

Addis Ababa University
College of Education and Behavioral Studies
School of Psychology

**The Causes and Psychosocial Impacts of Divorce on Women: The
Case of Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA)
Supported Women**

by

Wubedel Dereje

November 13, 2014

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**A thesis submitted to the School of Psychology in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
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Ethiopia

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This is to certify that this thesis is prepared by Wubedel Dereje entitled “The Causes and Psychosocial Impacts of Divorce on Women: The Case of Ethiopian Women Lawyers’ Association (EWLA) Supported Women” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Developmental Psychology. It complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with regards to originality and quality.

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Abbreviations

CSA	Central Statistics Agency
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
PHC	Population and Housing Census

Abstract

There is an increasing interest in revealing the causes as well as the psychological and social effects of marital disintegration on women who have undergone through the divorce process. Thus, the study attempts to identify the causes & the psychosocial impacts of divorce on women during and after marital dissolution. The study focuses particularly on women who have approached the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA) in Addis Ababa. Currently, EWLA is providing free legal aid service for approximately 150 women who seek assistance as a result of marriage related problems. The present study explores the experiences of divorced women from their own point of view using qualitative in-depth interview method with the combination of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as well as key informant interviews. The research used 16 divorced women and 2 key informants from the EWLA as data sources and they were selected using purposive sampling technique. The study finds that the causes of divorce are multidimensional such as financial irresponsibility, infidelity and domestic violence because of alcohol addiction. In consequence, some of the women face traumatic and stressful life events psychologically, socially and economically that has disrupted their overall well-being. It is also found that in addition the negative effects, divorce also has immense beneficial factors on women who have undergone through the divorce process that allows them to experience the various positive effects. Apart from this, the women have been able to use different strategies in their post divorce lives to cope with divorce related problems. The combined effects of divorce's various positive impacts and the appropriate coping mechanisms used by the women have made the women's post divorce adjustment possible and significant. The psychosocial issues explored in relation to the lives of divorced women reveal that for some women divorce has negative results while for the majority its effect is advantageous in every aspect. Conversely, the post divorce consequences are severe for most children of divorced women as they have been suffering from the various divorce related problems. These children feel that their parents abandon them and dislike them which results in emotional confusion and sadness that has long-term negative impact in their overall well-being. Hence, the study has recommended that divorce is the best alternative for those women who are in a violent and disagreeing marital relationship. In addition, to keep the well-being of children, regular visitation schedules should be arranged for fathers in order to involve them in their children's lives.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Most people enter into marriage with the intention of living together for the rest of their lives. However, divorce is a rapidly common social phenomenon that is spreading at an alarming rate. The rates of divorce have increased significantly not only in the developed but in the developing nations as well (Sharma, 2011). However, the rate of divorce varies across culture and over time. As the study conducted by Mundu and Unisa (n.d) shows there are various factors associated with marital dissolution and these are wide-ranging among the different cultures and geographical locations.

According to Pankhrust (as cited in Serkalem, 2006), in Ethiopia women initiate divorce when they experience infidelity, extravagance, authority over their activities, physical abuse, age gap etc in their marriage (Serkalem, 2006). In a similar situation, violence, cruelty, addiction to drugs and alcohol, lack of role models are also mentioned as the major causes of divorce (Trivedi, Sareen, &Dhyani, 2009).

Divorce has an extensive and long lasting effect on the lives of both men and women. It is the cause of major life changesthat can cause great amount of stress for individuals involved (Mulroy, Sabaelli, Malley& Waldron, 1995).Individuals who pass through the process of marital dissolution face challenging situations psychologically that disrupt their overall well-being.Various research findings have demonstrated that divorced people experience poor psychological well-being, low self-esteem, low-level of happiness, psychological distress and

poor physical health as compared to married people. The negative effect of divorce goes beyond those who are involved in the process. The immediate sufferers of the marital dissolution who share the potential consequences are children and other relatives of the couples (Bereket, 2012). In addition, divorce has various negative effects on the society as a whole. Its impacts are felt psychologically, physically, socially and economically (Murray, 2012).

Similarly, the year following the marital separation is a time of rapid and frequently radical shift in the usual patterns of life. Divorce disrupts the family structure creating much stress on the family (Mulroy et al., 1995). Divorce, therefore, plays extensive role in disrupting the parenting role that was practiced in the family before and may lead to further shifts in self-perception and emotional struggle. It causes various kinds of stress on women which makes them suffer from different psychological issues such as depression, sleeplessness, heart disease and loss of appetite and the like.

Single motherhood as a result of marital separation creates a complex situation since women have to deal with different phenomenon like the legal process to acquire custody of children and other legal issues and rearing children as a single parent (Khan, 2013). Moreover, life in a single parent household can be quite traumatic for the women and they may feel overwhelmed by the various responsibilities they need to take like maintaining a job to support the family and handling household tasks without getting support from the spouse (Boon, 2005).

Apart from the negative impacts, divorce may also have various advantages to the overall well-being of those who undergo through the process. Even though the ending of marriage has stressful and negative consequences, divorce also has beneficial effects by ending and resolving acute conflict situations and other problems. In some cases, the ending of problematic

relationships leads to an improvement in individuals' well-being by allowing them exercise their autonomy and by gaining relief. In addition, studies have shown that most women in the aftermath of marital disruption achieve enhanced personal growth that leads to an important psychological and social functioning (Boon, 2005).

Having the above mentioned facts as a background, this research is aimed to see the psychosocial impact of divorce on women. It will, therefore, focus on divorced women by limiting the study to the beneficiaries of Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA); EWLA a non-governmental charity organization that works on promoting the economic, political, social and legal rights of women.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Even though various research studies are available in relation to divorce, much study has not been conducted on the causes and the psychosocial impacts of divorce on women in Ethiopia.

According to Serkalem(2006), divorce negatively affects couples, their children and those close to them psychologically, socially and economically. She indicated that no organization is found that provides services for people at the time of pre-marriage, divorce and re-marriage except for few religious institutions. Therefore, conducting a study on the causes and the psychosocial well-being of divorced women may help us to further understand the negative impacts of divorce. In addition, various researches undertaken previously have explored the downsides of divorce on marriage partners and their children not giving so much emphasis on the positive aspects of divorce. Hence, this particular research will explore if there are any positive results seen in the lives of women following divorce.

The study, therefore, seeks to answer to the following research questions:

1. What are the reasons leading to divorce?
2. What are the negative psychological impacts of divorce on women?
3. What are the negative impacts of divorce on the social relations of women?
4. What are the positive impacts of divorce on women?
5. What are the impacts of divorce on children's well-being from mothers' perspective?

1.3. Objective of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of the study is to find out the psychosocial impacts of divorce on divorced women supported at the EWLA. In line with this general theme, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the factors that cause marital dissolution;
2. To investigate the negative psychological impacts of divorce on women.
3. To examine the negative effects of divorce on the social relations of divorced women.
4. To explore the opportunities divorced women have made use of as a result of divorce.
5. To investigate the impact of divorce on children's well-being from mothers perspectives.

1.4. Significance of the Study

It is believed that the study will be informative on the major factors that lead to marital disintegration. It will also make readers aware of not only the negative but also the positive

impacts of divorce on women's well-being. This research will in addition serve as a benchmark for further studies on the causes and the psychosocial impacts of divorce on men.

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

To conduct this study, the researcher has selected the EWLA taking into consideration the availability of divorced women who are looking for free legal advice and counseling and/or other related issues under one roof.

1.6. Operational Definition of Terms

Divorce: the end of an official marriage of married couples by court or other competent body.

Psychosocial dysfunction: refers to a disturbance in the social and psychological behavior of individuals. Persons suffering from this condition usually have difficulty functioning normally in social situations and tend to withdraw.

Psychosocial condition: refers to the psychological and social conditions of women in their post-divorce life.

Marital Dissolution: technical legal term for divorce.

Psychological problem: refers to individuals' problems in living their lives in a full and deeply satisfying manner. It is the combination of feeling bad and failure to function effectively.

Social Isolation: the absence of social interaction, contacts and relationships with friends, neighbours on an individual level and with society at large.

Depression: disturbance in mood, thought and body characterized by varying degrees of sadness, disappointment, loneliness, hopelessness, guilt and self-doubt.

Divorced Women: women who are separated from their former husbands and no longer legally married to them.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

According to Burton (as cited in Mundu and Unisa, n.d), in every society, marriage is a vital social event as individuals get involved in each others' lives and start their marital union based upon mutual and continued choice and affection. Married life gives couples emotional support and care in their lives by protecting their mental health and enables them to fulfill multiple social roles. Therefore, marriage guarantees emotional health for couples and it allows them to demonstrate higher level of psychological as well as physical well-being (Mundu&Unisa, n.d). Many aspire to be married to benefit from the positive ends of marriage and according to Daniel (as cited in Bereket, 2012), in the Ethiopian society, women and to some extent men are raised to believe that one's major life goal is to get married (Bereket, 2012).

Divorce is another incident in people's lives and is a common phenomenon that occurs in many parts of the world. It is the dissolution of the socially and legally recognized marital relationship that changes the responsibilities and obligations of the married couples. It is one of the most traumatic life events individuals face that is highly associated with an increase in emotional instability (Tilson& Larson, 2000). Divorce is a major life shift that has far-reaching social, pathological, legal, economic and personal consequences. In general terms, divorce is considered as the ending of a marriage (Sharma, 2011).

Marital dissolution has become a major issue in our society and the rates have risen during the past few decades. Like various developed nations, in the Ethiopian society, divorce is

unavoidable reality for many families(Family Code Proclamation, 2000).There are various interconnecting factors that contribute for the rapid increasein divorce rate worldwide which include personal, social, economic andcultural factorsin general.

Divorce is one of the most chaotic and shocking experiences that can occur in the life of any person (Du Toit& Van Staden, 2005). Various research findings indicate that those who pass through the process of divorce tend to show high levels of depressive feelings and traumatic experiences over time (Parvez, 2011). Similarly, as Palmer and Buit (2012) put it, marital dissolution causes severeand stressful life events for those who are involved as it leads to difficult and challenging situations that negatively affect the lives of people. It requires peoples' energy for personal reformation as well as adjustment to new way of life (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007). Moreover, empirical studies have revealed that divorce is linked with a number of social problems that havestriking effects on the social life of individuals (Parvez, 2011). In addition, the disruption of family has harmful impacts on the system by weakening the bond between individuals and the stability of the society. Therefore, the effect of divorce directly and indirectly affects the environment which covers a wider area (Trivedi et al., 2009).Other than the psychological and social drawbacks, divorce has amplified financial impacts on women particularly if the women are dependent on their spouses (Medina, 2010).Divorcealso causes a series of shifts in family roles and relationships and living arrangements, all with devastating impact onadjustment(Tilson& Larson, 2000).

Divorce has various stages and is regarded as a process rather than a single life situation. According to a study conducted by Kelly and Emery (as cited in Hickman, 2007), marital disintegration is not a single happening but extends over time which involves varied incidents

(Hickman, 2007). It has an intertwined effect not only on the adults who make the choice but also on their children. Its impact is generally felt psychologically, socially, emotionally, economically and physically (Du Toit & Van Staden, 2005).

In contrast, research findings have revealed that divorce also provides opportunities for those who undergo through the process. It helps women to liberate themselves from the abuses they face while married and allow them to experience the relief, confidence, happiness, personal growth as well as to free themselves from the financial hardships. This has enabled them greatly to improve their lives and to adjust to their post divorce lives (Schneller, 2001). Hence, although divorce is a traumatic incident for some people and its impacts create challenging situations, it is a way out for others from horrible life circumstances (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007).

Overall, divorce is one of the most devastating life situations that bring about massive life change to individuals that causes hardships and suffering regardless of who they are or what circumstances they are in. Hence, for some divorced women life turns out to be more difficult and the situation gets worse particularly if they have to support their families. Therefore, divorce disrupts the lives of people psychologically, socially, emotionally and economically. On the other hand, even if divorce is a family crisis as well as a personal one, it also results in various beneficial factors; by terminating stressful and traumatic life situations and other related problems it successfully brings opportunities for development (Tilson & Larson, 2000).

2.2. Patterns of Divorce

The figures of divorce are dissimilar throughout the world when looking at the variation of divorce rate from diverse angles. For instance, according to the literatures that are found for this

study, Olson and DeFrain (as cited in Abera, 2008) show that in the United States, the statistical figure to divorce rate was roughly 1 million divorces for the year 1996 from the low socio-economic group (Abera, 2008). According to O'Connell Corcoran (as cited in Murray, 2012), the divorce rate in the United States is the highest in the world as 50% of marriages end in divorce and 67% of all second marriages end in divorce (Murray, 2012). Similarly, most of the European countries are experiencing 2-5 times higher divorce rates, than in the 1960s. The study by Sobotka and Toulemon (as cited in Mundu&Unisa, n.d) indicate that a worldwide flow of rising divorce rates has been seen in Europe since the 1970s as a result of urbanization and industrialization that has changed the marriage pattern in European countries (Mundu&Unisa, n.d). In addition, in one of the Asian countries, in Taiwan, the risk of divorce to married couples has been escalating as a result of industrialization, changes in social norm and women's economic independence and in 15 years time, from the year 1981 to 1996, the crude divorce rate in the country showed a drastic increase to 89% (Hsu, 1998). Similarly, in the Middle Eastern countries, for instance, in the Iranian society, there are an increasing number of separated couples and the divorce rate has increased to 50% (Rahimi, Shakarbigi and Naderi, 2012). Likewise, from the continent of Africa, in South Africa for example, the divorce rate is increasing swiftly within the first 5-9 years of marriage which is mostly initiated by women. Also, recently Nigeria witnessed the highest divorce as a result of urbanization and industrialization (Adegoke, 2010).

According to Tilson and Larson (as cited in Abera, 2008), in Ethiopia 45% of married people end their first marriages within 30 years as a result of divorce. Furthermore, 28% of first marriages end in divorce within the first 5 years and 34% within 10 years and 40% within 20 years of marriage (Abera, 2008). Likewise, according to the Population and Housing Census

(PHC) of Ethiopia (2007), of the total married women living in Ethiopia, 6.7% of them were divorced while divorced women who were living in the city of Addis Ababa constituted 10% of the total married women.

Similarly, according to the most recent study by the Addis Ababa City Government of Vital Events and Resident Services, for the year 2012/2013, of the total 33,191 married couples in the city of Addis Ababa, divorced people constitute 3,473. This figure only includes those individuals who undergo the proper marriage procedures at the City Government and does not embrace traditional and religious marriage procedures as well as cohabitation. In addition, according to the Officials at the City Government, the stated figure is not accurate as the office only depends on organizing the information in relation to the divorce figure from those who approach the office to collect their divorce certificates. On the other hand, those who did not approach the City Government to collect their divorce certificate are not included in the stated figure that makes the divorce figure an underestimation.

Moreover, in the Ethiopian society, high divorce rate was examined in relation to ethnic and religious background. The findings of Pankhurst (1992a), (1992b), Beckstrom (1969), and CSA (1993) (as cited in Tilson & Larsen, 2000) showed that there was an alarming rate of divorce as in the case of the Amhara than the Oromo and more common among the followers of the Orthodox Christianity than the Muslims (Tilson & Larsen, 2000).

2.3. Divorce as a Process

Amato and Cherlin (as cited in Ängarne-Lindberg, 2010) indicate that divorce is a turning point in the life of each individual involved which is not considered as a single life event but a series

of transitions (Ängarne-Lindberg, 2010). The process of divorce is a complex and often painful event that needs great adjustment in various aspects of one's life. It is a long, difficult and sometimes twisty journey toward a new and a very different life (Boon, 2005). The process of divorce starts with the physical separation prior to divorce and extends well after the legal case is completed. The legal perspective of divorce shows that it is the termination of marital relationship, whereas from the psychological point of view, it is considered as a timely process. In most cases, individuals pass through persistent periods of stress, grief and family disagreement following the actual decision for divorce (Ängarne-Lindberg, 2010).

This divorce process, hence, sets down a series of other events and the result will vary in severity and interval depending on the presence of various factors (Gaffal, 2010). Therefore, divorce is regarded as a process rather than an isolated life event and various stages have been identified within that process. It appears that not all the phases of the divorce process are equally stressful (Rawlins, 2012).

Rawlins (2012) explained that various theorists have defined the varied emotional process of divorce. In studying divorce, the various theories of the divorce process is noted which include the three stages of re-adaptation to the loss of a spouse conducted by Waller (1951), the six divorce stages by Bohannon (1970), the seven stages of emotional divorce by Kessler (1975), the five stages of emotional crisis by Wiseman (1975), the five stages of the theory of grief by Froiland and Hozman (1977), the three-stage model by Weiss (1975), and the four-stage psychosocial model of divorce by Guttman (1993). Though the stages of the divorce process vary among each theorist, at some point they concur that individuals pass through the divorce experience that occurs in a variety of orders and speeds with the chance of the stages to overlap. However, individuals' experience is completely different from one another.

Therefore, in order to have a clear understanding of the divorce process, various theorists' divorce process (old and recent) is summarized as follows:

Table 1: Comparison of Divorce Process Models

* Adapted from Comparison of Divorce Process Models (Table 1), Salts (as cited in Rawlins, 2012)

Waller (1951)	Bohannan (1970)	Kessler (1975)	Wiseman (1975)	Froiland and Hozman (1977)	Weiss (1975)	Guttman (1993)
<p>Stage 1: Alienation</p> <p>Stage 2: Removal of Old Love</p> <p>Stage 3: Assimilation</p>	<p>Station 1: Emotional Divorce</p> <p>Station 2: Legal Divorce</p> <p>Station 3: Economic Divorce</p> <p>Station 4: Co-Parental Divorce</p> <p>Station 5: Community Divorce</p> <p>Station 6: Psychic Divorce</p>	<p>Stage 1: Disillusionment</p> <p>Stage 2: Erosion</p> <p>Stage 3: Detachment</p> <p>Stage 4: Physical Separation</p> <p>Stage 5: Mourning</p> <p>Stage 6: Second Adolescence</p> <p>Stage 7: Hard Work</p>	<p>Stage 1: Denial</p> <p>Stage 2: Loss and Depression</p> <p>Stage 3: Anger and Ambivalence</p> <p>Stage 4: Reorientation of Life Style and Identity</p> <p>Stage 5: Acceptance and New Level of Functioning</p>	<p>Phase 1: Denial</p> <p>Phase 2: Anger</p> <p>Phase 3: Bargaining</p> <p>Phase 4: Depression</p> <p>Phase 5: Acceptance</p>	<p>Phase 1: Erosion of love and persistence of attachment</p> <p>Phase 2: Separation</p> <p>Phase 3: Starting Over</p>	<p>Crisis</p> <p>Stage 1: Deciding</p> <p>Stage 2: Separating</p> <p>Stage 3: Struggling</p> <p>Stage 4: Adjustment and Winning</p>

2.4. Contributory factors to Divorce

In the contemporary world, the rate of divorce has escalated severely as a result of different factors. There are multiple interconnecting factors that have contributed for the rapid increase of divorce rate in the world. The psychological, economical and social factors are considered as major contributors for the rapid growth in divorce rate throughout the world (Medina, 2010). Below, the various factors that are responsible for the increasing rates of divorce in the world are highlighted and will be discussed.

Cultural Factors

Recently in some societies, divorce has lost its stigma and become a more socially acceptable phenomenon. This has made people to be less attached to the institution of marriage and consequently they consider divorce as an alternative to escape from marital abuses. Those people from individualistic society consider marital union as valuable as long as it satisfies their needs for personal growth. If, however, the marital relationship is unable to meet their personal needs and interests, they feel to end the union and find new relationships through marital break-up. In addition, couples lose interest in putting up with marriage challenges and carrying the sacrifices it may require. Therefore, women mostly initiate marital dissolution to free themselves of dissatisfying and frustrating marital union (Ambert, 2002).

Personal Factors

Various personal reasons contribute to the disintegration of marital relationships which include domestic violence, alcoholism, fighting and adultery and so forth that are frequently mentioned by couples as the most significant cause of marital breakup (Ambert, 2009).

Craig (as cited in Willemse, 2011) revealed that most marital relationships dissolve as a result of the failure to detect the early warning signs that signals the marriage is at the verge of collapse. He indicates that there are a number of personal factors that lead to the disintegration of marital union in many families which will be explored in detail as follows:

Low Commitment

In some cases, couples lack the obligation to stay married for a lifetime and when they start to lose interest and commitment in the union, the relationship will be affected that leads to the dissolution of the marriage without any sensible reason (Willemse, 2011).

Idealistic Hope

When couples set unattainable standards within their marriage and when they are unable to meet the standard, persistent misunderstanding arise between them and hence marital breakup is considered as an only option (Willemse, 2011).

Boredom of Relationship

Marital relationships disrupt when the parties involved start to take their mate for granted. In such cases, one of the partners starts to neglect the other instead of showing affection. At this stage, the other partner refuses to handle these attitudes and moves away from the marital bond which leads to the breakup (Willemse, 2011).

Interpersonal Difficulty

Following marriage, some individuals expect to have a successful relationship hastily or by chance. Such people expect too much out of the marriage without trying to sustain the relationship by showing an effort and by developing personal skills that are useful for the marital growth. These people mostly disregard that their marriage depends on their efforts to effectively communicate with each other and to manage their lives without any problem. They also do not pay attention that their marriage needs their effort to work out both minor and major problems. In such instances, they fail to get what they expect from their marriage that takes the relationship's energy, happiness and wealth. Hence, failure to strengthen the marital bond will lead to marital disintegration (Willemse, 2011).

Infidelity

Most individuals disrupt their marital union when they find out the extra marital affairs of their partner. Usually marital relationships are affected by infidelity as a result of various factors such as attraction, excitement, curiosity, boosting up self-esteem, feeling neglected, boredom, a desire to find relief from a painful relationship, and so forth (Willemse, 2011).

Situational Crisis

Marital union is at risk of disintegration as a result of situational or developmental crisis namely death, sickness, accidents, hopelessness, unemployment or impoverishment. Such problems have the potential to weaken marital bond and leads to marital dissolution (Willemse, 2011).

Relationship Gap

A marital bond is weakened when there appears a change in the balance of power and decision making as a consequence of the level of education and personal difference in the earning capacity. These conditions force marital partners to alter their roles and responsibilities that intensify the marital breakup between married couples (Willemse, 2011).

Lack of Communication

In every marital relationship, communication is vital and is the backbone of the union. Clear communication avoids misunderstanding and conflict among the married couples. It further strengthens the marital bond by developing affection and respect which is vital to retain the union by stopping the marriage failure. When couples fail to have smooth communication, their marital life is at the verge of dissolution (Willemse, 2011).

In addition to the above findings by Willemse (2011), other researchers indicate that several reasons have been cited to file for a divorce particularly from the women sides. Women initiate divorce when they need to get a relief from abusive marriage. Financial difficulties, substance dependence, deceitfulness, sexual problems, incompatibility can also be stated as the major factors leading to divorce. In addition, the research findings have indicated that the rate of divorce is rising as a result of urbanization and industrialization (Khurshid, Khatoon & Khurshid, 2012).

In another research by Pothen (as cited in Parvez, 2011), the findings proved that divorce is caused in consequence of factors like biological, psychological and environmental factors that include family, finance and social factors (Parvez, 2011). Likewise, the findings of Mundu

&Unisa (n.d)has revealed that in India, for instance, the main factors that lead to marital dissolution are age at marriage, birth-cohort, district, residential place, religion, social classand education. Particularly, in the Indian society, age is considered as the most important factor that affects the marriage dissolution.

Similarly, Pankhurst (as cited in Serkalem, 2006) reported that in Ethiopia different reasons are considered as major causes of divorce from women's viewpoint (Serkalem, 2006).The increasing divorce rate is a reflection of the empowered position of women to leave unsatisfactory relationship. Also, according to Danieland CSA (as cited in Tilson and Larsen, 2000), there is little social stigma towards divorced women and most women who divorce, re-marry within several years (Tilson& Larsen, 2000). Similarly, Beckstrom (as cited in Tilson& Larsen, 2000) demonstrated that the social acceptance of divorce within the Ethiopian culture may ease the difficulties associated with divorce, thus empowering women to leave abusive marriages (Tilson& Larsen, 2000).

In recent times, all the aforementioned points highly initiate women to claim for a divorce without hesitation. However, it would be wrong to conclude that only women are taking initiative for this alarming rate of divorce. Men as well are responsible for the dramatic increase in the number of divorces throughout the world (Meyer, n.d).

2.5. Aftermath of Divorce

2.5.1. Challenges following Divorce

Psychological Impact

The impact of divorce is wide-ranging and affects almost all members of the divorcing family as well as friends and relatives (*AARP The Magazine*, 2004). Divorce causes distressing life experience that has simultaneous effect on individuals who pass through the divorce process. Divorce has, therefore, been known as the most significant life stressor that a person can experience and is associated with significant risks for protracted emotional stress, including depression (Sbarra, 2013). According to Hackney and Bernard(as cited in Steiner, 2009), divorce causes intense damage and stress to individuals and is associated with psychological trauma, damaged self-esteem as well as reduced social relations (Steiner, 2009). Malia(2005) also indicated that following marital dissolution, divorcees become less enthusiastic, painfully lonely and overwhelming with feelings of failure, inadequacy, the feeling of not belonging anywhere, self-pity and intense feeling that has never been experienced before. Many divorced people, thus, put themselves in a position that they would continue to face such devastating life permanently.

These psychological impacts make divorcees preoccupied with thoughts about the broken marriage and their spouse. This in turn has exasperating effect on them as they spend too much time thinking about the past and as they spend gloomy days and sleepless nights agonizing over the decisions made that terminates the marital union. Such conditions become discouraging for divorced individuals to start a new relationship(Hickman, 2007).

Individuals who pass through the divorce process become confused with their lives that fill them with pessimistic sensations especially when their partners took the initiative to end the marital relationship. As a result, they experience shock, betrayal, loss of control, poor self-worth, timidity, rage that makes them aspire to reconcile. According to Sakraida (as cited in Steiner, 2009), divorced women also feel abandoned and rejected and hate their lives as they get the divorce proceedings from their partners without their consent(Steiner, 2009).

The study conducted by Mastekaasa(as cited in Sharma, 2011) indicated that divorced people go through the worst emotional and social scenario which later on sets off permanent life damage. In addition, Christensen (as cited in Sharma, 2011) stated that due to the detrimental effects of divorce, individuals are exposed to intense psychosomatic problems and premature death than married people (Sharma, 2011). It is, therefore, revealed that divorced individuals undergo through severe life change and they suffer from personal problems like frustration, inferiority, introversion, seclusion and poor health on account of divorce (Parvez, 2011).

Marital break-up causes trauma and stress that disrupts the psychological health of divorcees and exposes their lives to jeopardy(Vukalovich, 2004). According to Bloom, Asher & White (as cited in Gottman, 1993), divorce also results in high risk of psychopathology, suicide, aggression, killing and mortality from various chronic diseases (Gottman, 1993). In the study to examine the psychological conditions of divorced individuals, Waite(as cited in Rawlins, 2012) indicated that following marital disruption, there is a drastic decline in the well-being of divorced people across the different health facets that include decline in pleasure, unfriendliness, depressive symptoms and poor health in general. It is also reported that marital dissolution contributes to health complications as compared to those in their first marriages. In

addition Waite(as cited in Rawlins, 2012), have found that women who get marital split-up experience the harsh effects more than men when measuring their conditions in a similar situation (Rawlins, 2012). It is also seen from various researches that divorce and its associated pain also affects the immune system that becomes a major contributory factor to severe medical complications that results indeath (Vukalovich, 2004).

Likewise, Marks (as cited in Sharma, 2011) has found that the psychological health of divorced men and women is on average on a descendingslope, however, the negative effects are seriously seen on women. The findings of Sharma (2011) confirm earlier studies that suggest marital dissolution is a traumatic life event that puts enormous damage on divorced women. In addition, this has mental and emotional repercussions that shatters women's self-confidence and influence their ability to become a positive role model.

As a result, women's feeling of lower levels of vitality, physical and mental health is associated with an increase in despair when they lose their partner, hopes, dreams and way of life (Palmer and Buit, 2012). It also deteriorates their sense of worth and this in fact leads them toward considerable amount of tension (Sharma, 2011). Various studies, therefore, conclude that the effects of divorce are imbalanced for men and women as it brings relentless impact on the psychological, physiological and emotional health of women(McLeod and Kessler, 1990). Similarly, in Ethiopia, studies reveal that marital disintegration has major psychological and emotional irregularity that disrupts the well-being of divorced women and their children (Serkalem, 2006).

In a similar vein, in the study conducted by Sharma (2011), the termination of marital union is the major cause of psychological problem among divorced women who show relatively high

admission rate in mental institutions (Sharma, 2011). Likewise, a research by Anderson, Stewart and Dimidjian (as cited in Boon, 2005), indicated that individuals in particular midlife women are highly affected by marital disintegration because divorce at midlife is a distressing experience as the couples are profoundly involved in social networks, lifestyles, parenting, and economic linkage that make the marital split up a turbulent moment. In addition, marital breakup at their age mostly complicates things as they have not been single for a longer period (Boon, 2005).

Marital dissolution at midlife is very difficult for women to manage and they become negatively affected as they lose their status, social identity and self image which is strongly attached to that of their spouse. It is also revealed that divorced women severely suffer from lack of identity following marital dissolution (Boon, 2005). This is particularly common on those women who are highly attached with the identity of their husbands. This affects them emotionally that change their personality to express feelings of guilt, shame, resentment, anger and anxiety (Kotwal & Prabhakar, 2009). Hence, the negative consequences of divorce may be harsh for them and their family.

A similar study indicates that divorce has overwhelming consequences that results in emotional turmoil for those at midlife or older which is equal to facing a major illness. According to this research, divorce disrupts the psychological well-being of those at age 40 and above and for some it is devastating than losing their job. It causes stressful moments for them on how to deal with doubts and the future. The research also shows that similar to those at early age, individuals at midlife and older suffer from mixed negative feelings like isolation, depression,

feeling of abandonment and failure and feeling of detested as a result of divorce (*AARP The Magazine*, 2004).

Previous studies by Kitson (as cited in Ferreira Da Costa, 2007) also demonstrated that continuing feelings of attachment and longing for the partner are the major cause of emotional stress for those who had undergone through the divorce process regardless of who initiated the breakup (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007). Other negative life events affect them greatly because they are already divorced and they cannot handle the pressure of additional chaos. Hence, they experience a greater number of traumatic events and lower satisfaction across all dimensions such as demotions and layoffs in their work environments, accidents, health disruption and problems with their own parents. They are also exposed to different kinds of hardships and other stressful life events (Kotwal&Prabhakar, 2009).

In a nut shell, the effect of divorce is severely devastating for individuals particularly women that make them feel rejected, insecure, traumatized and depressed. According to a study conducted by Hayward and Zhang (as cited in Akter and Begum, 2012), women are more vulnerable to psychological and physical problems as a result of divorce than their male counterparts. Overall, marital distress adversely affects the mental health of the women in the divorce process (Akter and Begum, 2012).

Social Impact

Individuals maintain and develop personal network during the time of marital union. While still married, they share a household, material ownerships as well as social contacts. This brings common possession of property that makes each other reciprocally dependent. Generally, the

level of dependency on one another is marked by sharing out paid and household tasks as well as by having mutual social networks. According to Coleman, Ganong and Fine (as cited in Terhell, 2003), marriage also provides an easy access to social interaction by forming a variety of relationships with in-laws and friends (Terhell, 2003).

In traditional marriages, prior to divorce, couples share their tasks, frequently part take in joint activities and they form mutual social contacts. This promotes the interdependency of marital partners' social life and the appearance of new personal contacts from both sides. In modern marriages, however, couples develop a more detached lifestyles as there is more self-determination and independence among their marital relationship. Thus, marital partners develop their own social life side by side with couple's social life. However, it has been found that mutual social contacts established by married couples are especially at risk to be broken off after divorce. Therefore, it may be expected that individuals from modern marriage, who dissolve their marital relationship, face fewer social losses following divorce as they have already formed their own networks at the time of marriage than those from a traditional marriage. Moreover, these persons are able to keep their own network and are better to compensate for the loss of relationship after divorce (Terhell, 2003).

When a marriage falls apart, marital partners no longer live together and, hence, they assume their previous status as singles which activates the various aspects of their social participation as in the case of recreating themselves and undertaking other social activities (Waite & Gallagher, n.d). In addition, after marital breakup, divorced people tend to cut off most of the couple oriented activities established while married and their social relationships and contacts that was retained in pre-divorce period is lost within the period. Consequently, the network size of

divorced individuals shrinks and undergoes fluctuations with different forms of connections and interactions. Thus, individuals' personal networks become disrupted in consequence of divorce which leads to persistent network losses especially for those who have mutual networks with the ex-spouse(Terhell, 2003).

There are various reasons for the decline of the size of the social network of individuals in the aftermath of divorce. To mention some, social relationships that are formed between married couples are mostly shared as in-laws and mutual friends. These social networks are terminated as a result of the marital disruption. This is because of loyalty issues, vanished responsibilities toward the family in-law and the detachment of marital contact with the ex-husband. In addition, right after the dissolution, divorcees may withdraw from network members who are also in contact with the ex-partner or show signs of disapproval. Previous studies by Broese Van Groenov (as cited in Trehell, 2003) indicated that after marital disruption, divorced women tend to keep and strengthen contacts only with relatives and intimate pre-divorce friends and discontinue their mutual contacts with their ex-partner (Trehell, 2003).

After marital breakup, individuals move toward their new life as single persons in different ways and engage in various social activitiesunlike their married life (Waite & Gallagher, n.d). Studies indicate that divorced and married individuals vary on a number of things, forinstance, on how they deal with their social lives. Compared with married individuals, divorcees report more social isolation due to differentexplanations(Amato, 2000).

As indicated by various researches, divorced women often feel socially awkward even if they wish to keep their social associates and be actively involved socially. This is because they mostly feel they do not still fit into social activities as a singles. Similarly, they think that they

do not have much in common with their married friends. Thus, divorced women lose many of their social contacts and experience greater loneliness. The loss of these social contacts, therefore, often results in the loss of emotional support (Waite & Gallagher, n.d).

In consequences of the effects of divorce, divorced women become pre-occupied with stresses and traumas of life which make them weak socially. This distancing from the society also makes them develop feelings of failure, carelessness and depression and mostly they show an inclination towards using alcohols and other substances. As a result, it becomes hard for them to succeed at work and home and to have time for social life (Waite & Gallagher, n.d). Divorced women also face the loss of social support mainly from their ex-in-laws and friends whom the couples share. It is also shown that elder women and those from low socio economic status undergo a more complex time in the aftermath of divorce (Ambert, 2009).

Various studies have indicated the negative effect of divorce on the social life of women who undergo through the divorce process. For instance, according to Parvez (2011), in the Bangladesh society, for instance, divorced women fail to achieve a better social life for themselves as well as their offspring because of the social and cultural stigmatization to divorce. This social and cultural stigmatization makes them socially excluded since they lose their social existence. Also, the decision to dissolve their marriage holds women accountable and makes them excluded by their family and networks. This in turn damages their social life and inflicts immense psychological costs. A Korean study by Kim and Kim (as cited in Murray, 2012) also reveals that divorce is severely stigmatized in the Korean society and makes women excused from the society. These women following divorce process are not given the opportunity to get a well paid job since they lose their married status which is useful in the job

market (Murray, 2012). In a similar fashion, Arikan(as cited in Kavas, 2010) indicated that in the Turkish society, although a woman is financially independent and experience positive outcomes in the aftermath of divorce, her social life may not be satisfying for her rather devastating. Married women are given high status in the family and society considering that they are able to fulfill significant activities as a wife and a mother for their family. However, upon divorce they no longer play major roles in the family. Thus, Turkish women feel the status loss in the aftermath of marital dissolution (Kavas, 2000). Likewise, according to the Saudi Female Clinical Psychologist, in Saudi Arabia, it is difficult for most divorced women to cope with their post divorce life. This is because they suffer from lack of social interaction as a result of cultural factors which expose them to discrimination and stigmatization in the social sphere. According to this research, in any family matters, the decision making fall in the hands of the father, husband or brother and this makes women socially inferior and vulnerable to discrimination in family matters. In addition, a woman who initiates divorce, for instance, is socially affected as she is vulnerable to go against the whole social system. Moreover, in Saudi Arabia, the social stigmatization is high on divorced women particularly on those from low socio economic status which highly disrupts their well-being (*Booz & Co., 2010*).In a similar vein, in Great Britain, a study conducted by Murray (2012) indicates that divorce has negative implications on the social life of divorced women. These women are stigmatized and are forced to lose their social contacts which make them encounter social problems. This study shows that divorced women consider themselves as rejected and as a threat to their married friends since they are always excluded from the crowd.

As demonstrated by Pankhurst (as cited in Tilson & Larsen, 2000), in Ethiopia divorce has been a common and largely accepted practice for centuries. As early as the 16th century, it was

referred to as the 'custom of the country'. However, neither the causes nor the impact of divorce on the Ethiopian society and exclusively on women are fully understood as little research has been conducted on this topic (Tilson & Larsen, 2000).

Similarly, Serkalem (2006) stated that little research has been conducted in relation to divorced women in Ethiopia. However, the research conducted on the Ethiopian divorced women, Daniel (as cited in Serkalem, 2006) has shown that women have reported a variety of stances towards the impact of divorce on their social lives. These women expressed their judgment and feeling about their relationships with previous and current friends, neighbors and their participation in family, social events and activities that explain their post divorce life experiences. According to this research, the majority of divorced women living in Addis Ababa that constitute 48.74% did not face any social problems as a result of divorce. However, 16.46 % of the divorced women under study reported feeling of loneliness, 8.04% faced interpersonal problems as well as 8.67% of the subjects faced feeling of inferiority as a result of divorce. The relationship of divorced women with their settings depends on their perception about their situation and the society about divorcees. Regardless of cultural difference, divorce creates change in all aspect of divorcees' and their children's lives(Serkalem, 2006).

However, some women are able to endure the social pressure that is caused in consequence of their marital split up because of their employment status. This is to say that, working individuals have the likelihood to make various contacts that improves their network size (Trehell, 2003). In addition, for working divorced women, work somehow reduces their stresses and anxieties as it becomes a source of social support. Various studies demonstrate that divorced working mothers are less depressed and less alienated as their work environment exposes them to interact with

different people than divorced stay-at-home mothers. Their work also helps them to get adult company that makes them feel better about themselves as they work to rebuild their lives(Waite & Gallagher, n.d). This, however, influences the development of relationships with relatives and friends outside the work setting.

In sum, the composition of personal network of individuals is affected by participating in paid activities and raising children at home. In addition, the personality characteristics of divorced women guarantees their interaction and social relations with others and help them maintain the previously established social networks (Trehell, 2003).

Impacts on Economic Condition

Other than the psychological and social drawbacks, divorce has amplified financial impacts on women than men particularly if the women are not educated and are dependent on their spouses (Medina, 2010). According to McLeod and Kessler(1990), individuals experience traumatic life events as a result of low financial resources and this economic crisis gives rise to difficulty in dealing with many other life problems. Financial hardship, therefore, is one of the major problems women face in the aftermath of the marital breakup. In addition, the shortage of income exposes divorced women to threatening life circumstances that put them under too much tension(Jennings, 2004). This problem occurs as there emerge a shift from a two income household to a single income household, low or no salaries and lack of child support. Vertical decline in income, therefore, is seen among most divorced women who were highly dependent on their husbands. This problem takes divorced women longer to adjust the monetary challenges than men (Kanewischer, 2012). Hence, divorced women's financial difficulties contribute to

change in their lifestyles which later on affect their health and living conditions (Rawlins, 2012).

Most women face financial difficulty right after divorce as they devote their lives only to taking care of the family and managing the house chores at the time of their marriage. These women encounter reduced financial means as they do not engage in some other activities outside home. Hence, after the breakup, they start to seek employment to earn their living and to cover all the necessary expenses. However, this becomes so challenging for them as they do not have marketable skills and knowledge or little experience or education. This one way or the other affects their self-esteem and they become frustrated as they turn out to be unsuccessful in finding a job that suits their skills and experience. In the end, their economic problems disrupt their sense of satisfaction with life (Boon, 2005). McKelvy and McKenry (2000), on the other hand, have indicated that for most women financial insecurity lasts only for a short period after divorce until they start to partake in income generating activities.

According to Daniel (as cited in Serkalem, 2006), in Ethiopia, the negative implications of divorce are immense on women than men where women have had lower involvement and status in education and employment. Therefore, divorced women are adversely affected economically making the post divorce adjustment very complicated. He also explained that the majority of divorced women suffer from the inability to cover for their basic expenses like food, clothing, schooling and health care for the fact that the government lacks to provide welfare system for these vulnerable groups of the society. Therefore, following divorce, women are forced to engage in different activities to generate income to support their family. Divorce intensifies suffering for women as they might assume the responsibility of head of household without male

support. Married women mostly undertake various tasks in the family through reproduction, childcare, handling errands and the like. However, upon divorce they are unable to fulfill these vital tasks in addition to taking care of the responsibilities which were previously undertaken by their spouses (Serkalem, 2006).

Daniel (as cited in Serkalem, 2006) similarly stated that financial difficulty following divorce confines divorced women's capacity to participate in different social and community activities. The relationship of the individual to their environment verifies the individual psychological and economic conditions (Serkalem, 2006).

Impacts on Single Parenting

Following divorce, women are usually given the custody of children, if any, and they likely experience task overload. The disappointments of being a lone parent can, therefore, create stress by itself and the level of anxiety can be harmful to individuals and this can lead toward emotional disturbance (Malia, 2005). Moreover, according to Handerson (as cited in Kibrom, 2008), in the immediate aftermath of divorce, women tend to be at odds and unpredictable and they are frequently preoccupied with their own depression, anger, emotional neediness which make them unable to respond caringly to the needs of their children (Kibrom, 2008).

Single motherhood has its own burden and challenges with respect to the hardship of lone parenting as well as the overload emanating from their need to work and to care for the children (Kavas, 2010). Usually lone mothers suffer from task overload as they have to engage in activities for extended hours to make their living and to support the family (Garriga & Härkönen, n.d). Due to this fact, it is assumed that employment has a harmful impact on women's

psychological well-being since it demands time, energy and attention apart from what is already used for domestic works (Trivedi et al., 2009). In addition to becoming the prime wage earner, divorced women are forced to cover the responsibilities that were shared by their spouses (Kotwal&Prabhakar, 2009).

With regards to taking care of children,women face the hardship of meeting their children's needs since they extend their working hours to make a living. This condition diminishes their time to devote to their children and they become incapable to give their full attention, guidance and affection to the children which in turn create a chain of stress for them. In addition, divorced women's failure to take care of the children reduces parenting time and skills that results in parenting instability, harshness or permissiveness. As a result, divorced women experience a drastic downfall in their potential to give care for their children. All these factors cause insecurity and anxiety to their lives as well as to their children's well-being (Ambert, 2009). Hence, singleparenting is not a proper option for a child's well-being because it is not easy to handle it alone (Kavas, 2010).

Likewise, in Ethiopia single mothers are more likely to suffer financially in the aftermath of divorce because no child support is provided by the government. As a result, these women are forced to partake in lower status jobs to sustain their children and themselves. It, therefore, becomes difficult in meeting basic needs of children and to cover their personal expenses (Barry, 2006).

According to some researches, single mothers describe their parenting experience as extremely difficult and the most challenging thing in their lives since they do not get enough monetary as well as moral support from their ex-husbands (Kavas, 2010). The most difficult issue to single

mothers other than their burden of raising children is that coming to terms with the absence of father in their children's lives and perhaps the hardest strain is compensating the father absence. This includes looking for a proper male role model that will help children's personality development (Kavas, 2010). Hence, dealing with the problem in relation to their children's well-being is hard for single mothers when fathers become absent from the children's lives and when the children feel the missing parents' absence severely, especially if the transition is sudden or lacking an explanation from one or both parents. In such instances, children may feel abandoned or unloved which affect their well-being(Cameron, 2008).

Overall, divorced women who hold child custody are more likely to suffer psychologically, socially and financially as a result of the pressures stemming from lone parenting, the overload emanating from their need to work to earn their living as well as to be in-charge of additional responsibilities which was previously managed by their spouses (Kavas, 2010).

2.5.2 Opportunities as a result of divorce

As indicated by a range of researches, despite most societies of the world have negative attitude towards divorce, there are individuals who propup marital dissolution for the reason that it results in various positive effects on their overall well-beings. Even if individuals pass through the most unhappy and turbulent situation, there are also moments that help them to see the positive sides of marital breakup. As research findings show, such individuals become more optimistic about their lives in the aftermath of divorce (Boon, 2005).

There are various factors that make the disintegration of marital union favorable for individuals who undergo through the divorce process which enable them maintain their well-being.

According to Boon (2005), although the negative aspects of divorce for women have been overemphasized, divorce also has beneficial effects particularly if their marriage was abusive and violent that provides a solution to escape from a dissatisfying and abusive marriage. Likewise, it is shown that individuals after marital disintegration eventually feel relief from a violent relationship. This is because their marital breakup stops the tension and the emotional strain they used to experience in their offensive marriage. Hence, the ending of problematic relationships leads to an improvement in individuals' psychological and physiological well-being (Gomez, n.d). In addition, studies have revealed that most women in the aftermath of marital disruption achieve enhanced personal growth that leads to an important psychological functioning. Some divorced women become fearless and spirited as they become released and are able to use the situation to start an important stage of emotional growth. Similarly, Writer (2010) pointed out that divorce allows women to interact with the society freely and to raise their children in their own ways without being dictated by their husbands. Furthermore, in consequence of the divorce, women are less occupied to their husbands' disposition and needs and they got the freedom to spend time alone in their own space. Studies also indicate that divorced women report greater self-rule in their lives than married persons (Boon, 2005).

Moreover, women following divorce are able to experience their sense of autonomy that make them free from unwanted relationships and allows them to heal from their grievances and to move on with their lives as a result of the ending of marital relationship. The other positive impact of divorce is that it helps divorcees to revitalize themselves. As indicated by different studies, following divorce individuals are able to entertain themselves without restriction, to be involved in whatever they like and to forming new social networks (Gomez, n.d). Also,

they mostly exercise their own authority over different things without being stopped by others (Writer, 2010).

In a similar way, individuals have reported that prior to their marital breakup, they suffered the greatest financial hardships and were most economically deprived that make them miserable in the overall marital union. However, following the marital dissolution, they stated that they have been relieved from all the consequences of the awful marital union. These divorced women also indicated that their self-esteem has been improved and they feel proud of themselves and are able to achieve the greatest competence in all aspects of their lives. In addition, they become competent enough to deal with the crisis they face and are able to take control of their lives (Boon, 2005).

Reibstein, Spanier & Thompson (as cited in Ferreira Da Costa, 2007) also pointed out that divorce is beneficial for those who experience it if the post divorce relationship is based on collaboration between the ex-partners particularly if children are present. The emotional and practical support may assist in reducing the stresses of the initial separation period and facilitate in achieving improved post-divorce adjustment (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007).

According to Ambert (2002), divorce is considered as a good decision when alcoholism, maltreatment and harsh conflict and other negative practices are present in the marital relationship. The marital dissolution also becomes advantageous for couples when one of the partners is emotionally disturbed, criminal or when one does not show the initiation to be engaged in any kind of employment.

In a similar research by Schneller (2001), it is indicated that participants of the study have benefitted a lot from the marital split up that includes personal development, great satisfaction and more pleasing lives. It is shown that their personal development is described in terms of growth psychologically, religiously and building a strong personal identity. Besides, great sense of confidence and competence is seen among divorced women in the aftermath of divorce which makes them feel stronger. These women also highlight that they become independent and self-reliant that enhance their self-esteem despite the economic hardships and the loneliness they experience. Furthermore, divorce has given them the freedom to learn and grow which help them discover new intellectual and creative abilities. They emphasize that after the liberation, they become much stronger as they start attending school to further their education and career. It is also reported that divorced women start to develop new interests and social contacts following the breakup. According to Amato (as cited in Ambert, 2009) divorce also has positive effects on the well-being of children as well as it helps children escape from experiencing parental conflict (Ambert, 2009).

To sum up, even though the ending of marriage has stressful and negative consequences on most women undergoing through the process, it also has beneficial effects by ending and resolving acute conflict situations and other problems successfully. In addition, not denying the pain, children are able to gain several positive changes as a result of parental divorce since it provides children with a harmonious and secure environment which is suitable for their good upbringing.

2.6. Coping Mechanisms

Divorce is one of the most difficult life events in adults' lives as it causes much stress in their lives mainly from the daily tasks and responsibilities, from the loss of significant relationships and possessions as well as from the need to establish a new identity as an individual. Although most individuals are different, most adults need time to familiarize themselves to the changes marital dissolution brings (IOWA State University, 1996).

According to Lazarus and Folkman (as cited in Ralwins, 2012), "coping is defined as constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 141). Likewise, Lazarus & Folkman, (as cited in Ralwins, 2012) indicated that when individuals pass through the process of divorce, they mostly experience various negative emotions and feelings in response to divorce from anxiety, fear, anger, regret, frustration and distrust. In such instances, they try to mediate these negative emotions. Their efforts that manage stress and traumatic experiences are known as coping. In various researches, it is indicated that managing stressful event is a very individualistic process (Ralwins, 2012). Hence, effective coping depends on toning the appropriate coping strategy to the situation (Boon, 2005). It is also indicated that coping is a process of managing stressful conditions in spite of the upshot that incorporate cognitive assessment and mediating emotions (Ralwins, 2012).

According to Menaghan (as cited in Ralwins, 2012), there are three types of coping variables namely coping efforts, coping styles and coping resources. Coping efforts are actions that are executed in order to decrease the strain or problem such as problem-focused and emotion focused coping (Ralwins, 2012). According to Lazarus and Folkman (as cited in Boon, 2005),

in problem-focus coping, individuals take direct action and obtain information in order to reach a solution and perhaps to seek social support. Emotion focus, on the other hand, involves making an effort to reduce negative emotions associated with the stressor and managing tension through the use of relaxation technique. Coping styles explains the use of certain ways in handling problems using particular coping efforts across different stressors. Coping resources can be both internal (personal) such as health, problem solving skills, self-regard, intelligence, communication skills and external (social) such as social support and material support. Coping mechanisms are positive adaptations to stressful situations that allow individuals to adapt to stressful conditions in a positive way (Boon, 2005).

Various studies reveal that there are various coping resources that help women during the divorce process which include social support, religion and spirituality, taking part in different activities, improvement in other aspect of life and the like. As a result of using effective coping resources, therefore, it is shown that many women have found greater sense of independence, career growth, educational achievement and spiritual growth in their post-divorce lives (Ralwins, 2012). Moreover, Molina (1999) also stated that religion and spirituality is one of the coping mechanisms women use in order to endure the difficulties they face as a result of marital disintegration and to experience positive changes in their lives. Similarly, according to Kincaid and Caldwell (as cited in Ralwins 2012), it was found out that a support network of friends and families was the major coping mechanisms among the women and they specifically found support networks to be emotionally supportive. Hence, they became more independent, responsible and in control of their lives as a result of their effecting coping. Similarly, religion and spirituality is taken as an effective coping that help women to overcome feelings of fear,

hurt and anger related to divorce and that helped them to cope better with divorce over time (Ralwins, 2012).

Therefore, effective coping during marital disintegration can lead to positive outcomes for women undergoing through the process of divorce. According to Ralwins (2012), coping resources such as social support networks, a sense of control, improvement in other areas of life and spirituality are helpful in coping with post-divorce life.

2.7. Summary of Literature Review

Divorce is a common social phenomenon that occurs in many parts of the world which is escalating at an alarming rate. It also has become a major issue in the Ethiopian society and the rate has risen during the past few decades. However, the rate of divorce varies across the different geographical locations, culture and over time. It is the dissolution of the legally and socially recognized marital relationship that alters the responsibilities and compulsions of married partners. There are various linking factors that contribute for the rapid increase in divorce rate which include personal, social, economical and cultural factors. Divorce is one of the most traumatic life events that causes emotional instability, psychological disorder, financial depreciation and reduced social relation that disrupts the well-being of individuals who pass through the divorce process. It also results in lone parenting which has its own challenges with respect to the hardship of raising children and the overload emanating from the need to work to earn their living making individuals to suffer psychologically, socially and economically. Divorce is not a single life event but has a series of transitions which is complex and often painful that needs great adjustment in various aspects of one's life. Other than the drawbacks of divorce, however, it also provides opportunities for those who are involved as it enables them to

liberate themselves from the abuses they face at the time of their marriage. It also allows them to experience the various positive impacts and helps them to adjust their lives in the aftermath of divorce. Effective coping also plays a major role in adjusting ones post divorce life by enabling individuals to endure the difficulties they face as a result of marital disintegration and to experience the positive changes in their lives.

2.8. Theoretical Framework of the Study

2.8.1. Crisis Theory

The Crisis theory provides a model for adaptation to crisis following shock, phase of reaction leading to a phase of processing the experience ending with a phase of re-orientation. According to Cullberg (as cited in Ängarne-Lindberg, 2010), to reach recovery and future well-being, each phase has to be properly dissolved. Crisis theory assumes divorce to be an isolated traumatic event with different phases of shock, an event to which most people are supposed to adjust to over time. According to this theory, the possibility of problems to appear later in life will mean one or more phases not to have been properly dissolved. Crisis theory looks at divorces in terms of how individuals can handle the resulting effects. It looks at adaptation of divorce process in phases which include denial, loss and depression, anger and indecisiveness, reorientation of lifestyle and identity and acceptance and integration. Crisis theory assumes that if an individual goes through the phases, then they adjust well, but if they skip any of the phases, problems will appear in later life (Ängarne-Lindberg, 2010).

The crisis state is time limited, usually touched off by some impulsive event, can be expected to follow a series of patterns of development through various stages, and has the possibility for resolution toward higher or lower levels of functioning (Slaikeu, 1990).

Wiseman (as cited in Ferreira Da Costa, 2007) and other crisis theorists have emphasized that the divorce process is seen as a cause of both grief and growth which may lead to improved psychological functioning (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007). According to Kitson (as cited in Ferreira Da Costa, 2007), in recent time, divorce is still considered as moral, social and psychological irregularity that contributes to great amount of suffering for those who undergo through the process. Apart from other factors, the new identity that is assumed following marital disintegration may play a major role in causing various difficulties in adjusting to the divorce transition (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007).

In addition, the crisis theory identifies the consequences of divorce on women's well-being. Divorce results in higher stress, traumatic life as well as role transition that are more or less the same with the idea of social role theory. According to Booth & Amato (as cited in Serkalem, 2006), the crisis theory explains the relationship of stress and role transition as brief and time bound stress of the disruption process and the disintegration of marital union creates changes temporarily in the state of mental health (Serkalem, 2006). In addition, the disrupted well-being of individuals as a result of the marital break-up is caused by the temporary uncertainty and suffering of the divorce process (Bronseleer, De Koker & Van Peer, 2008). Therefore, Serkalem (2006) has concluded that there is an inverse relationship between psychological distress and length of time following divorce.

2.8.2. Social Role Theory

Social Role theory provides a general structure for examining the psychological processes associated with shifts from one role to another. It is used to refer to the process of changing from one set of expected positional behaviours in a social system to another. Role transition is

an important type of change because it strongly influences the behavior and social identity of those who participate in the process (Serkalem, 2006). Social role is a way of describing and interpreting social conduct in everyday life. According to the role theoretical approach, social behavior is not random and pointless, rather behavior tends to be patterned.

It also tries to explain the impact of divorce on the social and psychological condition of individuals particularly on women in the aspect of the role transition. According to Ross (as cited in Serkalem, 2006), this theory indicates that divorce creates a stressful life for individuals in relation to assuming new roles and responsibilities than married people.

Similarly, according to Arendell, Kitson & Morgan, Mc Daniel & Coleman, (as cited in Ferreira Da Costa, 2007), the theory states that divorce causes changes in social roles, responsibilities and relationships. These changes in roles and responsibilities negatively influence the post divorce adjustment. As a result of assuming new roles, most individuals are required to work for extended hours that make them face task overload. These factors represent the social consequences of divorce that includes single parenthood, changes in employment and generally one's social routine is affected as a result of divorce (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007).

Bronselaer, De Koker & Van Peer (2008) also indicated that social role theory consider divorce to be a process in which the marital breakup gives rise to all kinds of transitions i.e. financial depreciation, declined social support, changing responsibilities and change in health conditions that are mostly distinguished as stressful and which have a lasting negative impact on individuals' health status.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Description of the Study Area

The research area selected for the present study is the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), which is a non-profit Ethiopian Charity established by Ethiopian women lawyers in 1996. The Association's objective is to eliminate all forms of legal and traditionally sanctioned discrimination against women, to ensure equal treatment of women with men in education, employment and access to public services and benefits and to advocate remedial and affirmative measures for women to redress accumulated consequences of discrimination.

Currently, EWLA is providing free legal aid service for a total number of 500 women of all age group from diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds, who have different cases. Out of the 500, approximately 150 of them approach the Association as a result of marital conflict and its related problems. EWLA also carries out different support programs depending on the budget of the Association like covering court fees, medical expenses, giving transportation allowance for those who are economically unable to support themselves. In addition, the Association undertakes activities like psychosocial support for divorced women whenever Courts refer cases to it, organizing awareness creation programs, educating women on Violence against Women (VAW) as well as provision of safe house service for those whose lives are at risk due to the violence perpetrated against them by their husbands.

EWLA was selected as a study site as it was found by the researcher that the Association provides legal assistance for women who face marital conflict and pass through the process of divorce. It was a suitable study site for the researcher to easily create contact with divorced

women who get benefit from the services the Association renders. The researcher approached EWLA knowing that divorced women were easily accessible and it would not be difficult to select relevant informants for the study.

3.2. Research Method

According to Creswell (2007), there are different criteria in selecting research approaches based on three factors which include the research problem, the researcher's personal experiences and the people for whom the research will be written.

In designing this study, the researcher employed qualitative approach because the impact of divorce needs to be explained in an in-depth manner and understood in detail. Qualitative method was also effective in identifying intangible factors such as psychological feelings and well-beings, social norm, social relations, women's role after divorce, spirituality etc. Creswell (2007) also states that qualitative approach will enable researchers to rely as much as possible on their informants' point of view about the issue under study since a qualitative approach uses open-ended questions. The researcher, therefore, chose this approach to gather information in relation to the impact of divorce based on the participants experience by collecting stories of individuals who have passed through the process of divorce. This has given the researcher in-depth understanding of the informants' beliefs and attitudes following divorce since they had provided firsthand experience.

Therefore, the researcher believes that qualitative research method has been helpful to fill the gap of providing insightful data which numbers cannot clearly explain. In addition, numbers cannot show in-depth perspective of women's feelings that are caused as a result of marital

disintegration. Hence, qualitative method was chosen to conduct this study as a tool to assess the everyday experiences of the informants and to draw out their daily experiences as seen from their own perspectives.

3.3. Sources of Data

This research used primary data sources as well as various related literatures on the issue under study. Primary data gathering involved practical field study using in-depth interviews and FGDs which were carried out with divorced women and other key informants from the EWLA. The other data were gathered mainly from journal articles, books, unpublished materials and the internet.

3.4. Informants, Sample and Sampling Technique

In order to collect the primary data, the researcher selected nine informants for the in-depth interview mainly due to data saturation when new data did not add meaningful contributions to the study. This enabled the researcher to conduct an in-depth interview through open-ended questions as it requires plenty of time. Likewise, the researcher assigned seven informants for the FGD that helped the researcher to explore their life experiences during and after divorce. This also allowed the researcher to obtain detailed answers that are useful for the study.

In addition, with reference to the various researches by different scholars in relation to the effect of divorce on women, it was shown that small number of participants was included for qualitative researches. According to Murray (2012), the researcher used only 12 participants thinking that her sample was sufficiently large to conduct a qualitative study. Similarly, according to Patton (as cited in Schneller, 2001) samples for qualitative samples are often small

in order to allow an in-depth, detailed examination of a specific issue (Schneller, 2001). Hence Schneller (2001) used small number of participants to conduct qualitative study.

Therefore, based on the aforementioned points, the researcher had selected a total of 18 informants and conducted the study. Out of the total figure, 9 of them were assigned for the in-depth interview, 7 of them for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and the rest 2 were selected from EWLA Officials as key informants.

Hence, careful selection process was undertaken that needed sufficient time to get the most willing and information rich participants who provided genuine information for the study. Because the Association's database was not functional during the data collection process, the researcher selected relevant informants based on the information contained in their physical files found archived in EWLA. As a result, the selection process took much of the researcher's time. The study selected a total of 16 informants from the Association and explored their post divorce experience in detail since it was not possible to include the entire EWLA's population in the study. As indicated earlier, as a result of data saturation, the researcher used a total of 16 divorced women who have approached the EWLA and 2 EWLA Officials to conduct the study through in-depth interviews and FGD. It was also believed that satisfactory results through in-depth interview and FGD would be achieved effectively and efficiently with limited time resources.

The study used purposive sampling technique to identify divorced women who have benefitted from the service of EWLA. The researcher employed the sample selection procedure based on referring the physical files of divorce cases archived as well as by consulting EWLA Officials

in obtaining the required information for the preliminary selection process. The overall criteria for the sample consideration included:

- divorced women who showed willingness to participate in the study so that they could disclose their true feelings and experiences which was valuable for the study.
- women who were divorced within the past 3 years since the short duration would enable them to remember every part of the divorce process and this would allow them to express what they really felt and experienced in their post divorce lives.
- divorced women who were living in Addis Ababa for the reason that it would be much easier for the researcher to get in touch with the informants whenever required.
- divorced women who had children under the age of 18. As these women were living with minor children, their problems intensified since they had to take care of both themselves and their dependents with limited support.

The two key informants from the Association were selected for the study using purposive sampling based on their area of expertise to provide information in relation to the issue. The researcher included these key informants in order to have broad and valuable insight useful for the study as professionals.

3.5. Instrument & Procedure of Data Collection

3.5.1. Instrument

In-depth Interview Guide

In order to collect data from informants of the research, in-depth interview guide was prepared. The content of the draft interview guide was then reviewed and later approved by a

psychological expert who has the knowledge on the subject that is being discussed and made it ready to apply. The expert made some revisions in terms of the content of the guide focusing on the causes of marital dissolution and on the psychological and social issues that are useful for the study. The content of the interview guide covered demographic, psychological, emotional and social aspects in terms of the day-today living conditions of divorced women. It was used for divorced women who were selected only for the in-depth interview.

The interview questions that were used to the informants were semi-structured including both open and close ended questions. This enabled the researcher to obtain sufficient information by freely discussing a number of broadly defined questions. It also provided the opportunity to obtain detailed and personal information of the informants.

FGD Guide

FGD guide that had various open and close-ended questions was first prepared and the content validity of the guide was checked and approved by a psychological expert to apply for the study. The expert revised the guide in such a way for the researcher to get broad and more depth responses that are useful for the study. The guide was then used in order to collect data about the individuals' as well as group's perspectives. FGD was useful to encourage the informants to disclose various information freely that might not have been revealed if only one informant had been interviewed. In addition, FGD structure had many positive outcomes from the research perspective in that when interviewing one informant, the informant might have given unclear and limited version of her experience. However, FGD allowed the researcher to obtain multiple perspectives and understandings of the same issue. The content of the FGD guide included

psychological, emotional and social aspects of divorced women. It was used for divorced women who were only assigned for the FGD to get varied information from different angles.

FGD enabled the researcher to understand the informants' perspectives, opinions and knowledge. The researcher believed that this type of data collection method would initiate the informants to discuss freely and openly as the researcher created a relaxed environment. In doing so, the researcher was able to collect a lot of information in a relatively short time since focus groups were structured and directed. The responses obtained in a focus group were typically open-ended, relatively broad, qualitative and more depth which was very useful for the study.

Key Informant Guide

A key informant guide was prepared for the Head of the Legal Aid and Project Coordinator of EWLA. The draft guide was then reviewed and approved by a psychological expert making it ready to apply. The expert made some inputs on the questions to revolve around the works of EWLA and how it is benefiting divorced women who seek the service of the Association. In addition, the expert directed the questions to focus on the overall outlook about the conditions of women who approach the EWLA. The other key informant guide prepared for the Client Attendant and Registration Officer that incorporated questions in relation to the women who approach the EWLA seeking legal assistance in terms of marital issues and their age range as well as the type of problem they face as a result of divorce.

Key informant interview is administered to small number of elite individuals who have knowledge on the subject that is being discussed (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). Key informant

questions were posed to the Head of the Legal Aid and Project Coordinator as well as the Client Attendant and Registration Officer of EWLA based on their expertise and knowledge in some specific parts of the research conducted. The key informants appeared to be best fitting informants for the study. The questions posed to the key informants were purely open-ended and specific to their area of expertise.

3.5.2. Procedure

Data for this research was collected within the period from January 20, 2014 to February 20, 2014 from the research informants. One informant was interviewed during each day of the interview. Key informants were interviewed at a separate time after the in-depth interview was conducted.

Before the interview process began, interview guides were prepared in English which were appropriate to gather the required data for the issue under study. The questions were later translated to Amharic to make it understandable for interview informants.

Having prepared the interview guides, the researcher contacted the EWLA to discuss on how to get in touch with EWLA's beneficiaries to start data collection. EWLA advised the researcher on how to be able to reach the women and to ask their consent to participate in the study.

The researcher then selected 50 divorce related files from the Association's archive so as to have options in case the informants were not willing to participate in the study. This was done manually as the database of the Association was not operational. In each divorce files, the researcher had seen that the profiles of the beneficiaries were attached. The profile sheets included the place they come from, the years of divorce, the number and age of their children

and their contact number which facilitated the selection process. Following this, the researcher made sure that their profiles fulfilled the mentioned selection criteria. Later on, the researcher contacted each of the 16 informants through their personal address and asked for their consent by presenting the objective of the research. Once they agreed, the researcher scheduled the time for conducting the interview taking into consideration the time that would be convenient for the informants to do the interview. The researcher conducted the interview in different cafeterias of the informants' preference in Addis Ababa.

Before starting the interview, the informants were asked to sign on the consent form. All divorced women were interviewed with the belief that the responses would vary in terms of their backgrounds and experiences. In some instances, the researcher posed additional queries other than the ones that were included in the interview questions as deemed necessary to collect specific information with respect to the participants' experiences. The interview time taken during each interview was approximately two hours. To conduct the interview with all the informants, the researcher had to take notes as they preferred this way of collecting data for their privacy reasons.

Similarly, questions were prepared for the key informants from the EWLA that revolves around the impact of divorce on women and how these women were affected psychologically, emotionally and socially from their own perspectives. This was carried out with the 2 EWLA Officials who have the knowledge on the subject that was discussed. The questions were then posed to the key informants based on their position and knowledge in some specific parts of the research. The questions were entirely open-ended and specific to their area of expertise. The key informants' interviews were conducted at the offices of the key informants.

For the FGD, the same process was followed to get the consent of the FGD informants and to hold the discussions. Discussion questions were prepared for the informants with respect to the issue under study. After selecting the participants, the researcher selected one church compound where it was a convenient place for all the informants and held the discussion without distraction. Some of them were housewives and the others were working women. The researcher then forwarded a specific discussion topic and the informants provided different views on the issue under study. The informants discussed the issues in random order. It was noticeable that the participants were more open and interested in the discussions.

All the interviews were conducted in Amharic and the results were translated to English for the purpose of data analysis. To ensure accuracy, the instruments were translated back and forth. The translations were also checked by language professionals to get accurate version.

3.6. Data Analysis

“Analyzing qualitative data is a systematic process that reorganizes the data into manageable units, combines and synthesizes ideas, develops constructs, themes, patterns or theories and illuminates the important discovery of research” (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p.131).

According to Brink (as cited in Murray, 2012), data are analyzed to categorize, manipulate, summarize and to give order to describe in meaningful terms (Murray, 2012). To start with the analysis process, the researcher first read through all the gathered data carefully and got an idea about the whole text. The researcher then arranged the data collected through in-depth interview, FGD and key informant interview. The researcher then gave codes to each section of the text and tried out the first round organizing method to see if there appear new categories to

be coded. This was also done to categorize common themes among the interviews. Then the researcher began to group codes together to form evolving themes or categories. Having done this, various themes were selected based on the data at hand under psychological, social, economic, single parenting and coping strategies. Following this process, the researcher grouped themes that relate to each other and minimized the categories and made the grouping simple. Finally, the researcher brought together the data belonging to each category in one group and started a preliminary analysis. Meanwhile, the researcher was careful in checking all the gathered data and was thorough in executing the analysis that eased the data analysis process.

This will enable readers to have a clear organized idea about the topic. Under the themes selected, all the issues discussed using the data from the in-depth interviews, the key informant interviews and FGDs created the picture of the psychosocial impact of divorce on women in their day to day activities. In addition, the findings that were obtained from the interviews and FGDs were interpreted in line with the theoretical framework.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

In conducting any research, it is the responsibility of every researcher to conduct his/her study responsibly to maintain high scientific research standards in the methodology part by ensuring the validity of the research. This was done by triangulating the data collected from divorced women supported by the EWLA and from EWLA officials.

In the process of the study, all the necessary measures were taken in order to ensure ethical standards in handling the research settings and informants. The respective informants of this

study were informed of the objective of the research in the language they understood. The informants then gave their informed consent in written form before they participated in the discussion.

The researcher has maintained the confidentiality of informants and the names that are used in the analysis of data are pseudonyms. The researcher established rapport with the informants by using effective communication skills, empathy and nonjudgmental approach as much as possible that made them feel comfortable and this helped the researcher to obtain genuine cooperation.

Chapter 4

Findings

4. Married Life and Reasons to Divorce

In the Ethiopian society, marriage is an institution that plays an important role in societal relationships. Some societies believe that individuals should get into marriage when they reach the stage of adulthood. According to Burton (as cited in Mundu & Unisa, n.d), in every society, marriage is an essential social event as individuals get involved in each others' lives and start their union based on shared preference and affection (Mundu & Unisa, n.d). Married life, hence, gives couples emotional support and care in their lives by protecting their mental health and enabling them to fulfill multiple social roles. It is unfortunate in some cases that all marriages do not end up in a successful marital union rather turn into marital dissolutions for various reasons. This chapter presents the life stories of the informants during their marital relationships and the period after the divorce process.

4.1. Marital Relationship before Divorce

The main focus of the study is on the overall experience of women in the aftermath of divorce. However, it is important to provide information in relation to marital relationship of couples before the disintegration of their marriage.

All the study informants viewed marriage as an important institution that provides a sense of security, a family unit and an accepted role within the social construction. When examining the years of marriage, almost all of them stayed in their marriage and lived with their husbands for more than a decade. With the exception of one informant, all the study informants initiated the

divorce for different reasons and it took them from six months to two years in contemplating divorce.

All of the in-depth interview informants reported that their marital relationship was not good from the very beginning particularly as a result of lack of communication between them. Similarly, the data gathered from the FGD affirms the views of the in-depth interview informants. Hence, disagreement and clash were the characteristics of their marital relationship. The informants gave different explanations for the cause of their persistent disagreements that will be discussed in the next section.

As can be noted from Willemse (2011), clear communication is important to keep one's marriage from falling apart. It avoids misunderstanding and conflict among the married couples. It also strengthens the marital bond by developing affection and respect. The informants also indicated that lack of communication was the major reason for their misapprehension resulting in the dissolution of their marital union. They stated that even if love and respect was present in their marriages, their communication problems intensified the marital problem that led to the crumbling of their marital relationship.

4.2. Marital Problems Leading to Divorce

Various reasons are mentioned by individuals as the cause of their disagreements which is the major factor for the dissolution of their marriage. This section presents the informants' marital lives and the problems they faced in their marriage that led to the marital disintegration.

4.2.1. Infidelity

During the study, seven of the in-depth interview informants mentioned their husband's extra marital affairs as their prime reasons for initiation of divorce. Their husbands' lack of interest in them and their cheating made the informants give up on their marriage. Haben, an in-depth interview informant reported:

I had been married for the past 16 years. All those years, I lived with him knowing that he was not faithful to me because of my immaturity. I convinced myself to resolve the issue with discussion. However, whenever I raised the issue, he used to beat me in order to cover his weakness. Because of this, my husband's behavior was no longer negotiable to me so after two years of divorce contemplation, I decided to file for divorce with the support and encouragement of my mother and my siblings.

It was expressed by most of the in-depth interview informants that their husbands' infidelity forced them to file for a divorce even if they felt bad about terminating their marriage. Of these informants, three of them also reported that their husbands were mostly drunk when they came home late night and talked about their adultery freely. The informants added that their husbands' alcohol addiction stimulated them to reveal everything which they would not do in their sane mind. The key informants from the EWLA as well affirmed that most women seek EWLA's legal assistance in order to liberate themselves from the pain they experience as a result of their husbands' infidelity.

In line with the above finding, Craig (as cited in Willemse, 2011) also reported that women dissolve their marriages when they find out the extra marital affairs of their husbands in order to get a relief from their pain (Willemse, 2011). Similarly, Pankhrust (2006) indicated that Ethiopian women initiate divorce when they experienced infidelity, extravagance and authority over their activities apart from some other factors in their marriage. The informants also reveal

that their husbands' committing adultery with different women is so intolerable for them which has caused them so much pain and frustrations in their lives. The informants feel the betrayal of their husbands when they start having extra marital affairs with others. Because of this, the women feel that they no more get the love and respect of their husbands. They also feel that their husbands' new character reflects their lack of commitment for the marital relationship. In addition, the finding of the study reveals that there is a slight relationship between alcoholism and infidelity and it is one of the causes for some women to know the status of their husbands as drinking alcohol stimulates individuals to reveal everything unintentionally. Hence, this enables some women to confirm their uncertainty about their husbands' action and to reach a final decision to break their marital bond once and for all.

4.2.2. Financial Irresponsibility

Two of the in-depth interview informants reported how distressing their husbands' refusal was to share the family's financial expenses and their overall irresponsibility towards them and the children. Tsehai, an in-depth interview informant, reported:

I spent my life as a housewife for eleven years and I didn't have any clue about the outside life. I was constrained in the house doing house chores and taking care of the kids. Because of this, I completely depended on my husband's income. Whenever I asked him for money, he started verbal and physical abuse. There were also times that I was not able to provide food for the children. I can say I lived in misery and suffering throughout those years. Because of this I divorced him.

The major finding of the FGD also confirms that the informants experienced similar problems with those of the two in-depth interview informants as a result of their husbands' negligence. The informants had complaints about their husbands' irresponsibility to the family that created bitterness in their marital lives. This is because they covered all the responsibilities of taking care of the kids and managing household while their husbands were not willing to assist them

financially. Therefore, such problems caused the breaking up of their family. In a similar vein, the key informants of the study also revealed that some women approach the EWLA in search of legal service when they face severe financial problems to support their family as a result of their husbands' failure to provide the necessary financial assistance.

Similarly, the finding of Serkalem (2006) indicated that women dissolve their marital relationship without having a second thought when they face economic problem in their marriage and when they become deprived economically and suffer from financial crisis in the later years of their marriage in spite of their positive expectation. Ambert (2009) also reported that married women have the tendency to leave their marriage, if they suffer from the economic hardships to manage the household and to raise children. In the same way, some informants of the study showed that because they faced financial difficulties as a result of their husbands' lack of interest in taking care of the family, they are forced to dissolve their marriage to escape from the severe economic difficulties.

4.2.3. Alcohol Addiction and Domestic Violence

During the in-depth interview and FGD, some of the informants stated that domestic violence as a result of alcohol addiction was the major reason for the informants' marital disintegration. Among the women interviewed, three of the in-depth interview informants reported that they experienced domestic violence as a result of their husbands' alcohol addiction and personality problems. The informants expressed that they were terrified with their husbands' aggression especially when they were drunk. Dina, an in-depth interview informant, summed up the views of many,

Whenever he was drunk, he used to insult me and beat me out of no reason. I was very much scared of him since he was a very cruel person and I mostly run away from him not to let him hurt me. One day he hit me with sharp object while I was asleep and it was with the help of God I was able to survive.

According to the key informants, domestic violence is one of the major reasons for most women to approach the EWLA to desperately get the Association's legal assistance in facilitating conditions for them to file for the divorce. It is also revealed that about 90% of the women who approach the EWLA seek divorce as a result of the domestic abuse they experience by their husbands.

Physical and mental abuses were mentioned to be the everyday experience of the informants that made their marital relationship worse which was a significant reason for leaving the marriage. The informants' experience of marital problems made them to initially seek solutions to save the marriage. However, they lost the motivation to stay in their marriage in order to save their lives. In addition, they related drinking with violence and they considered divorce as an only way to escape out of physical and mental abuse. The finding of the in-depth interview matches with the result of the FGD that the informants' persistent domestic suffering as a result of alcohol addiction forced them to dissolve their marriage.

The above findings reaffirm the study of Pankhrust (2006) who stated that in Ethiopia apart from other factors, women initiate divorce when they experience domestic violence in their marriage. In addition, violence, cruelty, addiction to drugs and alcohol are also mentioned as the major causes of marital disintegration (Trivedi et al., 2009). Various personal reasons contribute to the disintegration of marital relationships such as domestic violence, fighting and alcoholism that are frequently mentioned by couples as the most significant cause of marital breakup. This, therefore, indicates that there is a relationship between alcoholism and domestic violence and it

is one of the red flags for some women to break marriage relationship and to seek divorce. Domestic violence is prevalent in many communities in the world which is caused due to various factors leading to the disintegration of families. By the same token, domestic violence as a result of alcoholism is a common practice in the study which is confirmed by some of the informants.

4.3. The Post-Divorce Life

Individuals start their marital relationship with the belief of embarking upon their life journey to fulfill their dreams. However, this is not always easy to achieve and when these dreams are not fulfilled, peoples' expectations crumble and their dreams shattered which results in psychological crisis (Boon, 2005). For some people, divorce may results in positive effects and for others it may cause negative consequences that may disrupt their well-being. This chapter focuses on the psychosocial experience of women in the aftermath of divorce.

4.3.1. Challenges Following Divorce

4.3.1.1. Negative Psychological Impacts

In most cases, individuals pass through persistent psychological disorder like stress, grief and trauma following the actual decision for divorce (Ängarne-Lindberg, 2010). Psychological studies also report that compared to married people, divorced individuals experience poorer mental and emotional well-being (Adams, 1999). However, reactions to psychological challenges in the aftermath of divorce are not the same for all individuals. In spite of the distressing moments they faced, there are also instances that help divorcees to experience the good side of marital breakup (Boon, 2005). Some of the study informants reported that the disintegration of their marital relationship had no negative impact on their psychological well-

being while other informants had the opposite experience which caused depressing and challenging moments in their lives.

Fear, Grief & Loneliness

Of the total in-depth interview informants, three of them reported that they passed through significant psychological chaos as a result of the break-up which, however, lasted for a brief period. They conveyed that they experienced stress, anger and grief when they first thought of the idea of divorce. Because of this, they tried to endure the challenges and gave more chances to their husbands with the hope that their husbands would improve, however, they could not stay in the marriage for long.

These informants described painful losses incurred during the divorce which, however, lasted only for a short period. They expressed their loss of physical support as well as loss of friendship with the spouse. It was also stated that the divorce has affected them psychologically and, hence, they were forced to hide their divorce status in social spheres. Arsema, an in-depth interview informant, suffered psychologically when she dissolved her marriage. She said that there was a range of emotions that she had during that period of time. She described feelings of nervousness, disappointment, frustration, hatred and anger that occurred during the major transition in her life. Arsema, an in-depth interview informant, reported:

My psychological well-being was greatly disrupted as a result of my divorce. I had great fear when I thought of men. In addition, my divorce made me feel that I was valueless. I became careless for everything including my life and my son. I became forgetful. The most serious disorder I faced was insomnia which I suffered a lot from. Unlike those days, however, I now have become a healthy woman and my well-being is restored with the help of God.

Some of these informants faced emotional difficulties as a result of the psychological effects of marital disintegration. The loss of physical support was their major reason for their psychological disturbance. They reacted to the increased pressure of their daily compulsions by feeling swamped. The informants, who had been dissatisfied with their husbands as a partner in marriage, valued their presence and friendship and became distressed when the marriage dissolved. This, however, affected them only for quite a short while. This finding of the in-depth interview is also supported by the result of the FGD that the informants are also faced with psychological chaos only for the time being as a result of their marital break-up.

The key informants from EWLA similarly indicated that in some cases women who come to EWLA suffer from emotional problems such as grief, anxiety, fear, lack of self-confidence, feeling of distrust to others as a result of the difficult life conditions they have gone through. Their life conditions put them under too much stress and psychological trauma that has disrupted their overall well-being. In addition, following divorce the women become deeply frustrated in life and suffered as a result of their inability to cope with the problems they face in their lives. The key informants also reported that sometimes after some women get the legal service from the Association and got divorced, their feelings of fear and despair do not disappear completely rather their life situations become worsened. This is because mostly the women are physically abused by their ex-husbands in time of receiving their alimony from their ex-husbands as well as when they go to pick up their children after visiting their fathers. Therefore, EWLA makes continued effort to keep the safety of the divorced women with every possible means.

In a similar way, Kotwal & Prabhakar (2009) stated that divorce is known as the most significant life stressor that causes psychological and emotional health problems like anxiety, grief, anger, feeling of incompetence, rejection and loneliness. It is also revealed by the informants that after the break-up, they experience various psychological problems such as the loss of emotional ties and physical support which, however, lasted for sometime. They also develop fear of being perceived as going against the societal values and most of all they get frustrated because of their destroyed commitment. In support of this idea, the crisis theory according to Booth & Amato (as cited in Serkalem, 2006) explains that divorce creates changes temporarily in the state of mental health of individuals (Serkalem, 2006). This is an indication that divorce causes brief psychological problems to individuals passing through the process. The crisis theory also emphasized that the psychological and social crisis caused as a result of marital disruption is time limited usually touched off by some spontaneous events and has the possibility for resolution. It is also stated that the crisis state is limited by time and did not last long and individuals passing through the divorce process properly adjust well in the aftermath of divorce. This shows that the informants of the study passed through the divorce phase properly without missing any of the phases which results in experiencing a temporary turmoil right after their divorce.

Anger, Hatred and Revenge

Two of the in-depth interview informants want to take revenge on their husbands as they consider their ex-husbands responsible for all their life sufferings and difficulties. After divorce, the informants' hatred for their ex-husbands has developed and, hence, they wish to see them suffer because of the pain they have caused to their lives. Tsehai, an in-depth interview

informant, who had been in a terrible marriage, described her feelings towards her husband. She said,

Since he betrayed me, I consider revenge as a best weapon to hurt him. He knows that I always strive to change my life after divorce and he understands me well that I have the potential to improve my life because I am young and strong enough to participate in any activity. Because of that, he always asks me to re-marry him just to take advantage of me. So if his wishes come true as he intends, I will certainly take revenge and fulfill my wish by expelling him from the marriage unexpectedly.

Conversely, the information gathered from the FGD indicated that the informants do not develop feelings of anger, hatred and revenge in consequence of the break-up and they do not have the intention to hurt their husbands.

Contrary to the findings of the rest of the in-depth interview and FGD informants, Stiener (2009) showed that divorce causes intense damage and stress that is associated with psychological trauma and ruins the life of all individuals who undergo through the process. In addition, Boon (2005) indicated that people decide to stay married with the belief that they will lead a happy successful life and this high expectation motivates them to get involved in marital union. However, after marriage, when they are unable to achieve what they have expected, they feel that their life is disrupted permanently and they undergo through serious negative psychological problems. In line with the research findings, the crisis theory also suggested that divorce contributes to psychological abnormality that causes great amount of suffering to those who undergo through the process. The informants of the study also had great expectations with regard to leading a successful happy life in their marriage but when their dreams are shattered as a result of the break-up, they become devastated with their lives. However, only two of them develop hatred and anger towards their ex-husbands and want to see them suffer by taking

revenge. Therefore, the termination of marital union affects some divorced women's emotional and psychological well-being that has a negative impact on their personality.

On the other hand, one in-depth interview informant in this study reported that her emotional condition has been stable from the time of her marital disintegration until now and she feels indifferent about the situation even if her husband took the initiative to divorce her. She said her character has not been changed only with the help of God.

The finding of six of the informants is, therefore, inconsistent with the crisis theory and other research findings that identify the negative psychological effects of divorce on women's health that results in great amount of sufferings and stressful life. This shows that even if divorce causes very stressful life events for individuals who undergo through the process, most people manage to recover from the pain within a very short time as they consider divorce as one of life's event that could happen to anyone else. It is also shown that in most cases, women's guts and their spirituality help them considerably to recover from their pain and the psychological challenges of divorce.

Regret

All the nine in-depth interview informants reported that because they had undesirable marital life, they made the right decision to divorce. Abeba, an in-depth interview informant reported:

I regret marrying a person who is not ambitious to change his life and mean at the same time. I feel bad for wasting my time with him in an unhealthy relationship just for the sake of my children. It would have been better for me to leave him long time ago instead of burning in the marital relationship for nothing. I have regrets for not initiating the divorce at the beginning of our disagreements. Anyways, I am grateful to God that he divorced me.

However, none of them reported guilty feelings or regret at the loss of their marriage. In fact, they all were convinced that divorce was the right decision and it was the best option for them and the children to live in a peaceful environment even if some of the children miss their fathers. These informants who had felt trapped in unsatisfying relationship are able to get relief as a result of divorce. They all reported that after divorce, they have started to lead their lives with relief and satisfaction and they consider their divorce as an opportunity to build an independent life. The result of the FGD also coincides with the finding of the in-depth interview that the informants do not report any guilty feelings at the dissolution of their marriage.

Contrary to the above finding, the crisis theory by Wiseman (as cited in Ferreira Da Costa, 2007) explains that apart from other factors, the new identity that is taken following divorce contributes to various life difficulties in adjusting to the divorce process (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007). However, the finding of this study show that all of the informants do not feel sorry about their decision to dissolve their marriage believing that their peace, life satisfaction and well-being have been restored right after divorce. They believe that taking prompt action ensures their well-being instead of feeling regrets after experiencing an awful moment. This for sure enables the individuals to stay healthy and happy without inhibiting them from moving ahead after the marital disruption. This in turn allows them to avoid any feelings of disappointment and bitterness that impact their lives in every aspect.

4.3.1.2. Negative Social Impacts

Studies have shown that individuals particularly women face numerous social and psychological challenges following divorce (Ralwins, 2012). Divorce is one of the most traumatic life events that affect the overall well-being of individuals undergoing through the

process. As a result of divorce, some individuals experience distress and trauma that disrupts their well-being while for others it is a way out by allowing them to experience positive changes. The consequences of divorce vary across the different geographical locations, culture and the socio-economic conditions of individuals. This section deals primarily with the impact of divorce on the informants' social lives and their relations in their post-divorce experience.

Damaged Contact with Friends and Families

Of the total in-depth interview informants, two of them reported that in their post-divorce life, they suffered from poor social contacts particularly from the side of their family and from the common friends they share with husbands and their in-laws. They stated that their social relation with families and friends is negatively affected as a result of the divorce and they have broken off their social network with friends and families as they have taken sides with their ex-husbands. Tsedenia, an in-depth interview informant, reported:

After divorce, I started living with my three children. I have a few friends from the church. I isolate myself from the people I know because I don't trust anyone. If I need to meet my friends from church, I meet them outside home. I have cut off my contacts with my in-laws and the common friends my husband and I used to share. Even, I don't have Idir or Iqub. I don't need any relations with other people.

In addition to Tsedenia's damaged social relations with her in-laws and friends, her contacts with her families and the rest of the society is not either in good terms as she avoided them as a result of her personal viewpoints. Tsedenia added,

After divorce, I have become independent. I have stopped keeping in touch with those who didn't help me at my distressful time. I also have avoided contact with my family because they were not by my side at the time of divorce. So I made up my mind to disconnect our relations forever. I feel that it is better to stay away from these people.

These informants reported that their relation with their family in the aftermath of divorce was so tough that had affected their psychological well-being. They stated that nobody in their family understood the pressure they were going through as a result of divorce and they became sad and frustrated with their families' reaction during and after divorce. However, seven of the informants' relation with families and friends was not ruined following their marital disintegration. Instead, these people have got the full support of their closest people at the time of the turbulent period.

Likewise, the information gathered from the FGD emphasizes that most of the in-depth interview informants have never faced with poor social contacts from the side of their family and the common friends they share with husbands and their in-laws. It is shown that their social relation is not negatively affected as a result of the divorce.

In line with the finding of this study, Coleman, Ganong and Fine (as cited in Terhell, 2003) explain that after marital disintegration, most mutual contacts established by married partners become disconnected which reduce the size of the individuals' network (Terhell, 2003). This results in divorcees' limited social relations that expose them to experience the negative social life events. Likewise, according to Arendell et al., (as cited in Ferreira Da Costa, 2007), the social role theory states that divorce results in changes in social relationships and roles and these changes negatively influence the lives of those going through the process of divorce (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007). Bronselaer, De Koker & Van Peer (2008) also indicated that social role theory considers divorce to be a process in which it gives rise to declined social support which is mostly distinguished as stressful and has a lasting negative effect on individuals' health status. Similarly, two of the informants of the study cut off their social contacts once and for all

with their intimate relations such as friends and families for not getting the necessary support and encouragement from them during their challenging life moments. This shows that in the Ethiopian society, some people give high value to moral support and encouragement from their loved ones in time of difficult situations as the support is momentous for them during their challenging moments. However, when families and friends fail to fulfill such expectations, it results in the damaged relations with them permanently.

Social Stigma towards Divorce

Various societies have different attitudes towards individuals who undergo through the process of divorce. Some have positive attitude and others have negative perception towards marital disintegration. According to Arikan (as cited in Kavas, 2010), societal attitudes towards divorce are not similar among the different cultures. There are various factors that have contributed for this dissimilarity such as geographical location and socio-economic status that change societies' attitude towards divorce (Kavas, 2010). Hence, it is useful to see the societal attitude towards divorce in the Ethiopian context from the perspective of informants as it will give us insight into the attitude of the people.

Eight of the in-depth interview informants reported that they have never felt the negative societal attitude towards their divorce and they keep on receiving care and support from the society despite their divorcee status. They added that people around them do not have negative attitude towards divorce and these informants are able to win great respect and encouragement from the society.

However, one of the informants had experienced the negative societal attitude against her divorce status that disrupted their post-divorce life. This informant had undergone through a rough situation only at the initial stage of the divorce process. Arsema, an in-depth interview informant, shared:

The society's perception towards divorced women is so negative that I cannot put up with it. Before I got divorce, I ran away from home because of the persistent disagreement I had with my husband. But because of the pressure of the society, we were forced to settle the matter and I returned back to my house. However, I stayed with him only for a short while because the usual conflict resumed. It was only because of the pressure of those who had negative thinking about divorce that I returned to my house. However, I regretted my decision for risking my life to live with such an abusive person.

The result gathered from the FGD reaffirms the views of the eight in-depth interview informants that the informants have not faced with negative societal attitude towards their divorce.

Similar to the findings of the minority, Parvez (2011) indicated that divorce attitude in any society is influenced by the social and cultural values. It is also shown that following divorce, individuals suffer from social segregation and social support that fill their lives with internal as well as external stresses. Hence, negative societal attitude towards divorce is common in areas where there is stigmatization to divorce. Similarly, Daniel (as cited in Serkalem, 2006) has shown that women have reported a variety of stances towards the impact of divorce on their social lives. According to this research, 16.46 % divorced women under study reported feeling of loneliness, 8.04% faced interpersonal problems as well as 8.67% of the subjects faced feeling of inferiority as a result of divorce (Serkalem, 2006). Even if the majority of the current study informants have not faced the negative societal attitude, this does not mean that stigma is inexistent phenomenon in the Ethiopian society. There have been also instances where one of the informants faced social exclusion. This might be because of the fact that keeping up

marriage is an essential social norm and it is not easily accepted when individuals do not conform to the custom of marriage. In support with this finding, social role theory also emphasized that divorce results in negative changes in social relationships of individuals. Therefore, in the Ethiopian society, some people may develop negative attitudes towards divorced women as a result of the society's positive attitude towards the institution of marriage. In addition, some people give high respect to married women due to their personal insight as well as their cultural influence that isolate and look down on divorced women which in turn has negative consequence in divorcees' social interaction.

4.3.1.3. Negative Economic Impacts

Among the research informants, two of the in-depth interview informants reported that they had already been involved in income generating activities prior to their divorce which has helped them to overcome financial problems. They also indicated that their prior engagement in income generating activities made their single parenting not difficult as their work has enabled them to earn well to raise their children. These two in-depth interview informants had an experience that made them strong and confident to initiate the divorce. They did not encounter an economic downturn after divorce as they have already been engaged in income generating activity to free themselves from their husbands' control. Hence, following divorce, they have been able to support their little kids.

Among the in-depth interview informants, however, the other two have been receiving financial support from their families and closest friends to be able to raise their children as they are unable to work due to their poor health conditions. This, on the other hand, made their single parenting role somewhat difficult as they are dependent on the income of others to raise the

children. The extent of the problem that divorced women can face in case of inability to work is evident from Lydia's experience. Lydia, an in-depth interview informant shared,

Right after I gave birth to my daughter, my husband at first provided his full support and devoted his time and money for our baby. But this only lasted for a short while. He started to cut the amount of money he used to give me for some reasons unknown to me. Because of this, I have become seriously ill that has a negative impact on my day to day activities. Hence, I have been forced to quit my education until I recuperate. Currently, I am a stay at home mother without a permanent income.

The findings of the FGD indicate that economic problem was not the serious problem the informants faced after the disintegration of their marital union. Contrary to this, the other five of the in-depth interview informants reported that at first they have undergone through severe financial strain, which, however, lasted only for some time until they started to participate in money making activities and recovered from the financial strain. Due to their short-term financial difficulty and instability, managing parental responsibilities alone had become the most challenging situation for them which, however, did not last for long. These informants, therefore, managed the economic hardships they faced at the time of marital break-up. This is because of their involvement in small scale business after divorce.

The key informants of the study stated that even after divorce, it takes a very long time for the EWLA to facilitate and arrange things for the divorced women to get their alimony from their ex-husbands. During the process, however, the women go through the economic hardships despite the fact that they get financial assistance from EWLA to cover for their food and transport until their case is settled.

In a similar way, Abera (2008) explains that apart from its negative psychological and social impacts, divorce also affects individuals economically and makes their lives stressful and

traumatic. In addition, Daniel (as cited in Serkalem, 2006) also argues that the negative implications of divorce are massive on women and they are adversely affected economically making the post-divorce adjustment very complicated. He also indicated that the majority of divorced women strive to cover their basic expenses like food, clothing, schooling and health care (Serkalem, 2006). They suffered from financial crisis as the alimony they received from their ex-husbands was very small compared to the standard of living in the country while others do not get a penny from their ex-husbands which exacerbate the economic hardships they are facing. In addition, even if some of divorced women receive alimony from their ex-husbands, their lack of sources of regular income to support themselves and their children intensify their economic difficulties in their post-divorce adjustment. Likewise, the social role theory reaffirms that divorce gives rise to various transitions such as reduction in finance which is mainly detected as stressful and distressing that has severe impact on individuals' well-being.

Seven of the in-depth interview informants, who had been economically dependent on their husbands at the time of their marriage, have started to participate in different activities to adjust to an altered life style. Tsehai, an in-depth interview informant, reported:

Before divorce, I didn't engage in any income generating activities so it became so hard for me to withstand the economic problem following divorce. Right after divorce, things got worse for me and my children. So, I convinced myself to work and change my life. So, my Idir and Iqub members assisted me greatly to start small scale business. After some time I was able to succeed in my move and I have become the owner of three cafeterias. I dare say my divorce has allowed me to change my life completely.

In the same way, the data gathered from the FGD confirms the views of the in-depth interviewees that the informants' dedication to change their post-divorce life has helped them to achieve their goals. Hence, the finding of the FGD revealed that following divorce they are

satisfied with their financial achievements. They thought they are better off without their husbands.

In a similar vein, McKelvy and McKenry (2000) explain that in most cases even if women suffer from financial insecurity following divorce, they suffer only for a short period. On the other hand the findings of Kavas (2010) also indicated that some of the study informants did experience financial strain after divorce, however, many of the women manage their financial problems after a short while as they start to engage in various activities to overcome their problems. In line with this finding, the crisis theory according to Cullberg (as cited in Ängarne-Lindberg, 2010) also states that in order to reach recovery and future well-being, the divorce phases has to be dissolved properly but if individuals skip any of the phases, then problems will appear in their later lives (Ängarne-Lindberg, 2010). Similarly, it is revealed by most of the informants that they were not involved in any kinds of job before their divorce and they faced financial crisis significantly right after the break-up that made them incapable of maintaining their life. However, since they go through the divorce phases properly, as the crisis theory states, the informants adjust well after some time by improving their lives as a result of partaking in different income generating activities. This was mainly facilitated as a result of the small scale business and micro financing opportunities provided by the government. Hence, following divorce most of the informants started to engage in different activities based on their interests and abilities in order to liberate themselves from the economic dependence on their ex-husbands. In addition, they partake in small scale businesses not to be burden to their families and friends, to escape poverty and to get rid of mental anxiety.

4.3.1.4. Negative Impacts of Divorce on Children

All the in-depth interview and FGD informants have children from their past marriage. In connection with the effect of divorce on their children, six of the in-depth interview informants reported that their divorce has affected their children miserably while three of the informants indicated that their marital break-up has not resulted in negative consequences on their children's well-being as the children were very small at the time of divorce to understand their parents' marital break-up.

Six of the in-depth interview informants reported that their children have suffered a lot and have undergone through severe psychological and social challenges from the beginning of the divorce process. Arsema, an in-depth interview informant reported:

Right after my divorce, my son has become very sick. He has lost his appetite and he has become weak. He couldn't pursue his education properly and everything has become a disaster for him. He has become a lonely boy and has isolated himself from others. I have revealed the situation to him not to confuse him so that he won't blame himself. However, he hasn't shown any improvement. I feel sorry to create such a disturbing environment for him.

These informants have passed through challenging situations as a result of their children's disrupted psychological well-being. The children show negative psychological condition like becoming quiet, sensitive and emotional for everything. Lack of appetite and frequent physical illness is also seen among them after they fail to see their father regularly like before. They have developed strange attitudes and they preferred to be alone instead of actively interacting with children of their ages. This also has caused stressful situation for the informants as their children cannot easily comprehend the matter even if they are given different explanations from their mothers. Three of the informants' children, on the other hand, have been so small by the time

their parents broke-up and they do not face a hard time in realizing the absence of their fathers from their lives.

Likewise, findings from the FGD showed that the informants' children have undergone through difficult conditions as a result of their parents marital break-up. They have realized that after the break-up, their children cannot acknowledge their divorce as they have been so close to their fathers and living only with their mother have become so hard for them to accept. They added that the children have developed strange attitudes afterwards which they cannot put up with and their academic performance have become so poor that takes a long time to improve.

The findings of Bereket (2012) have also revealed that divorce has negative impacts on the lives of individuals undergoing through the process and one of the immediate sufferers who share the potential consequences is children of divorcees. In addition, as it is indicated in Kavas (2010), children develop negative feelings that disrupt their lives especially when they miss their fathers. Likewise, as most of the informants of the study revealed, their marital disruption has affected their children's well-being severely even if the children are very small to realize the problem during and after the divorce process. The children's pain and distress also has affected the mothers adversely as most mothers cannot bear to see their children suffer in anyways. Moreover, despite the mothers' ability to provide good environments and fulfill their needs, the children have experienced various challenging situations as a result of divorce. It is, thus, evident that parental conflict and marital disintegration cause severe and challenging situations for children of divorcees that disrupt their well-being psychologically, socially and physiologically.

4.3.2. Benefits from Divorce

4.3.2.1. Positive Psychological Impacts

Divorce is one of the most traumatic life events that bring about massive life change to those involved in the process. However, even if it causes numerous challenging situations to individuals, it also has various beneficial factors to the overall well-being of those undergoing through the process. When asked about any possible gains upon divorce, many of the informants reported that they experience various positive results and described the benefits deriving from divorce. These include relief, happiness and freedom, personal growth and becoming stronger. The informants defined their growth in terms of developing emotionally and working and improving their lives. The informants emphasized a greater sense of confidence, competence and hope in the aftermath of divorce.

Relief

For all the study informants, marital dissolution brought about relief in their lives. They believe that their divorce has enabled them to escape from all the troubles they had been facing. The relief that was gained after divorce was voiced by all the in-depth interview and FGD informants who regarded their marriage as a source of grief and their divorce as a way out of the sufferings. Haben, an in-depth interview informant summed up the views of many,

The first time I experienced my life after divorce, I was able to notice that there was life out there. I haven't been able to feel relief other than this in my life. Due to my divorce, I have become happy and satisfied with my life instead of feeling down. I had a very gloomy and boring marriage where there was no open communication with my husband. He is such a self-absorbed person. Thank God I am divorced and I no more belong to such a loser. I have my own decision making power and I am in control of my life. I really feel good about my decision to divorce.

Moreover, all the in-depth interview informants reported that they have become more positive about their marital dissolution. Dina, an in-depth interview informant shared,

I have never regretted my decision to divorce despite my life problems. I don't work and I don't have my own income but I enjoy my peace and relief. I am relieved from a stressful and unhappy life because of my divorce. Thank God living a life in agony is over! I have such a relief to love and enjoy my life.

Likewise, the findings of the FGD confirmed that the informants have started to enjoy their lives after divorce because of the relief they have been experiencing after so long. They all have become focused only on their lives leaving all the misery and sufferings behind. They reported that even though they had to struggle a lot to confront many of their life challenges right after divorce, they get relieved and become peaceful and satisfied with their lives. Therefore, divorce paves the way for the informants to experience relief, happiness and peace which has made them lead a better life.

Similarly, Gomez (n.d) stated that individuals as a result of the ending of a violent relationship eventually feel relief. This is because their marital breakup stops the tension and the emotional strain they used to experience in their unhappy marriage. Moreover, as per the findings of Kavas (2010), most of the study participants were able to experience relief as a result of terminating their marital relationship and they became happy and lively after divorce. In a similar vein, the findings of this study indicate that all of the informants have been able to escape from their dissatisfying marital life and they have been able to experience relief and satisfaction upon marital disintegration. This is for the reason that their divorce has allowed them to leave their painful past behind and to start a new life with the opportunities divorce has presented. Hence, divorce provided them with various opportunities to improve their lives upon leaving an unpleasant relationship. However, contrary to the above findings, the crisis theory

states that divorce is an isolated stressful life event that results in higher stress and distressing life that upsets individuals' well-being.

Happiness & Freedom

All the in-depth interview and FGD informants' overall perspective about their divorce has changed over time. After divorce, most of them have developed positive attitude towards divorce as they started to experience improvements in their lives that help them to see their divorce as a prospect to growth and development. All of the informants also have similar experiences with regards to happiness and freedom after divorce. Their comprehension of the benefits of divorce, therefore, has helped them to get rid of their stresses and traumas completely and to recover from their pain. According to the women, they are able to change their lives as a result of the freedom they get following divorce. So, after divorce, they expressed that they have become satisfied and happy as a result of the decision they made.

Mahlet, an in-depth interview informant, shared:

I feel happy and strong about my life because my only hope is God and I know he has the best plan for me. I wouldn't be able to experience such happiness and freedom in my life if I remained in my marriage. I am proud of my decision that enables me to free myself from the 'jail' after so long. I would remain in my quarrelsome marriage, had I not convinced myself.

On the contrary, the findings of Bereket (2012) states that divorced people experience low-level of happiness, poor psychological well-being and low self-esteem as compared to married people. Similarly, the social role theory supports the findings of Bereket (2012) that divorce creates stressful life for individuals in assuming new roles and responsibilities that causes persistent chronic stress and damage to individuals' well-being. In contrast, the findings of Ralwins (2012) showed that divorce is one source of happiness for individuals undergoing

through the process and is a way out from an abusive marriage. It also allows women to move from a place of harm and pain to a place of happiness and satisfaction. The findings of Ralwins (2012) also confirm that the end of their unhappy marriage presented opportunities for greater happiness, freedom and success. Likewise, the informants of this study reveal that the ending of marital union has exposed most of the informants to new life experiences by liberating them from life strains and giving them satisfaction and the chance to enjoy a quiet and peaceful life. These women do not consider themselves as victims in spite of the challenges they faced at the time of their marital relationship. This is because their marital break-up has enabled them to experience various optimistic situations that have given them bright prospect for growth and development. Divorce, thus, has helped most of the women under study to experience their freedom, happiness and satisfaction.

Work and Personal Growth

Marital dissolution is considered as a process of growth and development although it is also seen as a process of suffering. Two of the in-depth interview informants faced the negative consequences of marital dissolution because of their beliefs and poor perception towards divorce as well as the pressure coming from the different socio-cultural factors. Whilst for five of the in-depth interview informants, divorce opens the way for personal growth, personal recovery and opportunities to pursue areas in their lives which they could not otherwise have done if they had chosen to stay married. Divorce can, therefore, bring about positive life changes that gives an opportunity for individuals.

Among the in-depth interview informants, five of them reported that their divorce has brought them personal growth and life improvement by giving them the power and the freedom to

engage in various income generating activities. The informants discussed the job opportunities that came following their divorce. Tsehai, an in-depth interview informant shared,

After divorce the alimony I got from my ex-husband was not sufficient and I suffered a lot and was not able to survive with it. Although things were bad at the very beginning of the break-up, things got better. Following divorce, everything just started to fall into place due to my hard work. So through time I have started to grow competently. Currently, I own a business and my finances get better that made me a self-sufficient woman.

Most of these informants reported that in their post-divorce life experience, their divorce has allowed them to involve in various income generating activities to improve their livelihood. Since economic deficiency is a significant problem in the aftermath of divorce, Arsema convinced herself to change her way of living to achieve personal growth and satisfaction.

Arsema, an in-depth interview informant said,

I devote much of my time to work in order to improve my livelihood and to raise my son. I am employed in three different jobs where I work long hours to accomplish my job. This has enabled me to achieve my goals and to be successful in improving my life. In addition, I am able to embrace more of my job and hence my career has started getting better. For me, work has a healing effect from my pain and suffering and I give value to my work.

Similarly, the finding of the FGD revealed that divorce has enabled the informants to achieve their goal. They stated that they would not have initiated divorce, had they not known their potential to change their lives by engaging in any activity. Hence, they consider their divorce as an opportunity instead of a failure. They have accepted that the divorce is a good decision to move on to the next chapter of their lives and they all agree that their lives take the right path to success after divorce. Therefore, the informants' engagement in different occupations has provided the means to escape from the pain and to grow personally as they have control over the important aspects of their lives.

However, the rest two in-depth interview informants reported that even though they do not see divorce as a failure they also do not perceive its impact as an opportunity for growth. This is because their lives have not shown any improvement in the aftermath of divorce mainly due to their poor health condition. According to these women, they are not able to be involved in income generating activities to earn their livelihood. These informants, however, are able to survive their post-divorce life because of the support they get through friends and relatives as well as from the social network they developed. Hence, they become impassive towards the effect of divorce in their lives.

In line with the above finding, Boon (2005) explains that the ending of problematic relationships leads to an improvement in individuals' well-being by allowing them to exercise their autonomy and by gaining relief. In addition, it is shown that most women in the aftermath of marital disruption achieve enhanced personal growth that leads to an important psychological and social functioning. In a similar research by Schneller (2001), it is indicated that marital split up opens the opportunity for those who pass through the process of divorce to personal development and great satisfaction in life. As opposed to the above findings, the crisis theory according to Kitson (as cited in Ferreira Da Costa, 2007) states that divorce causes stressful and frustrating life for individuals and is considered as psychological, moral and social abnormality that causes severe torment for individuals involved in the process (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007). Contrary to the crisis theory, most of the informants indicate that the dissolution of their unhappy marriage has presented opportunities for them to improve their lives and, hence, work has become the most important factor that allows them to achieve personal growth. Their divorce experience has changed the informants' philosophy significantly and they rated their divorce experience as positive as it opens the way for work and personal growth. This is

because following divorce the informants have stopped to absorb their past not to negatively affect their health and their work performance. This is an indication that the informants have become successful in changing their lives and in growing as a person as a result of their continued efforts and commitments to achieve their dreams. The informants' dedication to their work becomes an important area of self-growth. It is understandable that work is a psychological and social need in addition to economic need. It can be said that marital break-up may be an opportunity for some divorced women for personal growth, personal recovery and prospects to pursue areas in their lives which they could not otherwise have achieved if they had chosen to remain married.

Becoming Stronger and Confident

Six of the in-depth interview informants reported that following divorce, they have become stronger as a result of the confidence they developed. They emphasized feeling stronger by developing new competencies as a result of their independent functioning. Mahlet, an in-depth interview informant, reported:

Following divorce, I suffered a lot economically since I was not involved in a paid job. Despite my ups and downs, however, I have started to engage in an activity which made me realize improvements in every aspect of my life. This made me certain that I am competent and strong in my work. My work has allowed me to regain my confidence which I lost years back. From this I get up and reinforce my energy to become the owner of my own business.

These in-depth interview informants reported that they did not lose their confidence in leading their lives as divorced women. They said that they have strengthened what they possess by making themselves flexible to new situations and by developing positive attitude towards marital break-up. Hence, because of their confidence, they become mentally stronger to deal

with the negative effects of divorce. Likewise, they become competent in handling their parental responsibilities effectively. They share the opinion that divorce has strengthened their confidence and teach them to be tough from the hardships they went through and to believe in themselves.

On the other hand, the other two in-depth interview informants reported that they do not lose their confidence in themselves in spite of their inability to engage in some kind of income generating activities as a result of their poor health status.

However, one informant of the study had a discouraging experience only at the initial stage of her divorce. This informant was more traumatized by her ex-husband's actions as well as by the negative societal attitude towards her divorce. In addition, she did not get the necessary encouragement and support from her closest family members rather accusations and criticisms were present in their everyday life. This made her lose her confidence that affected her greatly particularly at the time of the divorce transition. Later on, after the divorce transition, this informant has been able to regain her confidence and become very strong unlike the past due to her achievements in her works which completely change her life. Arsema, an in-depth interview informant reported:

After my marital life, due to my husband's poor personality and his persistent deterioration in his behavior, I became frustrated with everything and I felt so worthless. My family and my husband kept on blaming me for our marital tensions. Because of all those bad happenings, I lost hope, confidence and inspiration in everything. After a short while, however, my engagement in a variety of activities to improve my life became a source of strength and confidence. Meeting the ends of my own becomes a source of satisfaction for me and makes me stronger and confident in every way.

The findings obtained from the FGD also confirm the views of the in-depth interview informants that the informants are able to develop their confidence that made them strong to adjust to their post-divorce lives.

Likewise, Schneller (2001) indicated that divorced women have benefitted greatly from building their confidence and competence in the aftermath of divorce that has made them feel stronger. Contrary to this, the findings of Sharma (2011) suggested that marital dissolution is a traumatic life event that puts enormous damage on divorced women which has mental and emotional repercussions that shatters women's self-confidence and influence their ability to become a positive role model. In line with the findings of Sharma (2011), the social role theory highlighted that divorce is the cause of stressful life for individuals in relation to assuming new roles and responsibilities and these changes in role and responsibilities negatively affect the post divorce adjustment. As opposed to the theory, however, the finding of this study has indicated that in the aftermath of divorce, all the informants maintained their confidence by escaping from their distressful life and by engaging in various income generating activities. Hence, it can be said that some divorced women likely feel fuller sense of confidence in themselves after their marital break-up once they see their potential in managing everything without the presence of their abusive and discouraging husbands. In addition, divorce gives some women the opportunity to become stronger by giving them a sense of confidence which enables them to manage their lives on their own.

4.3.2.2. Positive Social Impacts

Improved Social Interactions

Empirical evidences have revealed that divorce is linked with a number of social problems that results in limited social relations for those who pass through the process. It is also indicated that significant social changes have been documented as a result of divorce in addition to the economic and psychological consequences (Trivedi et al., 2009). However, although the negative effect of divorce is overstated, it also opens the way for opportunities in the social aspect that allow divorcees to have a stable post-divorce life. Therefore, the aftermath of divorce is also suitable for divorced individuals to renew their contacts with old ties, to establish new social networks and to improve their own interactions socially (Boon, 2005).

All the study informants reported that following divorce, they are able to improve their social interactions with others regardless of their divorce status. These women have become active in improving their interpersonal skills to create new social contacts without any restrictions. The informants, hence, consider divorce as a chance to improve their social lives. Mahlet, an in-depth interview informant reported:

I have become actively involved in various social activities because of the freedom I get after divorce. Previously, I did not have any contact with people except for my family and the friends I share with my husband. But after divorce, I have started to attend various social congregations like weddings, funerals, Idir & Iqub etc. that has enabled me to socialize with others.

Similarly, the FGD results showed that following the break-up, the informants have started to socialize with others in order not to isolate themselves from the outside life and to improve their interactions. They believe that interacting with people has the benefit of exchanging various ideas and knowledge which is advantageous in their day-to-day activities.

In contrast, Trivedi et al.(2009) revealed that divorced women face substantial decline in their social contacts that made them suffer from unexpected change in their social relationships. This is because divorce sometimes results in isolating individuals from the society that affect their social circle. In addition, divorced mothers are responsible for various activities in and outside their house which in turn disrupt their time for social interaction (Boon, 2005). Serkalem (2006) also indicated that divorcees experience a substantial decline in their social networks and they suffer unexpected change in their social relations. Likewise, according to Daniel (as cited in Serkalem, 2006), 16.46 % divorced women under study reported feeling of loneliness and 8.67% of the subjects faced feeling of inferiority as a result of divorce (Serkalem, 2006). By the same token, the social role theory explains the effect of divorce as negative by causing too much stress and strains on individuals' central roles. It adds that individuals become socially isolated and face lack of social support with a burden of childcare responsibilities. As opposed to the above findings and theory, however, the informants of the study revealed that their divorce has enabled them to restore the social contacts which they discontinued years back as a result of their husbands' imposition and they have started to socialize with others as a result of the positive attitudes of the society towards divorcees. Therefore, their network size does not show substantial decline instead it has increased considerably. Hence, divorce is a way out for some women to improve their lives in the social sphere and this necessitates a positive adjustment to divorce. It can be said that divorce improves the social lives of some divorced women as the positive social views allow them to improve their social interactions with others freely. Moreover, their marital break-up facilitates their interaction with the society which enables them to exchange various ideas and knowledge on how to deal with their post divorce lives.

4.4. Divorce and Single Parenting

One of the major effects of marital disintegration is the alteration of family structure from two parents to a single parent household. In a single parent home, there is only one parent who is accountable for generating income and for managing the household. Such instance creates complex situations for individuals involved in the divorce process that expose them to the hardships of lone parenting and making the post-divorce life difficult. Similarly, single parenting also causes problems on the well-being of children especially when they are raised in the absence of their fathers. However, single parenthood also allows individuals to experience various favorable conditions in their daily lives as they are able to exercise their parental authorities without being dictated by their spouses. Moreover, a single parent household also helps children to escape from experiencing parental conflict and to live in a peaceful environment which is useful for their upbringing. Therefore, single parenting has both positive and negative implications on the well-being of divorcees as well as their children.

The study informants declare that they are the only ones to give care and attention for their children. They believe that the children are their most important responsibilities and hence they strive to provide for their basic needs. They added that it is good for the children to stay with them for their good upbringing. The informants report the positive and negative effects they face as a result of single parenting.

In this section, the findings of the study will show both the positive and negative aspects of single parenting as lone parenting was the major issue at the time of the interview.

4.4.1. Challenges of Single Parenting

All the in-depth interview and FGD informants reported that they are relatively comfortable with their single mother roles and regard the children as an only gain from the marriage. Hence, they have positive attitude towards single parenting. However, this does not necessarily indicate that they did not undergo through challenging situations in raising children alone. All of them also acknowledge the difficulties they are facing with respect to parenting alone. Even if they mostly refer to the period right after the break-up, they still experience difficult situations in their lives. The major challenging situations these informants face as single parents include absence of father figure and inability to give sufficient time to the children.

Absence of Father Figure

Following divorce, the most difficult issue single parents' face in their daily lives is the problem of compensating the absence of fathers. Single mothers face difficulty in finding a proper male role model that helps their children in developing their personality. In addition, in the absence of fathers, it is challenging for single mothers to create a sense of family in their children minds (Kavas, 2010).

Six of the in-depth interview informants reported that as a result of the absence of their husbands, their children miss their fathers and show emotional reactions and as a result the women have passed through the challenges of compensating the father absence. The finding is also supported by the result obtained from the FGD. Lydia, an in-depth interview informant, reported:

My daughter loves her father very much because of the paternal affection he used to show her. However, after divorce, things were not the same for my daughter after my ex-husband was found to be guilty of killing a girl. This brought a new change in my daughter's behavior and her attitude has changed since then because she misses her father. Her school performance has become poor and I feel that she is suffering I spend much of my time with her to develop attachment but even so she still misses her father and this is fairly a huge challenge for me to manage.

However, of the six informants, two of them have acknowledged that their ex-husband's visitation arrangement has helped their children considerably and is of great importance for their children's well-being. The rest three of the in-depth interview informants reported that their children were too small to comprehend the matter by the time they made a decision to divorce their husbands.

According to Kavas (2010), apart from other negative life issues that resulted from marital break-up, single mothers face the problem of handling the absence of fathers in their children's lives. Similarly, as revealed by Cameron (2008), children of divorced parents undergo through severe situations when one of their parents is missing from their lives and when the children feel the missing parent's absence severely. In such instances, the children feel abandoned or disliked which disrupt their well-being. Most of the informants of the study also reveal that they are unable to fill the gap and to create a mechanism to compensate their children's feelings towards their fathers. They also express that because of the children's emotional confusion and their sadness, they have gone through severe suffering which they are not able to find a way to compensate for their husbands' absence. This shows that some single mothers face challenging situations in handling children's issues with regards to father absence which has caused so much pain and stressful situations in addition to their divorce problems. This is because mostly mothers cannot bear to see their children's suffer in every way.

Insufficient Time for Children

All of the in-depth interview informants reported that as a result of the overload that stems from their need to work, they are unable to give sufficient time to the children, which is vital for the children's overall well-being. These single mothers emphasize how they are overburdened and indicate the difficulties they have been through in consequence of their marital break-up. Haben, an in-depth interview informant, shared,

I have a café which I run by myself and I always work until late. Due to this, I don't have sufficient time for my kids. It is my mother who takes care of them when I am away for work. I need her help and assistance until the children become old enough to support themselves. After work, it is my responsibility to manage the household so there is no time left to spend time with the children.

These informants reported that they are forced to handle the extra responsibilities which were shared by their husbands apart from their own responsibilities. And because of this, the women are unable to spend much of their time with their children. Therefore, their involvement in their children's life is very minimal. These women stated that due to their increased responsibility upon divorce, they are not able to monitor their children's overall condition. Thus, single parenting has caused challenging situations in their lives.

On the contrary, the findings of the FGD indicated that the informants did not face serious challenges in relation to providing sufficient time to the children. Instead they reported that they have ample time to spend time with their children even if some of them involve themselves in various activities to earn their living.

Similar to the social role theory by Arendell et al., (as cited in Ferreira Da Costa, 2007), as a result of divorce, individuals face changes in social roles, responsibilities and relationships and

these changes negatively affect the post-divorce life of individuals. In addition, their changing of roles force them to work for extended hours that make them face task overload (Ferreira Da Costa, 2007). Likewise, Ambert (2009) indicated that after the breakup, single mothers face the hardship of meeting children's needs since they extend their working hours to make a living which reduces their time to devote to their children. Hence, they become incapable to give their full attention, guidance and affection to the children. In support with the aforesaid points, the informants undergo through severe challenges in their lives as a result of assuming new positions after the marital break-up. This shows that divorce causes changes in social roles and responsibilities of some divorced women and these changes bring about negative impacts on their lives. Divorce, therefore, makes some single mothers liable to carry the burden of various responsibilities. Single parenting, per se, is a challenging job that requires some women to spend much of their time accomplishing the different responsibilities such as work, household chores and care for the children which as a result make them unable to allocate sufficient time to be deeply involved in the lives of their children.

4.4.2. Positive Effects of Single Parenting

For all the study informants, single parenting has resulted in favorable conditions that enable them to experience the various benefits of lone parenting. Although, they have experienced the negative effects of single parenting, the informants also reported that they have positive evaluation of lone parenting and motivation to move on with their lives.

Apart from the negative effects, therefore, single parenting has its own advantages for all the in-depth interview informants that make them personally happy as single women and as mothers.

The positive aspect of single parenting is expressly stated by one of the in-depth interview informant. Abeba, an in-depth interview informant shared,

Following divorce, I did not face serious life challenges particularly in terms of parenting alone. In fact, at the initial stage of the divorce, there were problems but I somehow overcame the difficulties with the help of God. Single parenting is not that hard for me though I partake in freelance activities. Single parenting has boosted up my confidence to bring improvement to my life. As a single mother, I feel competent and strong in every way.

Likewise, these informants reported that their only gain left from their marriages was their children. They stated that their children have given them great motivation to improve their lives and to move on to the next chapter of their lives. In addition, they expressed that their divorce has helped them to be an only parent for their children which they consider it as a support mechanism in their post-divorce life. Zerfe, an in-depth interview informant, summed up the views of many:

Having children gives me strength. Because of them, I have become hard worker to change their lives. My children are a source of inspiration and they have helped me to get a hold on life. Despite all the depressing incidents I faced, I have become the happiest and successful woman in life. If I hadn't had my children, I would be lonely and frustrated in life. So, I do enjoy single parenting even if I don't have sufficient time for my children.

By the same token, the findings of the FGD indicate that as a result of having children, the informants are able to build confidence in their lives. These women have achieved personal growth as a result of their engagement in different activities to support and give care for their children and to provide all the basics for their well-being.

The findings of the study indicate that in the aftermath of divorce, most of the informants are able to get their freedom and decision making power and to bear the responsibilities of the children alone. Although the informants expressed the challenges and hardships they

experienced as single parents, they develop positive attitude towards single parenting as it facilitates favorable conditions in their post-divorce lives. They indicated that they have no regret of having children from their past marriage but they are so much grateful for bringing up their children as single mothers. They added that despite their busy life to give ample time to their children, there are instances to spend time with their children and to guide them in their lives. So, they believe that having children is the biggest wealth and they are grateful that they are not living alone after those terrible moments of their lives. Hence, the informants' experiences oppose to the literature by Malia (2005) which stated that the disappointments of being a lone parent can create stress by itself and the level of anxiety can be harmful to individuals and this can lead toward emotional instability. Similarly, Kavas (2010) also indicated that single mothers describe their parenting experience as extremely difficult and the most challenging thing that put their lives under too much pressure. Contrary to the literature, however, the finding of the study shows that children are considered as a support mechanism following divorce. Having a child helps single mothers to get over the trauma of divorce through their companionship, to adjust their disrupted life easily and to be motivated to move on with their lives. In addition, the presence of children inspires divorced mothers to live their lives and to work harder in order to improve their lives.

4.5. Coping Mechanisms

The informants of the study have faced various psychological, social and economical challenges during the post-divorce period. In order to cope with such challenges, most of the study informants cited two mechanisms to overcome the problems. Effective coping during divorce can lead to positive outcomes for these women. This section will discuss the coping

mechanisms the informants of this study have been using in order to overcome the problems they face and to adjust their post divorce lives.

Spirituality

All the in-depth interview and FGD informants reported that their spirituality has helped them greatly and they cited that it has contributed a lot in adjusting their new life condition after divorce. Tsedenia, an in-depth interview informant, reported:

During my divorce process, I heavily relied on God to cope with the various challenges I faced. My church attendance has helped me to have a normal thinking and to adjust life after divorce. I feel tremendous spiritual growth after the break-up. In my moments of sadness, I seek God and he gives me such a comfort. Since divorce, I permanently go to church to find peace of mind and to cope with my difficulties.

Thus, all of the informants' belief in the divine power has enabled them to move on with their new life believing that they have a better future with the help of God. They depend on prayer to get relief from the pain and hurt they face and they think that only God's intervention has facilitated their recovery. Apart from prayer, they express that going to their respective religious institutions also has helped them tremendously and having a closer relation with God gives them satisfaction and happiness in their lives. The informants' experiences give support to what Molina (1999) mentioned that religion and spirituality enables divorced women to endure the difficulties they face as a result of marital disintegration and to experience positive changes in their lives. This indicates that some divorced women use their religion and spirituality as one of the coping strategies to adjust to their post divorce life as having faith in the divine power resolves one's life problems. Divorce is, therefore, an opportunity for positive growth and transformation through spiritual coping mechanisms.

Supportive Network

Over the course of their lives, some of the informants have gained a set of coping mechanisms to overcome challenging situations at the time of divorce. Of the total in-depth interview informants, six of them relied on the supportive network to survive the various life challenges they faced after divorce. Their support comes from their families in addition to their spirituality.

Lydia, an in-depth interview informant, reported:

In my moments of sadness, next to God, my family members were the only ones who were there for me to share my problems. They gave me moral and material support to bear the problems I faced. Since the time of the divorce contemplation until now they have rendered their unlimited support in every aspect that has helped me to reach where I am today. It is such a relief to have my family around and it is because of God and my family I am able to survive.

The findings of the FGD as well show that apart from the informants' spirituality that has made them strong to face the challenges, they are able to cope with their post-divorce troubles as a result of other means.

It is revealed by some of the informants that they heavily relied on their family for so long during their tough time and their family has helped them greatly to adjust to their post-divorce period. It is also indicated that some of the informants have passed their responsibility of child care and domestic chores to their families in time of their busy schedules to accomplish their tasks. Hence, the informants realize that their family members have become a strong source of support for them to cope with their difficulties. This shows that since the Ethiopian society is a collectivist society, individuals mostly share others' work and responsibilities by providing support to those who are highly in need of. This is an indication that families and friends come to the front line as a means of coping strategy and the informants have benefitted from sharing

their problems as well as their responsibilities with them. Hence, families' and friends' help is an important mechanism for divorced women to deal with up with their difficulties.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Summary and Conclusion

This qualitative study has explored and described the psychosocial impacts of divorce on women who have approached the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA) in Addis Ababa seeking free legal assistance. Although the emphasis is on the psychological and social aspects of divorce on women, the research also revolves around the factors that contribute to the disintegration of marital relationship and divorce's overall effects on the well-being of women as well as its general effects on single parenting. The study has examined the lives of women in the aftermath of divorce in wider perspective and looks into the areas where women face challenges as well as opportunities as a result of divorce. In addition, this research has revealed strategies that have been taken by the informants of the study as a coping mechanism in their post divorce adjustment.

Divorce is one of the most traumatic life events that is highly associated with an increase in emotional instability, psychological trauma, reduced social relations, financial depreciation as well as poor physical health. It is the cause of any major life change that can cause great amount of stress and has overwhelming consequences for all individuals from different age group. Similarly, it also has severe and devastating effects on the well-being of children creating prolonged emotional stress, including grief and sorrow. However, apart from the negative consequences of divorce, marital disintegration also brings about favorable conditions for divorced women that enable them to experience the positive effects. It helps women to

experience various opportunities by ending all the strains and stressful situations in their lives which leads to an improvement in their well-being.

The study has also revealed the marital relationship of couples before the dissolution of their marriage. In addition, it is shown that there are different mechanisms to handle marital difficulties as a result of coarse marital situations by involving families, friends and in-laws, using discussion, lenience and confrontation before the break-up. It is also indicated that divorce is initiated by women when they need to liberate themselves from the harsh conditions of their marriage.

Moreover, it is indicated that there are various factors that contribute to the disintegration of marital union such as personal, social, financial, psychological etc that initiated the women to claim for a divorce. The study, thus, has found out that husbands' unfaithfulness and failure to provide financial assistance as well as their domestic abuse as a result of alcohol addiction are the major ones that results in marital dissolution. Challenging marital situations, therefore, induce women to think of divorce as an only alternative to recover from their pain even if they struggle a lot to work out their marital conflicts in order to save their marriage.

The study has shown that women experience a variety of post divorce situations in consequences of marital break-up. Some women experience negative psychological conditions such as fear, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, anger, hatred, revenge which disrupt their overall well-being. In addition, their social life is severely affected making them face the challenging social conditions. This is because of the negative perception of those people around them such as families, friends and in-laws, towards their divorce status. A very few of them are blamed and excluded even by their social networks, and sometimes by their family, because of the

social stigma to divorce which causes immense psychological costs. Economic hardship is the other problem that some divorced women face that exposes them to financial strain particularly if they were not engaged in income generating activities prior to their divorce. Some of these women, who have been dependent on the income of their husbands, therefore, face economic hardships following divorce.

On the other hand, even though some women experience traumatic life events following their marital break-up, there are others who are also able to recover from their pain so quickly as they are able to experience the various opportunities provided by divorce that has given them the way to liberate themselves from all the marriage constraints.

The research conducted has, therefore, found out that marital disintegration has resulted in positive psychological effects such as relief, happiness and freedom, personal growth and confidence for most of the women who have undergone through the process of divorce. In addition, most of them do not feel any regret about ending their marriage but rather they are happy and satisfied with their decisions to end their abusive marital union. The women hence have become comfortable and have started to lead a blissful life which is filled with development and growth in every aspect. Likewise, in the social aspect, it has been found out that the majority of the women have acquired improved social relations in the aftermath of divorce. They are able to attain better social interactions and relations as a result of the positive attitude of the society they are interacting with. Moreover, their interaction with the society has enabled them to exchange various ideas and knowledge on how to deal with their post divorce lives. It is to the researcher's understanding that nowadays in the Ethiopian society, there is social reform and Cultural Revolution that helps the society to change their negative outlook

towards divorce which helps divorced women to experience the positive social effects of divorce.

In a similar vein, the study has found out that most women are able to experience positive economic impacts as divorce allows them to partake in different income generating activities and to experience financial security after they end their abusive marital relationship. This is possible as a result of the contributions of the political economic situations of the government that facilitate micro financing for small scale businesses as well as the privatization that assist those who are in need of liberating themselves from economic hardships they are facing. Furthermore, most of the women take advantage of single parenting as it allows them to exercise their freedom and decision making power and to bear the responsibilities of their children in the absence of their husbands. For these women, children are considered as a support mechanism in the aftermath of divorce as they help them to recover from the trauma of divorce through their companionship, to adjust their disrupted life easily and to be motivated to move on with their lives. Besides, religion and spirituality as well as supportive network from families and friend have helped divorced women to a great extent to adjust well to their post divorce lives.

It is, therefore, important to note that even if divorce results in some traumatic and distressful life experiences and one can label it as a challenging situation in ones later life, the study has affirmed that it also has various beneficial factors psychosocially for those undergoing through the process. Most of the women under study have, thus, become psychologically stable that made them satisfied with their decision to divorce as they are able to achieve an improved peaceful life by leaving a conflicting and abusive relationship. In addition, although the

institution of marriage is a widely accepted social phenomenon in the Ethiopian society, the society at large have become much aware of the downsides of marital conflicts and its related consequences on women that made them develop positive outlook towards divorce. This in turn makes divorce a more socially acceptable phenomenon by minimizing its social and cultural stigma to divorced women greatly. This enables divorcees to improve their social interaction and maintain strong social networks. Likewise, divorce also has freed them from the economic dependence on their husbands as the women are able to earn their own livings in their post-divorce lives. The research has, therefore, concluded that the positive effects of marital disruption have surpassed the downsides of divorce on women as they have benefitted significantly psychosocially in the aftermath of divorce.

However, even if the women's post divorce experience predispose to the many positive effects, it is also found out that most of the women have faced divorce's negative effects with regards to their children's well-being. It is indicated that almost all children of divorcees undergo through severe psychological, social and physiological challenges as a result of father absence in their lives that has severely disrupted their well-being. The children's pain and distress in turn affects the mothers adversely as mothers cannot bear to see their children suffer. In addition, these divorced mothers are required to spend much of their time accomplishing the different responsibilities which as a result make them unable to allocate sufficient time to be deeply involved in the lives of their children. The finding, therefore, has shown that parental conflict followed by marital disintegration has severe negative effects on the lives of children which disrupt their well-being and upbringing.

Therefore, the overall effects of divorce are more positive on those women who have passed through the process of divorce. This indicates that the majority of divorced women under study have benefitted greatly psychologically and socially out of their marital disintegration. This is not, however, the case for children of divorcees as gathered from the lived experience of divorced women.

5.2. Recommendations

Marriage is one of the most respected social values in many societies. It is considered as a commitment that gives rise to strong relationship based on love, trust and respect. As indicated on the findings of this research, the positive effects of divorce have, however, outweighed for the informants of the research psychologically and socially given that they have suffered from the psychological and social challenges within their married life. Taking into account the already existing high values given for marriage within a certain society, it may, hence, seem ironic for one to promote divorce.

There are instances where staying married is no more possible for some couples. In a case where finding a solution has become a dead end and compromise is no longer possible, divorce appears to be the best possible alternative to put an end to the enduring conflicts and intolerance between the married partners. This very fact has also been evidenced in this research.

The separation of the conflicting partners will to some level reduce continuous psychological and social stress although the dissolution may have negative impacts given that the women may have invested a lot to the marriage. Hence, responsible bodies that are involved in the individuals' divorce process should be able to provide access to preliminary psychological

support for those women who are at the verge of dissolving their marriages as well as post divorce counseling to equip them with emotional and psychological strength through the process. On the other hand, children may also be the ones in the front line to suffer from the break up of parents.

Divorce should, therefore, be an option to be considered in order to avoid worse psychological and social pressures that may ensue particularly on women if they are living in a conflicting and abusive relationship. In the case of children, however, proper frequent visitation schedules should be arranged for fathers in order to involve them in their children's lives not to disrupt the children's well-being as a result of the absence of fathers in their lives.

Similarly, policy making bodies should be aware of the overall impacts of divorce to have a comprehensive knowledge both on the negative and positive impacts of divorce on women's well-being prior to proposing statement of ideals. This will, therefore, assist them in putting forward a non prejudiced philosophy in relation to the impacts of marital disintegration on women, to refrain from reflecting a partial approach towards the stated issue and to implicate the overall impact of divorce on women undergoing through the process.

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Annex 1

Informed Consent Form to Participate in Psychological Study

Title of the Research

The Causes and Psychosocial Impacts of Divorce on Women: The Case of EWLA Supported Women

My name is Wubedel Dereje. I am a post-graduate student at the Addis Ababa University. I am conducting this research as part of my senior thesis project in Developmental Psychology. The purpose of my study is to explore the causes and effects of divorce on the psychosocial well-being of women. My study consists of a series of several short interview questions that ask about demographic, personal and relationship information and current attitudes and experiences about your psychological and social conditions during and after divorce. Please answer the questions in the order they are asked. For the purpose of the study, it is best if you answer all the questions, but if there is a question that makes you feel uncomfortable, you are not obliged to give a response.

The information you provide during the study is completely confidential and at no time will your name be associated with the responses you give. If you have any questions about what you will be doing in the study or about the study itself, feel free to ask.

In appreciation for your time, I will pay 100 ETB to each participant for attending the face-to-face interview. No other compensation will be given.

Participant's Permission:

I, the undersigned person, have voluntarily agreed to participate in this research project. I have read and understood the Informed Consent and the conditions of this project. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project by signing my name on the line below. I understand that I may refuse to participate or stop participation at any time without any penalty.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

በሳይኮሎጂ ጥናት ላይ በፈቃደኝነት ስለመሳተፍ የሚገልፅ ቅፅ

የጥናቱ ርዕስ: ፍቺ በሴቶች ስነልቦናዊና ማሕበረሰባዊ ጉዳዮች ላይ ያለው ተጽዕኖ

ስሜ ውብዕድል ደረጃ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የድህረ ምረቃ ተማሪ ስሆን ይህን ጥናት የማከናወነው በዴቪዥኖች ል ሳይኮሎጂ ትምህርት ክፍል ለመመረቁያ ጽሁፌ የሚያገለግለኝ ስለሆነ ነው።

የዚህ ጥናት አላማ ፍቺ በሴቶች ስነልቦናዊ ና ማሕበረሰባዊ ጉዳዮች ላይ የሚያስከትለውን ውጤት ለመመርመር ነው። ጥናቱ ከሚያካትቱ ቸው ጉዳዮች ውስጥ ተከ ይነት ያላቸው ቃለመጠይቅ ሲሆን የግል፣ የቤተሰብ፣ የትዳር ግንኙነት መረጃን ና በፍቺ ጊዜና ክፍቺ በኋላ ስለተከሰቱ ስነልቦናዊና ማሕበረሰባዊ ጉዳዮችን የሚያጠቃልል ይሆናል።

ባክዎን ጥያቄዎቹን ንደቅደም ተከተላቸው ይመልሱ። ሁሉንም ጥያቄዎች ቢመልሱ ለጥናቱ ጠቀሜ የሚኖረው ሲሆን ርስዎን ያላተመቸዎት ጥያቄ ቢኖር ግን ጥያቄዎቹን የመመለስ ግዴ የለበዎትም።

ርስዎ የሚሰጡት ምላሽ በሚስጥር የሚጠበቅ ሲሆን በጥናቱ ላይ ስምዎት የማይገለጽ መሆኑን ገልጸዋል። ስለጥናቱ ወይም ርስዎ በሚሰጡት የቃለመጠይቅ ምላሽ ላይ ማንኛውም አይነት ጥያቄ ቢኖርዎት ምላሽ ያገኛሉ።

ጊዜዎትን ሰውተው በ ኔ ጥናት ላይ ለመሳተፍ በመገኘትዎ ቃለመጠይቁ ሲጠናቀቅ 100 ብር (መቶ ብር) ንደምክፍልዎት አሳውቃለሁ። ነገር ግን ከዚህ በተጨማሪ ምንም አይነት ክፍያ የማይደረግ መሆኑን አሳስባለሁ።

የተሳተ ፊው ፈቃደኝነት:-

ኔ ስሜ ከዚህ በ ች የተገለጸው ተሳ ፊ በራሴ ፈቃደኝነት በዚህ ጥናት ላይ ለመሳተፍ ተስማምቻለሁ። በዚህ ወረቀት ላይ የተገለጸውን ሀሳብ ና የጥናቱን አጠቃላይ ሁኔ አንብቤ ተረድቻለሁ። ስለዚህም በዚህ ጥናት ላይ ለመሳተፍ ፈቃደኝነቴን ከዚህ በ ች በተገለጸው ስሜና ፊርማዬ አረጋግጣለሁ። ነገር ግን በዚህ ጥናት ላይ ላለመሳተፍ ብፈልግ ንካ ያለምንም ቅጣት ቃለመጠይቁን ለማቀረጥም ሙሉ መብት ንዳለኝ ከጽሁፉ ተረድቻለሁ።

ስም _____

ፊርማ _____

ቀን _____

Annex 2

Interview Guide for Divorced Women

Part I. Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Please answer the questions below

Demographic Information

1. Can you tell me about yourself?
 - a) What is your Age?
 - b) What is your Level of Education?
 1. < Grade 8
 2. Grade 9-12
 3. Certificate
 4. Diploma
 5. Undergraduate
 6. Postgraduate
 7. other
 - c) What is your present occupation?
 - d) If you don't work, what is your source of income?

Personal Information

2. How many children do you have? Boys and girls? What are their ages?
3. What is your living arrangement after divorce?
 - a. Living alone
 - b. Living with children/child
 - c. Living with relatives
 - d. Living with parents
 - e. other

Relationship Information

4. How long did your marriage last?
5. How long has it been since you are divorced?
6. Who took the initiative to file for a divorce?

7. If it was your idea, how long did you contemplate getting a divorce before finally deciding to do so? Why?

a) How did your husband react on this?

Part II. Individual Interview Guide

Information on the Effect of Divorce on Women's Well-being

A. Divorce Contemplation

8. Describe what your marriage was like?

9. Did you encounter frequent clashes with your husband? Why?

10. What are the most significant reasons that led to divorce?

B. Psychological Issues

11. Can you tell me what it was like when you started considering the possibility of no longer being married? What were your feelings when you started considering this?

a) How did you act on these feelings?

12. How is your psychological condition after divorce? Do you think your psychological well-being is disrupted as a result of divorce? How?

13. How do you see life after divorce?

a) Do you say you had an undesirable marital life? Do you think you made the right decision to divorce? Why?

b) When your marriage ended, did you feel you lost an important relationship or did you regret it? Why?

14. How do you perceive yourself with respect to divorce? What do you feel about being a divorced woman?

15. Can you mention the type of emotional states that describe your condition during divorce?
16. Can you mention the type of emotional states that describe your condition after divorce?
17. How do you feel about yourself now?
 - a) Are you satisfied or frustrated with yourself?
18. What do you feel after divorce? Why?
 - a) What do you do to deal with your feelings, needs and problems relating to the effect of divorce?
19. What are the most difficult psychological challenges you faced following divorce? Can you mention the most difficult and devastating events you have to go through as a result of divorce?
20. What opportunities arise for you in the post-divorce life?
 - a) What do you like best about your life after divorce?
21. What is your feeling toward your ex-husband?
 - a) What do you feel about him?
 - b) Do you miss him?
 - c) What actions do you take to get a solution?
22. What new behaviours have you developed after divorce? Why and how did you develop these behaviours?

Part III. Interview on the Effect of Divorce on Women's Social Relations

A. Social Issues

23. Did you tell your family and friends about your marital problems before proceeding to the divorce process?
 - a) How did they react to your problems and your decision to divorce? How were you supported?
24. Who would you turn to in case of any difficulty in life other than your relatives and friends?

25. What type of relationship do you have with your ex-husband?
26. How is your social life and networking?
- a) How do you see the respect that you receive from family, friends and the rest of the community after your divorce?
27. What is the current status of your social networks? How do you best describe your social interaction with others after divorce?
- a) How is your relation with your married friends?
- b) How is your current relationship with the common friends you and your ex-husband share?
- c) How is your relationship with the family of your ex-husband?
28. What do you do during your free time?
29. Have you ever been exposed to abuse (physical, sexual, verbal) or social stigma of any kind from the society? If yes, please explain why and how it happened?
30. How do you evaluate your current participation in different social activities when compared with the time before divorce?
31. What is your current participation in social activities like in *Idir* and *Iqub*? How do you see the people's attitude towards you?

Part IV. Interview on the Effect of Single Parenting and Work

32. What kind of problems do you face after becoming the head of the household?
33. Where do the children stay after divorce?
- a) If they are staying with their father, how often do you visit them?
- b) How is your visitation arrangement working out?
- c) How do you feel about not being able to raise your children?
34. If all the children are staying with you, have your ex-husband been visiting the children?

- a) How often does he pay a visit? Do you face any problem with that?
35. Do you receive child support from your ex-husband?
- a) How much is per month?
 - b) For how many children?
 - c) Do you get the support on time?
 - d) Do you think it is enough?
36. What are the challenges you are facing in raising the children in a single parent household?
- a) How do you manage to give ample time for your children? Who takes care of the children when you are away?
 - b) Who shares your responsibilities for your children? How do you manage?
 - c) How do you meet the needs of your children as a single parent?
37. What is it like for you to be a single mother? How do you feel about it?
- a) What meanings does it have for you?
 - b) What are the best parts?
 - c) What are the worst parts?
38. How do you manage work and social and personal life?
- a) Do you think life has become easy or hard after the divorce? How?
 - b) How do you operate on a day to day basis?

Part V. Recommendations

39. In your opinion, what should be done to reduce the causes and effects of divorce in the Ethiopian society?
40. What advice would you give to divorced women?

41. What is the perception of the Ethiopian society towards divorce? Can you tell me from your personal feeling and experience? What should be done by the government and the society with respect to divorce?

ክፍል 1. ከቃለመጠይቅ በፊት የሚጠየቁ ጥያቄዎች

እባክዎን ከዚህ በታች ያሉትን ጥያቄዎች ይመልሱ

ግላዊ መረጃ

1. ስለራስዎ ሊነግሩኝ ይችላሉ?

ሀ. ዕድሜዎት ስንት ነው?

ለ. የትምህርት ደረጃዎ ምንድነው?

- 1. 8ኛ ክፍል 2. 9ኛ-12ኛ 3. ስርተፊኬት 4. ዲፕሎማ 5. ቅድመ ምረቃ
- 6. ድህረ ምረቃ 7. ሌላ

ሐ. ባሁኑ ሰዓት በምን ስራ ላይ ተሰማርተው ይገኛሉ?

መ. የማይሰሩ ከሆን ገቢዎት ምንድነው?

የቤተሰብ መረጃ

2. ስንት ልጆች አሉዎት? ወንድ? ሴት? ድሜያቸው ስንት ነው?

3. ከፍቺ በኋላ የኑሮ ሁኔ ምን ዓይነት ነው?

ሀ. ለብቻ መኖር ለ. ከልጅ/ልጆች ጋር መኖር ሐ. ከዘመዶች ጋር መኖር

መ. ከወላጆች ጋር መኖር ሠ. ሌላ

የትዳር ግንኙነት መረጃ

4. ትዳርዎ ስንት ጊዜ ቆየ?

5. ከተፋቱ ስንት ጊዜ ሆነዎት?

6. የፍቺውን ጉዳይ የጀመረው ማን ነው? የፍቺው ጉዳይ ንዲክፈት ያደረገው ማን ነው?

7. ርስዎ ከሆኑ ፍቺን ከመወሰንዎ በፊት ስለፍቺ ሲያስቡ ምን ያህል ጊዜ ወሰደብዎት? /ቆየ?

ሀ. ባለቤትዎ በዚህ ጉዳይ ላይ ምን አሉ?

ክፍል 2. የግል ቃለመጠይቅ መመሪያ

ፍቺ በሴቶች ደህንነት ዙሪያ ላይ የሚያስከትለውን ውጤት የሚመለከት

ሀ. ስለፍቺ ማሰብን የሚመለከት

8. ትዳርዎ ንዴት ንደነበር ይግለፁ?

9. በተደጋጋሚ ከባለቤትዎ ጋር ግጭት ያጋጥምዎት ነበር? ለምን?

10. ለፍቺ ከዳረገዎት ጉዳይ ዋናዎቹን ምንድናቸው?

ለ. ስነልቦናዊ ጉዳዮችን የሚመለከት

11. የጋብቻ ሕይወትን ለማቆም ሲያስቡት ንዴት ንደነበር ሊነግሩኝ ይችላሉ? ስሜትዎስ ንዴት ነበር?

ሀ. በስሜትዎ ላይ ምን ርምጃን ወሰዱ?

12. ከፍቺ በኋላ ደህንነትዎ ንዴት ነው? በፍቺ ምክንያት ስነልቦናዊ ደህንነትዎ የተናጋ ይመስልዎልል?

13. ከፍቺ በኋላ ሕይወትን እንዴት ያዩልል?

ሀ. አለስፈላጊ የትዳር ሕይወት ነበረኝ ብለው ያስባሉ? የፍቺ ውሳኔዎት ትክክለኛ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?

ለ. ትዳርዎት ሲፈርስ በጣም የሚፈልጉት ግንኙነት ንደፈረስ ተሰምቶዎት ነበር ወይም ቆጭቶዎት ነበር? ለምን?

14. ራስዎን ከፍቺ ጋር ንዴት ያዩልል? ፈት ሴት በመሆንዎ ምን ይሰማዎልል?

15. ከፍቺ በፊት ምን አይነት ስሜት ዊነት/ፀባይ ንደነበረዎት ሊገልጹልኝ ይችላሉ?

16. ከፍቺ በኋላ ምን አይነት ስሜት ዊነት/ፀባይ ንደነበረዎት ሊገልጹልኝ ይችላሉ?

17. በአሁኑ ጊዜ ስለራስዎት ምን ይሰማዎልል?

ሀ. በራስዎ ረክተዎልል ወይስ ተስፋ ቆርጠዎልል?

18. ከፍቺ በኋላ ምን አይነት ስሜት ተሰምቶዎታል? ለምን?

ሀ. በፍቺ ምክንያት ለተከሰቱብዎ ስሜት፤ ፍላጎትና ችግሮችን ለመቋቋም ምን አድርገዎልል?

19. ፍቺ ከተፈጸመ በኋላ በጣም አስቸጋሪ የስነልቦና ውጣውረዶችዎ ምንድናቸው? ማለፍ የነበረበዎት በጣም አስቸጋሪና ከባድ ክንውን ሊጠቅሱልኝ ይችላሉ?

20. ከፍቺ ሕይወትዎ በኋላ ምን አይነት ድሎች ገጥሞዎልል?

ሀ. ከፍቺ ሕይወትዎ በኋላ የወደዱት ነገር ምንድነው?

21. ለቀድሞ ባለቤትዎ ያለዎት ስሜት ምንድነው?

ሀ. ስለሱ ምን ይሰማዎታል?

ለ. ይናፍቆዎልል ወይ?

ሐ. መፍትሔ ለማግኘት ምን አይነት ርምጃን ወስደዎልል?

22. ከፍቺ በኋላ ያመጡት አዳዲስ አመሎች/ፀባዮች ምንድናቸው? ነዚህን አመሎች/ፀባዮች ለምን ና ንዴት ሊያመጣቸው ቻሉ?

ክፍል 3. ፍቺ በሴቶች ማህበረሰባዊ ግንኙነት ላይ የሚያስከትለውን ውጤት የሚመለከት

ሀ. ማህበረሰባዊ ጉዳዮችን የሚመለከት

23. የፍቺን ጉዳይ ከመጀመርዎ በፊት ለቤተሰብዎቻችን ና ለጓደኞቻችን በትዳርዎ ላይ ስለነበረው ችግሮች ነግረዋቸው ነበር?

ሀ. ስለችግርዎና ስለፍቺ ውሳኔዎ አቀባበላቸው ንዴት ነበር? ርዳ ቸው በምን መልኩ ነበር?

24. ከቤተሰቦችዎና ከጓደኞችዎ ሌላ በሕይወትዎ ችግር ሲገጥምዎት ወደማን ይሄዳሉ?

25. ከቀድሞ ባለቤትዎ ጋር ያለዎት ግንኙነት ምን ዓይነት ነው?

26. ማህበረሰባዊ ሕይወትዎና ግንኙነትዎ ንዴት ነው?

ሀ. ከፍቺ በኋላ ከቤተሰቦችዎ፣ ከጓደኞችዎና ከቀሪው ማህበረሰብ የሚያገኙትን ክብር ንዴት ይመለከቱ ል?

27. በአሁኑ ጊዜ ማህበረሰባዊ ግንኙነትዎ ምን ይመስላል? ከፍቺ በኋላ ከማህበረሰቡ ጋር ያለዎትን ግንኙነት ንዴት ይገልጹ ል?

ሀ. ካገቡ ጓደኞችዎት ጋር ያለዎት ግንኙነት ንዴት ነው?

ለ. ባሁኑ ጊዜ ከቀድሞ ባለቤትዎ ጋር ከፈሯቸው ጓደኞች ጋር ያለዎት ግንኙነት ንዴት ነው?

ሐ. ከቀድሞ ባለቤትዎ ዘመዶች ጋር ያለዎት ግንኙነት ንዴት ነው?

28. በትርፍ ጊዜዎ ምን ያደርጋሉ?

29. ከማህበረሰቡ ለጥቃት (አከላዊ፣ ዋ፣ የቃላት) ወይም ለመገለል ተጋልጠው ያውቃሉ? አዎ ከሆነ ለምን ና ንዴት ንደደረሰበዎ ባክዎ ይግለጹልኝ?

30. ከፍቺ በፊትና በኋላ ያለውን ሕይወትዎን ሲያነጻጽሩ በአሁኑ ጊዜ በማህበራዊ ጉዳዮች ላይ ያለዎትን ተሳትፎ ሲመዘኑት ንዴት ነው?

31. በ ድር፣ በ ቁብና በመሳሰሉት ማህበረሰባዊ ዙሪያ ላይ ያለዎት ተሳትፎ ምን ይመስላል? ሕዝቡ ለ ርስዎ ያለዎት አመለካከት ንዴት ነው?

ለ. በአንድ ወላጅ የሚመራ ቤተሰብና ስራን የሚመለከት

32. የቤተሰብ ላፊ ከሆኑ በኋላ ምን አይነት ችግሮች ገጥሞዎ ል?

33. ከፍቺ በኋላ ልጆችዎ ከማን ጋር ነው ያሉት?

ሀ. ከአባ ቸው ጋር ከሆነ በየስንት ጊዜው ይጎበኛቸዋል?

ለ. የጉብኝት ጊዜዎት በምን ደረጃ ላይ ነው ያለው?

ሐ. ልጆቻችን ማሳደግ ባለመቻልዎ ምን ይሰማዎ ል?

34. ሁሉም ልጆች ከ ርስዎ ጋር ጋር ከሆኑ የቀድሞ ባለቤትዎ ይጎበኛቸዋል ወይ?

ሀ. በየምን ያህል ጊዜ ይጎበኛቸዋል ወይ? ከዚህ ጋር በተያያዘ ችግር ገጥሞዎ ል ወይ?

35. ከቀድሞ ባለቤትዎ ለልጆች የማሳደጊያ ድጋፍ ይደርስዎ ል ወይ?

ሀ. በወር ምን ያህል?

ለ. ለስንት ልጆች?

ሐ. ድጋፉን በትክክለኛው ጊዜ ያገኛሉ ወይ?

መ. በቂ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ ወይ?

36. ልጆቻችን በአንድ ወላጅ የሚመራ ቤተሰብ ውስጥ በማሳደግ የገጠመዎት ችግር ምንድነው?

ሀ. ለልጆቻችን በቂ ጊዜን መስጠትን ንዴት ተቋቋሙት? ርስዎ በማይኖሩበት ጊዜ ልጆቹን ማን ይንከባከባቸዋል?

ለ. ለልጆቻችን ያለበዎትን ላፊነት ማን ያግዝዎ ል? ንዴትስ ተቋቋሙት?

ሐ. ንዴ ብቸኛ ወላጅ ለልጆቻችን የሚያስፈልጋቸውን ነገሮች ንዴት ያሟላሉ?

37. ለ ርስዎ ብቸኛ ወላጅ መሆን ምን ይመስላል? ምን ይሰማዎ ል?

ሀ. ለ ርስዎ ምን ትርጉም አለው?

ለ. በጣም ጥሩ ጎኑ ምንድነው?

ሐ. በጣም መጥፎ ጎኑ ምንድነው?

38. ስራን፤ የግልና ማሕበራዊ ሕይወትዎን ንዴት ያጣጥሙ ል?

ሀ. ከፍቺ በኋላ ሕይወት ቀላል ወይስ ከባድ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ? ንዴት?

ለ. የየዕለት ሕይወትዎን ንዴት ይመራሉ?

ክፍል 5. አስተያየት

39. በ ርስዎ አስተያየት በኢትዮጵያ ህብረተሰብ ውስጥ የፍቺን መንስኤና መዘዝ ለመቀነስ ምን መደረግ አለበት?

40. ለተፋቱ ሴቶች ምን አይነት ምክር ይሰጣሉ?

41. የኢትዮጵያ ህብረተሰብ ስለፍቺ ያለው አመለካከት ምን ይመስላል? ይህንን ከ ርስዎ የግል ስሜትና ሕይወት ቢገልጹልኝ? ከመንግስት ምን መደረግ አለበት ይላሉ?

Annex 3

FGD Guide for Divorced Women

1. What were your expectations about what you would get out of marriage? Do you think divorce is desirable or not?
2. What are the positive and negative aspects of divorce?
3. What lessons do you get from divorce that you could give others as an advice?
4. How did you cope with the situation?

ክፍል 6. የቡድን ቃለመጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. ከትዳር ምን አገኛለሁ ብላችሁ ትጠብቁ ነበር? ፍቺ ጠቃሚ ነው ወይስ አይደለም ብላችሁ ስባላችሁ? ለምን?
2. የፍቺ አዎን ዊና አሉ ዊ ገጽ ምንድናቸው?
3. ለሌሎች ምክርን ለመስጠት ሲባል ክፍቺ ምን አይነት ትምሕርትን አግኝተናል?
4. ክፍቺ በኋላ ሁኔታዎችን ንዴት መቋቋም ቻላችሁ?

Annex 4

Key Informant Interview Guide (Head of Legal Aid & Project Coordinator of EWLA)

1. How much of the service your Association is giving to the beneficiaries benefitting the target group?
2. What is your general opinion about the conditions of women who approach EWLA? What are the challenges they face?
3. What are the policies the Association uses to address the challenges of divorced women? If there is, can you mention the strengths and the drawbacks?
4. Does the Association respond to all the needs of divorced women?

ለሕብረሰብ የሕግ ምክር አገልግሎት ክፍል ላይ ና ፕሮጀክት አስተባባሪ ቃለመጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. ማሕበሩ ምን ያህሉን አገልግሎት ለተጠቃሚዎች ይሰጣል?
2. ወደ ሕብረሰብ የሚመጡት ሴቶች አጠቃላይ ሁኔታ በ ርስዎ አስተያየት ምን ይመስላል? ምን አይነት ችግሮች ይገጥሟቸዋል?
3. ማሕበሩ የተፋቺ ሴቶችን ችግር ለማሳወቅ የሚጠቀምባቸው ፖሊሲዎች ምንድናቸው? ከለ ጠንክራና ደክማ ጎኑን ቢጠቅሱልኝ?
4. ማሕበሩ የተፋቺ ሴቶችን አጠቃላይ ፍላጎት ምላሽ ይሰጣል?

Annex 5

Key Informant Interview Guide (Client Attendant & Registration Officer of EWLA)

1. How many women with marriage issues approach EWLA each day?
2. What kind of problems are they faced with?
3. What is the age group/range of the women seeking EWLA's assistance?
4. What is the psychological and social situation of the women who approach EWLA?

ለሕብረሰብ ንግዳ ተቀባይ ና የምዝገባ ሰራተኛ ቃለመጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. ከጋብቻ ጋር በተያያዘ ጉዳይ በየቀኑ ምን ያህል ሴቶች ወደ ሕብረሰብ ይመጣሉ?
2. ምን አይነት ችግሮች ይገጥሟቸዋል?
3. የሕብረሰብን ርዳ ፈልገው የሚመጡት ሴቶች የ ድሜ ክልላቸው ምን ያህል ነው?
4. ወደ ሕብረሰብ ከሚመጡት ሴቶች ውስጥ የስነልቦናዊና የማሕበረሰባዊ ሁኔታቸው ንዴት ነው?

Annex 6

Background Characteristics of Interview and FGD Informants

No.	Pseudonyms	Age	No. of Children	Education	Profession	Living Arrangement	Years of Divorce
1.	Abeba	53	3	N/A	Freelancer	With ex-husband & Children	2 years
2.	Tsedenia	50	3	12+3	Housewife	With Children	3 years
3.	Haben	36	3	12 th Grade	Small scale business-woman	With family & Children	1 year
4.	Lydia	23	1	10 + 2	Housewife	With family & Child	2 years
5.	Tsehai	39	2	6 th Grade	Business-woman	With Children	3 years
6.	Arsema	28	1	Degree	Employed in NGO	With family & Child	1 year
7.	Mahlet	27	2	12 th Grade	Self-employed	With family & Children	2 years
8.	Dina	30	2	10 + 2	Employee at Govt's Hospital	With Children	2 years
9.	Zerfe	43	3	Cooking Diploma	Restaurant Chef	With Children	3 years
10.	Kebebush	39	4	12 th Grade	Hair Stylist	With Children	3 years
11.	Zufan	35	3	5 th Grade	Gatekeeper	With family & Children	1 year
12.	Lemlem	29	2	8 th Grade	Serving Church	With Children	3 years
13.	Mame	47	1	12 th Grade	Cashier	With Child	2 years
14.	Hilina	40	2	10 th Grade	Waitress	With Children	2 years
15.	Tirhas	36	3	9 th Grade	Business woman	With Children	1 year
16.	Martha	26	1	5 th Grade	Waitress	With family & Child	2 years

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University and that all sources of materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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