

# A STUDY OF SELF PERCEPTION AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE- COMPARING DIVORCED AND NON DIVORCED WOMEN

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Divorce is commonly recognized as a major problem in our society. It is not simply an event or simply the ending of a marriage. It is a life changing transition which is complex, unfamiliar and frequently scary. Also it is not a happy matter for anyone involved. The act of divorcing a spouse is essentially the act of shattering the most important hopes and dreams that either of them had. Women seeking divorce come up against with many problems. They face possible loss of their children, usually no financial security, and their identity changes in the eyes of society. There are even times that the result of a traumatic divorce causes women to have mental breakdowns and even severe stress related health problems. In this context, the present study was aimed to compare the self perception and emotional intelligence of divorced and non-divorced women. The sample of the study comprised of 20 divorced and 20 non-divorced working women who were selected from Srinagar district. For the selection of divorced women, purposive sampling technique was used whereas non-divorced women were selected randomly. The tools used for the present study were two standardized scales viz Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and Scales Measuring Self Perception (SMSP). Results revealed that majority of the respondents among divorced group were found to score average on Self Perception Scale whereas, respondents from intact families scored high on the said scale, which indicates that divorce does have a bearing influence on the self perception of women. In addition to it, it was found that women from intact families had better scores on Emotional Intelligence Scale and on its dimensions in comparison to majority of the divorced women. The results thus summarize that while drawing a comparison between divorced and non-divorced women, it was found that women from intact families performed better in both the areas under study i.e. self-perception and emotional intelligence as compared to separated women.*

**Keywords:** *Women, Divorce, Self Perception, Emotional Intelligence.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Women are the nuclei of a society. In traditional society, women's role was limited to the family. Since she was the bearer of the children, she was fully occupied with her role as a mother and home maker. However in due course of time, factors like urbanization, industrialization and women's education have profoundly changed these traditional conditions. By now, it has become an established fact that women have been stepping out of their traditional status of being confined to the environment of their family and society to advance towards development and prosperity. Women have been an inspiration for many writers for centuries. They have been celebrated as symbols of beauty, affection and strength, and we usually connect them with motherhood and

raising children. The works about women very often reveal not only lives of women, but they also describe the times and problems they had to face and they provide a very clear picture about the whole society of the times when these works were created. After centuries of conforming to female stereotypes created by men, women are slowly taking control of their own image making. Image of being equal to the men and being able to face the reality of life on their own, without men's support. But it would also be pertinent to mention here that women in contemporary times are confronted with various issues among which divorce seems to be the most crucial. Divorce is the legal dissolution of marriage. It is not a solo act nor it is a victimless phenomenon. It usually involves confusion, loss, grief, betrayal, anger, frustration, failure, depression, trauma, fear and ultimately, acceptance. But it is very uncommon for both members of a couple to decide together to separate. Usually one spouse continues an attachment to his/her marriage. Divorce radically alters the structure of the family. It creates tense conflicts and divided loyalties. It forces parents to drastically adjust their parenting roles and embroils extended family members in a battle to reaffirm loyalties and realign alliances. The effect of divorce can thus change virtually every aspect of a person's life especially women's, including where the person lives, with whom she lives, her standard of living, her emotions, assets and liabilities, time spent with children and other family members and much more. Some effects can be positive such as ending an unhappy or even abusive relationship. Other effects of divorce can be detrimental to a person's well being. Self perception that is concept of one's own self has been seen to be the most affected among divorced women, who feel what the society will think of them which not only lowers their self concept but also hampers their adjustment in the environment. For many women, divorce involves a threat to their self-esteem and to core elements of their self-image as a spouse or parent. Consequently, they need to save face. Whereas some experience the rejection inherent in divorce as a blow to their self esteem, others experience it as a total humiliating assault on the self. The degree to which individuals feel assaulted, depends on the degree of their narcissistic vulnerability i.e. on the strength, and the adequacy of integration of their preparatory self-identity. Dismissed, disrespected, and devalued, they seek recognition and validation from others. Possibly the saddest and most painful situations among divorcing couples are those in which one or both of the spouses remain powerfully emotionally attached to the other. In these cases, couples continually seek to re-engage but find their expectations disappointed and their hopes repeatedly thwarted. Apart from this the emotional trauma that occurs during the crises of separation and divorce is enormously disruptive and debilitating. The sense of failure and loss that accompanies the marital break down frequently results in feelings of disappointment, bitterness, loneliness, detention and depression. The feeling of inadequacy and abandonment can be overwhelming.

The process of divorce is often more emotionally traumatic for the women because women are usually found to be less able to cope with the separation. After divorce, the women's sense of loss often increases, leading to great sadness, depression and anxiety especially on special occasions, such as birthdays, holidays etc. Fear of desertion, feelings of guilt over having been responsible for the divorce, developmental regression, sleep disorders, physical complaints, depression and anxiety disorders have been found very common among divorced women. The present research has thus been undertaken, keeping the aforesaid facts into consideration, to study the impact (if any) of divorce with special reference to self perception and emotional intelligence of women.

### **1.1. Objectives Of The Study**

a. To study the self perception of divorced and non divorced women.

- b. To assess the emotional intelligence of divorced women and non divorced women.
- c. To compare the above said groups on the dimensions of self perception and emotional intelligence.

### 1.2. Limitations Of The Study

- The sample of the study comprised of only 40 divorced and non divorced women in equal ratio i.e. 20 respondents from each group.
  - Only working divorced and non divorced women were included in the study.
- The locale of the study has been confined to Srinagar district only.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITRERATURE

For the present study, the review data on related studies has been arraged as under:

A study by Catherine, E.R. (2003) revealed that mean aggression, mean depression, anxiety and schizophrenic thinking was significantly high in divorced women as compared to married women.

Lillberg, K. (2003) in his study on stressful events and risk of breast cancer revealed that there are five major stressful events which include death of husband, divorce / separation, personal illness, injures, loss of job, death of a family member or friend. Using statistical tests it was found that divorce / separation stands out as the most stressful life event that is likely to predict breast cancer.

A study conducted by Waite, L. (2003) in the University of Chicago analyzed the relationship between marriages, divorce and happiness by using the National Survey of Family and House hold. It was revealed that many people are no happier after divorce.

An article published by in the Oklahoma Bar Journal (2004) claimed that people who have been in divorced families have higher rates of alcoholism and other substance abuse compared to those who have never been divorced.

Moines, D. and Lorenz, F. (2006) conducted a study at Lowe University on divorced women who were suffering from chronic illness. Results were obtained from the rural Iowa women who were interviewed three times in early 1990s and again in 2001. Among the 416 women interviewed, 102 were recently divorced. The divorced women reported 7 percent higher level of psychological distress then married women. They did not report any difference in physical illness at that time. It further adds that the act of getting a divorce produced no immediate.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology plays an important role in research work. Until and unless the methodology is correct, no research work can give correct and authentic result.

### 3.1. Sample Description

The sample group for the present study comprised of women, between the age group of 25-55 years which were divided into two groups i.e. divorced and non divorced women. The size of the sample was 40 divorced and non divorced women in equal ratio that is 20 respondents from each group. For selecting the sample, the criteria considered were:-

Age group: Both divorced and non divorced women between the age group of 25-50 years were selected for the study.

Occupation: Only working divorced and non divorced women were included in the study.

### 3.1.1. Sampling Technique:

For selecting divorced women, purposive sampling technique was used where as for the selection of the non divorced women random sampling technique was made use of.

### 3.2. Tools Used For The Study

The tools used for data gathering were:-

Emotional Intelligence Scale & Scale Measuring Self Perception. The above mentioned scales are briefly described as follows:

Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS):-Emotional Intelligence Scale had been developed by Anukool Hyde, Sanydot Dethe and Upinder Dhar in 2001. In the test 34 items are given and all these are based on 10 factors viz Self awareness, Empathy, Self motivation, Emotional stability, Managing relations, Integrity, Value Orientation, Commitment, and Altruistic behaviour.

### Norms for the interpretation of raw scores of Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)

INTERPRETATION	RAW SCORE
Normal Range	52-84
High	85 and above
LOW	51 and below

### Norms for factor- wise interpretation of raw scores of Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Factor s	Self awareness	Empty	Self motivation	Emotional relations	Managing relations	Integrity	Value orientation	Commitment	Altristic behavior
Normal range	4-10	7-14	9-17	4-10	5-11	4-7	2-5	2-5	2-5
High	11 & above	15 & above	18 & above	11 & above	12 & above	8 & above	6 & above	6 & above	6 & above
Low	3 & below	6 & below	8 & below	3 & below	4 & below	3 & below	1 & below	1 & below	1 & below

Administration and Scoring :- The Emotional Intelligence Scale was administered on a group of divorced and non divorced women (both working) in the age group of 25-55 years. Before administration of the scale, the consent of the respondents was sought and they were assured of confidentiality. It was stressed that there is no right and wrong answer and no time limit for the completion of the scale. It was duly emphasized that all statements have to be responded and no statement should be left unanswered. For scoring, the rating ranged from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree to Strongly Disagree. Each item or statement was scored as 5 for Strongly Agree, 4 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 2 for Disagree and 1 for Strongly Disagree.

Scales Measuring Self Perception ( SMSP)

The Scales Measuring Self Perception has been developed by K.G. Agrawal in 1991. The Scale comprises of 40 items and consists of two sub scales i.e. Self Regard and Self Acceptance. Self Regard (S.R) measures affirmation of self because of worth or strength and it consists of 16 items .On the other hand, self acceptance (S. A) measures affirmation or acceptance of self, inspite of weakness or deficiencies and consists of 26 items.

**Norms for interpretation of raw scores of Scales Measuring Self Perception ( SMSP)**

INTERPRETATION	RAW SCORE
Low Self Perception	Up to17
Average	18-29
High	30 - 40

**Norms for the interpretation of raw scores of Self Regard (SR)**

INTERPRETATION	RAW SCORE
Low	Up to 5
Average	6 - 10
High	11-16

**Norms for the interpretation of raw scores of Self Acceptance (SA)**

INTERPRETATION	RAW SCORE
Low	Up to 9
Average	10 - 18
High	18-26

Administration and Scoring: The Scale measuring Self Perception was administrated on 20 divorced and 20 non divorced women (both working) between the age group of 25-55 years. Each respondent was asked to read the statements carefully before marking her preference. In certain cases, the statements were read aloud and translated in simple terms by the investigator for those who faced difficulty in reading or understanding. For scoring, the correct response (which has been indicated on the manual of the scale) was scored as one for both the subscales of Self Acceptance and Self Regard which when combine measures self perception.the higher the score, the greater is the self perception of individual.

**3.3. Data Analysis**

After the required information was gathered, the data was carefully analyzed and interpreted. In order to quantify the data, was coded and processed through a software namely SPSS (Software Package for Social Science). The data was analyzed by using column percentages; chi square analysis and the level of significance which were obtained through

\*\*\*  $P \geq 0.05$  - Insignificant.

\*\*  $P \leq 0.05$  – significant .

\*  $P \geq 0.01$  – highly significant

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1 shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 60.00% between the age group of 25- 45 years scored average on the scale of Self Perception. Such relation between age of women and Self perception was found insignificant. ( $p \geq 0.05$ ) Furthermore, the educational status of women was divided into three groups graduates, post graduates and Ph.D. Majority of women i.e. 46.67% having professional and doctorate degrees scored average on self perception. Thus the data depicts that there is insignificant relationship between educational status and self perception. Moreover, the Table indicates that majority of the divorced respondents i.e. 60.00% were found to score average on self perception whereas, 58.13% of non divorced respondents scored high on the Self Perception Scale. Statistically the data depicts that the relationship between marital status and Self perception was found insignificant. ( $P \geq 0.05$ ). The data thus indicates that divorce does effect the self perception of women to some extent which caused them to score average on the scale of Self Perception where as women from intact families would score high on the Scale. This may be attributed to the fact that marriage in our society is considered to be an institution of vital importance. Its success or failure is often linked with the personal characteristics and attributes of the partners especially women's. So, most of the women believe that if their marriage has failed, they have failed as individuals also thus hampering their self perception.

**Table 4.1 Self Perception**

VARIABLE	RESPONSE	SELF PERCEPTION								X <sup>2</sup> ANALYSIS
		Low		AVERAGE		HIGH		TOTAL		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
AGE (YEARS)	UP TO 25	-	-	-	-	5	20.83	5	12.50	
	25-45	-	-	9	60.00	14	58.33	23	57.50	*** 6.734
	45-55	1	100.00	6	40.00	5	20.83	12	30.00	
	Total	1	100.00	15	100.00	24	100.00	40	100.00	
Education status	Up to graduate	-	-	3	20.00	8	33.33	11	27.50	
	Post Graduate	-	-	5	33.33	7	29.17	12	30.00	*** 2.224
	Doctorate & professional	1	100.00	7	46.67	9	37.50	17	42.50	
	Total	1	100.00	15	100.00	24	100.00	40	100.00	
Marital status	Divorced	1	100.00	9	60.00	10	41.67	20	50.00	
	Non divorced	-	-	6	40.00	14	58.13	20	50.00	*** 2.264
	TOTAL	1	100.00	15	100.00	24	100.00	40	100.00	
*** P VALUE $\geq 0.05$ COLUMN PERCENTAGE Degree of freedom in subscripts of X <sup>2</sup> — valued N -40										

Similar findings have been reported by Catherine, E. (2003) in her study she has revealed that mean self perception was significantly low in divorced women as compared to mean self perception in married women.

**Table 4.2 Self Regard**

VARIABLE	RESPONSE	SELF REGARD								X <sup>2</sup> ANALYSIS
		Low		AVERAGE		HIGH		TOTAL		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
AGE (YEARS)	UP TO 25	-	-	1	10.00	4	12.29	5	12.50	
	25-45	1	50.00	6	60.00	16	57.14	22	57.50	*** 0.684
	45-55	1	50.50	3	30.00	8	28.57	12	30.00	
	Total	2	100.00	10	100.00	28	100.00	40	100.00	
Marital status	Divorced	1	50.00	5	50.00	14	50.00	20	100.00	
	Non divorced	1	50.00	5	50.00	14	50.00	20	100.00	*** 0.002
	TOTAL	2	100.00	10	100.00	28	100.00	40	200.00	

\*\*\* P VALUE  $\geq 0.05$   
COLUMN PERCENTAGE  
Degree of freedom in subscripts of X<sup>2</sup> — valued  
N -40

Table 4.2 while assessing the respondents on self regard i.e. one of the components of self perception, it was revealed that between the age group of 25 -45 years, majority of the respondents i.e. 60.00% scored on the average level. Statistically, there is an insignificant relationship between the age and Self Regard. Further, the Table signifies that 50.00% of the respondents both in the divorced and non divorced groups scored high on the dimension of Self Regard whereas, the remaining 50.00% in the both groups scored average on this dimension. Thus such findings indicate an insignificant ( $P \geq 0.05$ ) relationship between Self Regard and marital status.

**Table 4.3 Self Acceptance**

VARIABLE	RESPONSE	SELF ACCEPTANCE								X <sup>2</sup> ANALYSIS
		Low		AVERAGE		HIGH		TOTAL		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
AGE (YEARS)	UP TO 25	-	-	1	8.33	4	14.29	5	12.50	
	25-45	-	-	8	66.67	15	53.57	23	57.50	*** 0.632
	45-55	-	-	3	25.00	9	32.14	12	30.00	
	Total	-	-	12	100.00	28	100.00	40	100.00	
Marital status	Divorced	-	-	11	91.67	9	32.14	20	50.00	
	Non divorced	-	-	1	8.33	19	67.86	20	50.00	*** 11.910
	TOTAL	-	-	12	100.00	28	100.00	40	100.00	

\* P VALUE  $\leq 0.01$   
\*\*\* P VALUE  $\geq 0.05$   
COLUMN PERCENTAGE  
Degree of freedom in subscripts of X<sup>2</sup> — valued  
N -40

The above Table 4.3 signifies that most of the respondents i.e. 66.67% between the age group of 25-45 years scored average on the dimension of Self Acceptance. Such relationship between self acceptance and age was found statistically insignificant ( $P \geq 0.05$ ). The Table further indicates that majority of the respondents i.e. 91.67% among divorced women were found to score average on the dimension of Self Acceptance whereas,

most of the respondents i.e.67.36% among the non divorced women were found to score high on this dimension. Thus statistically the data depicts that the relationship between marital status and Self Acceptance was highly significant ( $P \leq 0.01$ ). Table 4.4 signifies that 71.43% of women between the age group of 25- 45 years were found to score average on the Emotional Intelligence Scale. Such relationship between age of respondents and emotional intelligence was thus found statistically insignificant ( $P \geq 0.05$ ). Moreover, majority of the respondents i.e. 43.48% having professional and doctorates degrees scored high on the scale of Emotional Intelligence. Furthermore, among the divorced women most of the respondents i.e. 78.57% were found to score on the normal level of Emotional Intelligence Scale whereas, among the non divorced women, most of the respondents i.e. 73.91% scored high on the said Scale. Such relationship between marital status and Emotional Intelligence was thus found highly significant ( $P \leq 0.01$ ). Thus the data suggests that majority of the women belonging to intact families scored high on the scale of Emotional Intelligence in comparison to the divorced women where majority of the respondents could not score above the 'normal level'. Similar results from quoted by Simons,(1999).He discussed in his study that isolation increases after divorce. He adds that emotional stress, depression and lower self esteem are common among divorced women.

**TABLE.:4.4 Emotional Intelligence**

VARIABLE	RESPONSE	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE								X <sup>2</sup> ANALYSIS
		Low		AVERAGE		HIGH		TOTAL		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
AGE (YEARS)	UP TO 25	-	-	1	7.14	4	17.39	5	12.50	
	25-45	2	66.67	10	71.43	11	47.83	23	57.50	*** 2.554
	45-55	1	33.33	3	21.13	8	34.78	12	30.00	
	Total	3	100.00	14	100.00	23	100.00	40	100.00	
Education al status	Up to graduate	1	33.33	4	28.57	6	26.09	11	27.50	
	Post Graduate	1	33.33	4	28.57	7	30.43	12	30.00	*** 0.144
	Doctorate & professional	1	33.33	6	42.86	10	43.48	17	42.50	
	Total	3	100.00	14	100.00	23	100.00	40	100.00	
Marital status	Divorced	3	100.00	11	78.57	6	26.09	20	50.00	
	Non divorced	-	-	3	21.43	17	73.91	20	50.00	* 12,832
	TOTAL	3	100.00	14	100.00	23	100.00	40	100.00	
* P VALUE $\leq 0.01$ *** P VALUE $\geq 0.05$ COLUMN PERCENTAGE Degree of freedom in subscripsts of X <sup>2</sup> — valued N = 40										

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present research was conducted to study the self perception and emotional intelligence of divorced and non divorced women. Results indicated that while comparing the groups under study with regards to their Self



Perception, it was found that majority of the respondents among the divorced group scored on average level of self perception whereas, most of the respondents among the non divorced group scored high. Thus indicating that divorce does have an influence on the self perception of women.

The findings further suggested that among the divorced respondents most of them scored normal on Emotional Intelligence Scale whereas, majority among the non divorced respondents scored high. Statistically it was found that there is a highly significant relationship between marital status and Emotional Intelligence of women. Thus, to conclude, it can be summed up that divorce is a crucial issue confronting women in contemporary times. Taking an overview, the present study has revealed that while comparing divorced and non divorced women on self perception and emotional intelligence, it was found that women in intact families had better scores in both the said areas as compared to counterparts from divorced families. This may be attributed to the emotional trauma and setbacks that has often been found to accompany divorce.

### 5.1. Suggestions

In the first place both the spouses must try and attempt to maintain cordial and healthy relationships so as to keep away from challenging issues like divorce. Divorced women must make conscious attempt to safeguard their self esteem and self perception, so as to carry ahead smoothly their lives with this lives. Strong support system must be made available for the separated spouses. Workshops which are specially meant to improve the mental health and self perception of divorced women must be organized. Pre- marital counselling can ensure that the would - be spouses are prepared and willing to face the challenges confronting marriage.

### 5.2. Recommendations For Further Study

Following recommendation have been put forth to assess the areas not covered by the present study.

Apart from Self Perception and Emotional Intelligence, other important aspects of personality should also be assessed. The present study dealt with women between 25-55 years only, further research should cover the other age groups as well. Effect of divorce on children i.e. whether the woman is living with children or not should also be investigated.

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