the community may be highly critical. Whereas, in the case of men; they spend their time in day to day work, in the company of their friends or in the pursuit of hobbies. As a result, less emotional trauma is felt by them.

The present study on The Psychological Well Being and Quality of Life of Divorced Muslim Women undertaken in Malappuram district of Kerala, explored various aspects like: socio-economic background of Muslim women under study, the causative factors leading to divorce, problems associated with the process of divorce, consequences of divorce, problems
associated with remarriage and maintenance, attitude of these women towards divorce, level of psychological well being and quality of life of divorced Muslim women and suggestions for improving conditions of divorced Muslim women. The study has also looked into the association between selected socio-demographic factors and variables viz. attitude towards divorce, psychological well being and quality of life of the respondents. Regarding the sample size, the researcher interviewed 316 divorced women from the family court of Malappuram. Among these 316 respondents, two cases were studied in-depth using case study techniques. Key personnel numbering 15 were interviewed and their views were also collected.

The study proved the following hypothesis viz. The higher the Psychological Well being the higher will be the Quality of Life for Divorced Muslim Women, The higher the Psychological Well being the higher will be the Positive Attitude towards Divorce, The higher the Positive Attitude towards Divorce the higher will be the Quality of Life and the selected Socio-Demographic variables have significant relationship with subject variables viz. (1) Attitude to Divorce (2) General Psychological Well being and (3) Quality of Life for Divorced Muslim Women.

As the outcome of the study there were a few suggestions to reduce the incidence of divorce and rehabilitation steps to minimize the problems of divorced Muslim women. The major ones being; Proper family life education will enrich the couples with proper strategies of adjustment, through which they can reduce the incidence of divorce. Family therapy should be popularized in the society, in order to minimize broken relationships. Counselling services should be popularized for the needy divorced women and their children. Adequate financial assistance and scientific advice for self employment schemes can be instrumental in ameliorating the problems of divorced Muslim women to an extent.