



DIVORCE AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN

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Abstract: Divorce is complex and painful process not just for the couple but also for their children. The family set up where the child develops has the greatest impact on mental health of the child. Children and adolescents represent a sensitive and at risk-population. Reactions to divorce vary according to the age group the child belongs to and the understanding of the event. The impact of divorce can manifest itself as anxiety, depression and behavioural problems. Children who experience divorce with high levels of parental conflict will show symptoms such as aggression, regression to immature behaviours, failing academic achievement, as well as conflict with one or both parents and develop a fear of abandonment. There is strong evidence of psychopathology for children exposed to high levels of post-divorce inter parental conflict. Neurologically, there is a reduction of brain volume in children of divorced parents. Specific parenting emotionality lead to changes in oxytocin levels. Parental sensitivity and parental availability are positively related to empathetic brain of children. Not all children experience similar effects of divorce. The level of resilience helps them cope with their changes. Resilience is determined by child's perception and understanding of the life event before, during and after the traumatic event. Normalization of fears and child's feelings can occur with peer groups. Parents seeking for divorce should minimize its impact. This may involve seeking for mediation or therapy to help communicate and reach for mutual agreements. Stabilization of daily routines and medication in cases with severe anxiety and depression is recommended. Children needing help may have an on-going anger and resentment, persistent depression, and the inability to enjoy the social lives in settings that they formerly enjoyed. They may withdraw from friends or school in general or develop behaviour problems which never existed before. Therapies with children include Play therapy- feeling balloons, Designing dad, Family Drawings etc are used. Group therapy helps in normalization of shame and isolation in children. Supportive therapy is used as adjunctive forms of therapy. Cognitive Behaviour therapy is used in older children. Dissolution of marriage is complex, children of all ages can have a lot of questions, confusion, and conflicting feelings when they have to deal with divorce, and even the most compassionate and attentive parents may struggle to meet all of their children's need.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage, an event that creates legal, cultural and religious connection between two people. Conflicts can range from silence to violence. For many reasons these connections get dissolved. The dissolution of the disjointed parties most of the times create a chaos within the structure of the family. Children are the major victims of the dissolution. Children frequently experience tension and worry due to personal, psychological, familial, and academic issues. Family problems, scholastic difficulties, parental disagreements, financial worries, social isolation and interpersonal issues, parental separation and divorce, being cut off from family, and a weakened support network are a few of the frequent ones that have a significant impact on their life. Children are most impacted by the choice of their parents and are divided between the parents when divorced, which produces a painful and nerve-racking atmosphere in the family. The bonds that were created by the primary care-giver has always been a protective factor in face of stress. Children find it hard to understand the complexities of the broken relationship. Though engagement and disengagement are part of human existence, the relationship between parents becomes so discordant that their beyond repair. The confusing nature of the relationship which unlike death of a parent may create mixed emotions in children. For many even when divorce is anticipated it is a shock, when the parents are divorced, it creates an amputation in the child.

The greatest problem of divorce is that children have to be raised by single parents. Collectively all single parent families face poverty and social isolation. The life changes that this event splutters precipitate more stress. The child is forced to establish a different kind of relationship with the non-custodial parent. There is also a shift in economic status, residential change, peer groups and schooling. The custodial parent usually works longer so the time spent with children become less. Children may become close to one or both parents. They develop a sense of freedom that binds their parents. They may have sense of pride and competence on completion of newer responsibilities. A sense of continuity and stability is important for children. But children may become disorganized after a divorce. New rules, such as those imposed by new residences, schools, friends, and parent-child

ties, may result in a decline in living standards. They can have trouble maintaining a high-quality and consistent line of communication with the parent who doesn't have custody. Communication problems among family members might occur. The amount of adjustment varies amongst family members. The way each person responds in this process might vary.

Inter-Parental Conflict:

The frequency of conflict and disagreement between parents on family issues is referred to inter-parental conflict. The mode of expression can be physical, verbal or hostile. The styles of conflict help the children deal with disagreement between parents. Research points to five possible IPC management styles: overt (physical and/or verbal), covert, cooperative, avoidant, and withdrawn (Buehler et al., 1994; Camara & Resnick, 1988; Katz & Gottman, 1993).

Overt style: The relationship with the parents is strained. There is direct manifestations of negative connections. Some of the characteristics include: belligerence, contempt, derision, screaming, insulting, slapping, threatening, and hitting (Buehler et al., 1994).

Covert Style: In the following style the child expresses hostility in reaction to passive-aggressiveness of the parents. There are two types- Triangling- wherein one of the parents denigrate the other, scape-goat the child or relaying messages without asking directly. Global covert – wherein the child faces untold subtle tensions, resentments between parents though this does not involve the children.

Cooperative style: There is continuous effort between parents to have normal interactions despite the disagreements on fundamental issues. The characteristics that ply in this style is to place the child as a priority, negotiation, active listening and reasoning.

Avoidant style: Avoiding or showing an unwillingness to address the difference despite knowing the child is a priority. Some characteristics include denying that a difference or disagreement exists, speaking abstractly about issues, using humor to sidetrack discussions of disagreements, and keeping so busy with other aspects of life that issues are not addressed (Fitzpatrick, 1988).

Withdrawn Style: style in which the person is removal from active or on-going interactions. These could include withdrawing from a conversation, clamping or walking out amidst a problem. This is different from avoidant wherein this the person tries to distance himself/ herself completely from the interaction.

Children's Reaction to Divorce: Most children react to this with denial. Some of them despite knowing the absence of the parent may persist to do their routine like the parent was still present. As age progresses of the child, he/she may suppress and repress the emotions contributed by the split family. While the others may take to depression, apathy or hostility. The anger can be redirected to themselves with feelings of self-loathing. This usually takes about six to eight weeks. Regression to previous stages is also common as they may require attention. Guilty parents may foster the behaviour further. Anger is the most inevitable expression of the child during the time of separation. It is hard for the child to express these feelings within the same environment where the parents have a conflict as they feel they would contribute for the conflict further. The frustration they experience should be ideally allowed to express in constructive manner than in destructive manner. The reactions of the child are more oblivious to the understanding the child generates from the situation.

Theories on Development of Youth pathology

Process Oriented Approach:

The undermining factors are socialization experiences and early family processes that central on three important perspectives for the development of pathology. Firstly the role of the parent-child relationship, the second emphasizes the importance of children's attributions for and emotional processing of inter-parental conflict, and the third highlights how the inter-parental relationship adversely affects psychophysiological and neurobiological regulatory processes in children.

There is an evidence from researches that emotional security and attributional process perceived by children through cognitive and emotional processes from hostile homes adds to pathology among the youth. The impact of the conflict is how the child interprets the conflict and implies it for well-being. There are two levels of processing- initially the child becomes aware of existence of conflict. Intensity and resolution potential as well as contextual factors are primary at this stage leading to the second stage. Second stage is making sense of the conflict ascribing reasons for the conflict. Children may feel responsible for the conflict or may feel threatened and helpless.

Social Learning Theory: Children learn to behave, think and act as a result of modelling their parents behaviours (Bandura, 1978, Sears et al., 2015). The conflictual behaviours of the parents can be impactful in the development of problematic behaviour in the child. The impact is determined by the level of exposure to interpersonal conflict. This can also determine the child's future development. If a child is raised in a high-stress, high-conflict environment, they may be more likely to demonstrate similar behavioral styles in their own future relationships (Parade et al., 2012). Interpersonal skills, family processes generated by the child is learned patterns of behaviour from the parents. Evidence suggest that positive parenting aids in better problem solving

skills (Xia et al., 2018; Roisman et al., 2004). The presence of watching parents have a conflict can be stressful which is linked with poor adjustment and low-self esteem. Children have a high probability to model the similar conflicting behaviours with everyone around resulting in severe inter-personal problems throughout their life.

Family Systems Theory: The theory posits that importance of the family members position in the family which can often be influenced by changes within the system as a whole (Kerig, 2019). Bowen (1988) stated that chronic anxiety can form if family members are unable to properly think through their emotional reactions, something which often occurs during frequent marital conflict and this can be easily passed down to the next generations. Bowen also suggests that triangulation happens in family systems. Triangling is conflict that has been created between two family members is passed down to third person. This is very common when parents have a fight and child has been told bad about each spouse to complete the triangle. Triangulation is a part of family projection process. According to projection process the conflict between the two is mistakenly taken as his/hers by the third family member. This especially leads to poor mental health outcomes in children as they are easily vulnerable to triangulation and projection process. These patterns at home can create or sustain problematic behaviours in children. Repeated exposure to parental conflict can turn out to be self-reinforcing negative loop which continually facilitates feelings of sadness, anxiety and depression in the child. The concept of "self" is not differentiated (rather, it is diffused) in the marital setting, and the loss of that self as a result of divorce is a key source of potential dysfunction among adult family members during and after the divorce, according to the family systems' perspective on divorce. As a result, there is a higher likelihood that the self was formed in a fusional approach during the marriage when there is less distinction of self among family members. Therefore, one or both spouses are likely to feel a great feeling of loss and probable family dysfunction when the fused common self is lost through divorce. After a divorce, having stepparents and half siblings has a significant impact on children and teenagers as well. The collapse of connections caused by these events frequently leads to trauma and deviant behavior, making the family dysfunctional and difficult to adjust to.

Role of Parents:

Parents who are distressed and engrossed in a strained relationship are usually aggressive and less emotionally sensitive to the needs of the child. There is an association between parent child relationship and the outcomes predominantly internalizing and externalizing problems in children.

Role of Psychophysiological and Neurobiological Mechanisms:

Role of psychophysiological aspects and neurobiology are complex but dissolution can be associated with a ,vagal tone (regulation), b. cortisol activation, c. skin conductance and d. autonomic nervous system responses. Separation or loss of a parent is considered one of six indicators of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), according to Felitti et al. (1998). ACEs can impact brain development and lead to impulse control issues, emotional dysregulation, and the inability to anticipate consequences, recognize social cues, and manage interpersonal relationships. These psychological challenges also can result in poor school performance, gang involvement, substance use, and pregnancy.

- a. **Vagal tone:** This refers to regulation of the heart rate by the body in accordance to the external demands. Vagal withdrawal accelerates heart rate increasing the coping mechanisms of the body. In contrast Vagal augmentation decelerates the heart rate in face of a problem thus unable to cope actively to the problem. Evidence suggest that vagal augmentation is associated with parental conflict and adjustment. (El-Sheikh et al., 2001; El-Sheikh & Erath, 2011).
- b. **Skin Conductance Level Reactivity:** Skin conductance level reactivity is associated with family stress and child outcomes. It was found to be high in boys with internalizing problems and high in girls with externalizing problems .
- c. **Cortisol activation:** The total amount of secretion of cortisol was found to high with inter-parental conflict. It was found that the higher level of cortisol secretion was found in adults with less or no parental conflict and the secretions were less with higher frequencies of conflict. This is consistent with the fact that moderate stressful situations provided physiological adaptation. (Hagan, Roubinov, Mistler, & Luecken, 2014). There is evidence that different child attribution to the problem there is difference in child cortisol levels.
- d. **Autonomic Nervous Systems Responses:** The sympathetic and Parasympathetic systems of autonomic nervous systems are involved. High Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia (RSA) and high Skin Conductance is associated with internalizing problems and externalizing problems. Parasympathetic nervous system activates when one of them is low. There are gender differences in pretext of maltreatment.

How to tell children about Divorce: Parents of the current generation have started communicating subjects to children that were once considered as a taboo. The period surrounding the event of divorce is blur. Most parents never communicate the grief of the event. Children may hear the news for the first time from wrong people or hear it from one of the parents in rage of an argument. Comprehending parental secrecy may become very difficult for children. When parents avoid speaking about it children's fears are magnified and they replace reality with fantasy and psychological defences. The worst actuality is better than uncertainty. The subject has to be discussed when both parents are there this makes the chances of calling each spouse a culprit.

How Children of different age group take up divorce:

Children of all age groups have an emotional deprivation due to unstable marriage. While the single parents may undergo wonder, worry, fear of future, unhappiness and anger. All of the emotions displayed especially by the mother have higher chances of developing psychological pathology in the child.

Pre-School Child: The child is aware of the departure of one of the parents usually the father. The anxiety is caused because of the abandonment they perceive which would separate them from one of them. The child becomes restless, noisy, irritable and clings to the teacher which is very unusual at this age reacting to parental stress. The pre-schoolers express emotional symptoms of depression, anger, moodiness and anger. Most of the time the child is aware that the parent has moved on but do not realise why. The child may show concerns regarding of not being loved, or being guilty for the separation. They tend to blame themselves and fantasize that the parents would reconcile. The self-blame never lets them deal with the reality. Also the pre-schoolers have an identification with one of the parents while fantasizing with the other. When divorce occurs the pre-schooler may consider the identified partner was not good. The pre-schooler boy may consider that his father has banished from home due to masculine aggression. He considers that masculine aggression is of no good leading to anxiety and confusion regarding masculinity. (Neubauer, 1960). Parents can help children understand divorce through books. They can let them verbalize the stress, reassure their self-worth and continue supporting them.

Latency Child (6-12years): The child at this stage identifies himself with the same sex and responsibilities through 'work identification' (Erikson, 1963). They wish to be productive and want to learn new things as part of it. Divorce may hinder the process of learning. The child is consumed with intrusive thoughts, anxiety, inability to focus as a result poor academic performance. The child usually expresses loneliness by being tearful. Like pre-schoolers they may feel deprived of nurturing and love. This stage also marks the development of the super-ego which is still tentative and unstable. As divorce takes in the child would feel guilty and blame themselves for the event. The child's behaviour fluctuates from being obedient to rebellious. As a later latency child, the child has internalised moral standards. They start discerning the divorce of parents which creates a moral outrage. The child has difficulty being obedient especially when there are cracks in power structure. (Kohlberg 1972). Ultimately they may think that one or both parents are morally wrong so they respond with intense anger. Gradually they lose the fear of being punished which manifests itself as lying, stealing and getting in trouble with authorities. As hard as it seems all this results due to inner stress (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1967). The self-concept and identity of the family is at stake due to divorce. Children find solace with peers by sharing the embarrassment they feel. The relationship with the peer gives comfort and validation to their thoughts

Adolescent: Initially the adolescents are angry, upset and sad. Children who continue to be angry from the latency period into adolescence may act out with behavioural problems or conduct disorder. Adolescents usually tend to judge the values of their parents according to concepts and ideals they are brought up in. Premature judgement can have variety of implications. Some adolescents would appreciate the individuality of the parents so they have easier identity formation whereas some develop independence prematurely. Premature independence can lead to promiscuous behaviour. Some may express their precautions over relationships. There is small growing body of research suggesting that children of divorced parents especially women have harder times in developing intimacy in their own relationship. (Feng, Giarrusso, Bengtson & Frye, 1999) While others may become truant and have poorer academic performance. The adolescent who is able to distance himself / herself from the problems of their parents and those who continue on their own developmental task fare better with the event. Sometimes the crisis leads the adolescent to sublimate into creativity and maturity.

Consequences On Child:

Children can be impacted by parental discord even when the discord is not physical or verbal abuse. Child Affected by Parental Distress (CAPD) is a disorder in DSM V noting that children may react to parental intimate partner distress, parental intimate partner violence, acrimonious divorce, and/or unfair disparagement of one parent by another, by evidencing heightened behavioral, cognitive, affective, or physical symptoms as a result of exposure to parental relationship distress (Bernet, Wamboldt, & Narrow, 2016). Research on Parental conflict and psychopathology has been dated as early as 1930. Studies indicating that children who witness conflict between parents frequently, intense, and poorly resolved are at elevated risk for a host of negative developmental outcomes including increased anxiety, depressive symptoms, aggression, antisocial behavior, poor academic attainment, substance misuse, criminality, and suicidality in the extreme (Asarnow, Carlson, & Guthrie, 1987; Bernet et al., 2016). Intra parental conflict and divorce is associated with negative symptoms like externalizing, internalizing problems, poor socialization skills, lower cognitive skills, risk of dropping out of school, increased risk of psychiatric disorder, suicide attempts, and substance misuse (e.g. Amato, 2000). The temperament of the child, gender and history of exposure to the conflict influences the impact of the marital discord. The long-term effects of divorce depend on various factors like parental readjustment post-divorce, parent – child relationship, peer relationships, the external support systems and child's temperament. Children may develop personality issues due to the on-going stress. The quality of relationship among parents can determine various problems in children like

Sleep Problems: When children have a difficulty in initiating or maintaining sleep it is indicative of family stressor that impacts the neurobiology of the child. Sleep is critical in determining brain- functioning in children. The patterns of sleep persist until late childhood. Inter parental conflicts impact the initiation and maintenance of sleep in children.

Externalizing Problems: Multiple studies underpin that inter parental conflict gives rise to aggression, conduct disorder , anti-social behaviour in childhood and adolescence. Children below three would exhibit temper- tantrums and persistant aggression unwarranted for the age can have negative outcomes including academic difficulties, substance misuse, peer victimization and depression or depressive episodes in later life.

Internalizing Problems: The on-going parental conflict and stress can put the adolescents to remain withdrawn, shy, have depressive features, self-esteem issues, suicidality and anxiety issues.

Academic Problems: The sleep difficulties that are an impact of parental conflicts are also a precursor for the academic difficulties in children at elementary level. Children from conflict ridden homes have negative attributions that result in poor academic achievement. They have poor attention and difficulty in social adjustment in classroom.

Socializing: Inter parental conflict is also a precursor for parent-child conflict and also a strained relationship between siblings. The impact of the conflict can cascade on the child's interpersonal skills, socializing competencies and problem- solving. When parents in conflict with spouse are hostile and aggressive towards their ward, the child tends to be less sensitive and less emotionally responsive towards their peer. The primary and elementary graders can be involved with fights with their peer. As adolescent and young adults it can be hard for them to have quality romantic relationships. They can be viable for future break-down in love relationship or physical abuse.

Emotional Difficulties: The discord disrupts the emotional security in the child. Derived from the attachment theories the discord can impact the child emotional functioning in three ways- feelings of emotional reactivity wherein the child feels scared, angry and sad in face of conflict among the parents. Representations of family relationships – wherein the child thinks that conflicts between parents would lead to conflict in some other relationship as well. Regulate emotions- wherein the child tries to regulate the conflict between parents either by intervening in or withdrawing from the conflict.

Physical Health problems: Children out of a conflicted world have psychological stress manifested in various physical problems like abdominal stress, headaches, fatigue and stunted growth. They can also engage in risky health behaviours like sexual promiscuous behaviours and substance misuse.

Disruption of Educational Attainment: Children tend to have low average educational achievement in disrupted families. Family disruption can result in decreased time and parental inputs as compared to when they were together. Childs educational attainment is impacted the most when divorce takes place at a young age. There are many factors that contribute in particular the economic vulnerability, inadequate parenting and acute stress of the child. Academic transitions are particularly difficult for children when they move to different school. Educational progress is impacted the most when divorce happens during adolescence when the child would pursue higher education.

Coping:

Evolutionary Pattern- Coping with Crisis:

Children and adults often follow an evolutionary pattern dealing with divorce.

Orientation: The original reactions of the child depend on the individual but they form a key in understanding how they would deal with. Most of them undergo shock initially and so they need some time to catch up. They usually do this by blocking up the stress or change for that period. The changes brought about by the divorce are usually not a part of their lifestyle. Blocking can be by denying that life would be different or blocking apportion of the experience into inertness of depression or fusing their identity with some object or person to dull the self -awareness. These are normal patterns of coping but the child would lack self-awareness and direction. During this time, the child usually lacks zeal or has lack of interest . They are referred by others to the Counsellor. During the initial face sadness is not felt neither do they have positive feelings regarding divorce. The emotions experienced are jumbled and diffuse. The mental health professional can help the child orient himself/herself. Therapist can work in helping split the diffused emotions. The detrimental relations and evasive features of the clients behaviour are mutually enumerated. Children may not verbalise like the adult counterparts but they can provide consent to the content for a working relationship which is part of early intervention. Most of the children can cope to these changes unintended without a real need for therapy but those who need help need a caring reality.

Integration: The new status post- divorce is filled with anger, sadness, excitement and disorientation. The new direction is accompanied by sense of insecurity and anxiety. The single parent may either deny the anxiety provoking feelings or may master. Similarly children may get away with their anxiety by accepting the new status, coping and planning. The parent and children may loose their identity and side track their own needs for each other. Under the guise of protection and generosity both may

lose their identities. Children usually become protective about their parent and may assume responsibilities of the absent parent without realizing their needs. Guilt and resentment are the long term outcomes. Sometimes the child may deny the new identity deadening pressures of it or by moving into a phase of inertia feeling further helpless about the situation. To counteract with these emotions the individual must take active control of his life. In most cases, dealing with emotions one by one helps the child. Dependencies on important others replacing the non-custodial parent can be used as shock absorbers. Children often replace their non-custodial parent to peers, teachers, date, relative or therapist. The child needs to experience care, trust and respect from these relations else it would further damage the child from developing trust in adult world.

Consolidation: By this stage the Counsellor has reinvested the skills and tools for the child to be part of mainstream society. Once realistic identity and coping skills set in there is termination of therapy.

Post Divorce Coping: Parental disconnect hinders the development of the child. The parental system determines the family structure. Coping post-divorce is determined by the parental quality and parental conflict. The quality of parenting post-divorce is hindered by the parents coping itself. Further the spill over of parental conflict can hinder in child adjustment. The efforts in positive parenting post-divorce can bring positive change in children. With compromised energy of the parents post-divorce to regularise routines becomes challenging. The negative mood of the parents can generate hostile and aggressive behaviours. These behaviours can harm than do any good to the child. There is growing body of evidence that suggest that adjustment post-divorce for a child depends on three factors a. the relationship between ex-spouses b. the availability of resources and c. post-divorce parenting and parent-child relationship. A meta-analysis on aspects of inter-parental conflict, parenting and child adjustment has found that negative outcomes were related to father-child relationship quality and less maternal warmth. A differential impact of parenting behaviors on child outcomes following divorce (Stallman & Ohan, 2016), the four different kinds of parenting domains are: Parental acceptance, parental control, parent-child relationship, and role diffusion.

Parenting domains

Parental acceptance: Support versus hostility. The parental acceptance-rejection theory (Rohner, 1986/1999) states that humans have a biologically based desire for positive responses from people that are most important to them. Especially in childhood this refers to the need of parental affection, care, comfort, and support.

Parental Structure: Structure versus Intrusiveness: In Parental control the parent tries to control the child's behaviour using strategies whereas Parental structuring refers to parental behaviors that are directive or guiding, that provide structure by setting appropriate rules and limits, that monitor children's behavior and are used consistently, as opposed to parental laxness and inconsistent parenting. Intrusive parenting is controlling the behaviour of the child through psychological control, threatening, guilt inducing behaviours along with physical intervention that are disciplinary to force the child meet the demands.

Parent-child relationship: Relationship quality versus conflict: In this the parent plays the central role and the child just acts according to the parent. High parent-child relationship quality is marked by feelings of closeness to one another, a secure attachment, positive parent-child communication, and relationship satisfaction. In contrast, parent-child conflicts refer to conflictual behaviors between a parent and child, hence, how often they have arguments or fights, whether they get angry at each other, or quarrel.

Role diffusion: Parentification and triangulation: This refers to the role the parent takes during conflicts. Parentification is when the parent puts the child into the role of a parent for emotional and practical support. Triangulation as mentioned earlier the parent involves the child in their dispute through pressurising them to take sides, justifying the right in their part to the child etc.

Role of Mediation in Children of Divorced parents: Mediation is most recently professionalized intervention program. It is a widely accepted, confidential and voluntary process that helps the parties in conflict come to agreements without the use of the court system and expensive legal services (Emery, 2004), as well as help with negotiating through the process (Milne et al., 2004). It is a forum that aims at conflict resolution. Mediation is considered to be less time consuming and more effective than litigation. Litigation aims at stopping the conflict rather than resolving it. Mediation can be mandated by the judge when the custody of the child is disputed, when there is adjustment issues of the child either with relationship to their parents or towards divorce or it may be considered as a court procedure. In either case mediation is a mutual decision between the separated parties. The ultimate goal of mediation is conflict resolution, creating harmony and improvising cooperation among the disjointed. It has shown to have positive impact in resolving conflicts and aiding the child in better adjustment to divorce. Mediation can be a continuous process lasting for several years. It is the least intrusive method of handling a conflict among the divorced family members.

Role of mediator: Mediator is a person with mental health and law background. Usually with an effective and good communication skills. The mediator is sensitive to the loss, grief and relief of the family members. There is neutrality and respect for both parties at mediation. The principles used by mediators are - empowerment and self-determination. Empowerment-considering what is best for all family members, honest disclosure of assets and co-operative problem-solving. Self-

determination- clients here are encouraged and not forced into making choices. Mediators use feed-back as a tool to help parents resolve conflicts regarding the child. If Mediation is handled by non-professional there can be a damage to the aimed intervention programme.

Custody Determination:

The determination of the custody of the child, despite being told that it is in the best interest of the child it has never been so. The lawyers always wanted the best interest of the client. In most cases the psychiatrist are also convinced not considering the child as a priority. Both the parties would bring a group of mental health professionals(like Clinical psychologist) to justify their positions over the custody of the child. The idea of having mental health professionals is to help parents decide that the life of their child is in both their hands and courtroom litigation would only worsen their stance. The decision of the custody is more often placed in the hands of the judge who is a third person. The court would often decide the custody of the child based on the sexual behaviour of the parent especially if they had an extra- marital affair. The Clinical psychologist should have the social, cultural and economic difficulties in mind while deciding their perspective. The parental capacity is evaluated with interviews with both children and their interaction with the parents. Age of the child is the major factor in determination of the custody owing to the psycho-biological needs of the child. The decision to raise the children should be taken by the parents solely in best interest of their child.

Visiting Patterns after Separation: The visit to the non-custodial parent is usually once a week or three times a month. Only a few stay over-night with the parent. Despite being given ample time to visit the children are uncomfortable usually with the arrangement. Visiting twice a month is pattern accepted and promoted by the court and widely accepted by many societies. Children experience little nourishment, feel less gratified and their sense of freedom with the parent is lost post-divorce. This kind of family rupture gives the child a sense of helplessness and lowered self-esteem. When parents are inconsistent meeting their children it leads to anger. There is reduction in number of meetings due to the inconsistency. Adolescent children are usually happy with brief visits, randomly spaced meeting as it is consistent with the independence they want.

Changes that lessen the impact of divorce:

Encouraging children stay with the grand-parents or elderly individuals can help them gain warmth and support during the discord. Male teachers for pre and primary schoolers who spend at least six hours in day can turn out to be the object wherein the child has his parental gratifications met. When parents are legally divorced and psychologically married children are being used as scape-goats, spies and weapons against each other in such cases post- divorce counselling can be helpful. Joint custody is relatively new concept that has many advantages for children. The parents have flexibility in deciding where the child would live and for how long. The children can also shift deciding with whom they want to live for any permitted duration. This is helpful when both parents belong to the same district and are not broken by the traditional aspects of the society. Monogamous marriages, the trend of living together, greater freedom to have sexual relationship, choice of motherhood can reduce the rates of divorce and its impact on children.

Resilience:

It is the capacity of system to adapt successfully to the system in face of adversities that disturb the development of a system. The capacity for the child to develop resilience depends on many factors. The neurobiological regulatory systems, community safety, school, ecological safety and numerous other factors that are a protective factor for the vulnerable child. It is found that the resilience of the child depends on interdependent systems. There are various contributors for the differences in resilience with a few children better than the others. Some factors that determine to positive adjustment of the child is through self-regulation skills, problem solving self-efficacy and optimism.

Good Divorce:

A family with children stays a family in a good divorce. The children's emotional, financial, and physical needs are still the responsibility of the parents, just as they were when they were married. The fundamental tenet is that ex-spouses establish a parenting partnership that is sufficiently cooperative to allow the continuation of the ties of kinship with and via their children. According to a number of research, the effectiveness of post-divorce family interactions affects how well children adjust to divorce. The majority of this study has centred on two main topics: (a) the quality of children's connections with non-resident parents, and (b) the quality of co-parenting relationships. When parents maintain identical norms in both families, speak often with one another, and support the non-resident parent's authority and parenting role, children seem to gain. Children also seem to suffer when parents fight regularly, have contradictory rules, and try to undermine one other's authority or connections with the kids. A family after divorce is still a family, in that both mothers and fathers are still in charge of raising their kids and must work together to ensure their wellbeing. This viewpoint seems to be derived from a family systems approach, where the wider family system rather than the person is the unit of study.

Judicial Custody of the child:

The legal right of a parent to direct the raising of their kid is known as custody. Even if a parent is not granted custody, they may still be allowed visitation, or time with the children. In a divorce case, both parents have the legal right to request custody and

visitation. Custody can be two types: legal and physical. Legal Custody is the right to make major decisions about the child. This includes schooling, religious practices and medication. Physical custody is when the child lives with on a day-to-day basis. A parent with primary physical custody is sometimes called the "custodial parent" or the child's "primary caretaker."

Deciding Custody:

When determining custody and visitation, a judge will consider what is in the best interests of the children. To help in deciding the custody of the child, a clinical psychologist contributes his expertise keeping the child in mind. Some factors a judge may consider include:

- who has been the child's primary caretaker
- the quality of each parent's home environment
- how "fit" the judge thinks each parent is (stable home and lifestyle, good judgment, has a job, good mental and physical health)
- which parent the child is living with now, and for how long
- each parent's ability to provide emotional and intellectual support for the child
- which parent allows the other parent into the child's life (does not try to cut out the other parent)
- if the child is old enough, which parent the child wants to live with
- whether your child would be separated from any siblings
- whether either parent has been abusive

A judge must consider whether there has been domestic violence.

Role of Clinical Psychologist:

The greatest buffer a child could have against the stress is emotional support or an attachment with whom he/ she could create an emotional bond. If it is difficult for the parent to be the emotional support at home, the school psychologist can take up the same process. The Psychologist comforts the child and helps in being resilient. The child is able to form attachment with the psychologist so his attributions over the parental dissolution can be verbalised. The amount of help required depends on age of the child. Psychological adjustment happens at face of acceptance. Aggression is a contrary to acceptance. Aggression manifests itself as frustration. For psychologists identifying the underlying reason for frustration is important. One of the biggest sources of frustration in the life of children is when attachments (emotional connections) do not work due to too much emotional or physical separation, feeling rejected, losing a loved one, a lack of belonging, being misunderstood or not having ones needs met by a significant other. The psychologist makes sense of frustration help the child self-regulate. Teachers and school counsellors need to identify the problem the child is facing so that they can help them. Caring is a necessary behaviour in all civilisation as it helps the person combat their own impulses and attacking others. If the children are not allowed to express their emotions or do not express in situations apprehending vulnerabilities they may not adapt or cope. School counsellors/ Clinical psychologist may help the child vent and get the message to them that it is ok to experience what they are experiencing. This makes school a safe place to be rather than being bullied or remaining isolated.

Psychological Assessments:

The Child's Divorce Adjustment Inventory (CDAI) Practices: The Child's Divorce Adjustment Inventory (CDAI) was developed by Portes, Lehman and Brown (1999) and its validity and reliability studies were conducted by Çamkuşu Arifoğlu (2006). The inventory consists of 22 items and 3 dimensions. There are three sub-dimensions: conflict-poor adjustment, depression-anxiety and social support. As a result of the evaluation of the inventory, a single score is obtained from the whole inventory and this score indicates the adjustment of the children to divorce. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale without any cut-off score is 22 and the highest score is 110. It is concluded that child's adjustment to divorce increases as the score increases (Arifoğlu, Razi, Şanlı Richard, & Öz, 2010).

Child and Youth Resilience Measure - Practices with Adolescents (CYRM-Y): The Child and Youth Psychological Resilience Scale was developed by Liebenberg, Ungar and Van de Vijver (2012) for 11-16 yrs. The original form of the scale, which was developed in the light of data collected from 11 different countries, consists of three sub-scales and eight sub-dimensions. The short form study of the scale was conducted by Liebenberg, Ungar and LeBlanc (2013) and a structure of 12 items was obtained as a result of two different studies. The high scores obtained from the scale, which was a Likert type measuring instrument consisting of 12 items, indicated high level of resilience. Another version for the age group below 11 years is Child and Youth Resilience Measure Practices in Primary Schools (CYRM-C)

Interventions for Children from Divorced families:

Specific counselling interventions for children who are a victim to the dissolved marriage is relatively slim. The potential interventions for children from divorced families are Evidence Based Practices in School Settings, Group Therapy, Parenting training and coordination, Bibliotherapy and Family Therapy.

Evidence Based Practices in School Settings:

A model of evidence-based school counselling has been established by Dimmitt et al. (2007), and it suggests that counsellors (a) use data to identify a problem, (b) find appropriate interventions, and (c) assess if the implemented therapies were effective. This paradigm suggests that psychologists should look for therapies that are supported by research in order to meet the needs of their students (Poynton & Carey, 2006). Reviews support two main objectives of school counselling programs by demonstrating the efficacy of evidence-based initiatives in enhancing juvenile mental health and academic accomplishment. The use of evidence-based approaches by school psychologist can help them be effective change agents in their respective institutions. This model's successful implementation encourages school counsellors to retain a variety of data skills, such as recognizing current research-based policies and solutions. For many children, school is the only environment where they can receive interventions to address their emotional needs. Improved school adjustment has been linked to school-based therapies that concentrate on fostering coping skills, dispelling myths, creating realistic assessments of control, and assigning proper blame for family issues.

Consultation with Teachers and Caretaker is considered to be both responsive service and supportive system. In particular, teachers might acquire more useful abilities or information to react to and possibly avoid reoccurring circumstances in the future (Parsons Evidence-Based Counseling 12 & Kahn, 2005). Using interventions and teaching techniques with an emphasis on evidence-based practices is a crucial aspect of consulting. Externalizing problems and academic issues can be addressed. The other programs focuses on children's own responses to divorce by providing them with emotional support and teaching cognitive-behavioral coping and internal control skills. These skills can be sources of resilience which are empirically related to post-divorce adjustment. The structures vary for different age groups. The program also emphasises the parental presence and support. Since treatment modality should be guided from the nature of the child's issues, teacher input is extremely valuable in defining the child's school-related concerns.

Group Therapy:

A search through literature shows that there is dearth of interventional programme for group therapy. The children's group focused on developing an understanding of each child's emotions and their new family structures and roles, while at the same time promoting better interpersonal skills with their peers (Rich, et al., 2007). This was accomplished through the application of Yalom's Therapeutic Factors of Group Psychotherapy, which focuses on factors such as catharsis, the instillation of hope, and the development of socializing techniques. De Lucia-Waack and Gerrity (2001), though they conducted no empirical study of their own, they have listed seven goals for children of divorce group therapy.

1. to help children form an accurate concept of the process of divorce.
2. to normalize the experience or to help children learn that there are others that are going through the same thing as they are.
3. to provide a place where the children feel safe to talk about their feelings and concerns about the divorce.
4. to help children label and express their feelings and to help them understand the feelings.
5. to help the children develop new skills to cope with the divorce and related experiences .
6. to dispel unrealistic beliefs the children might have, such as the divorce is their fault or that both parents are going to abandon them.
7. to assist the children to focus on the future and on the positives of their new family structure.

Parent Training and Coordination:

A child's bad conduct is inversely correlated with changes in effective parenting brought on by increased maternal depression and stress as a result of divorce (Degarmo et al., 2004). As a result, a child's problematic conduct would improve, maternal despair and stress would decline, and effective parenting would ultimately result. In the end, they aimed to demonstrate how PMT could work as a "protective factor," aiding a child's transition following a divorce (DeGarmo et al., 2004). As a result, a child's problematic conduct would improve, maternal despair and stress would decline, and effective parenting would ultimately result. In the end, they hoped to demonstrate how PMT could work as a "protective factor," for a child's adjustment following a divorce. Henry (2007) promotes the use of parenting coordination as a way to lessen the dangers to a child's mental health, social life, and academic success as well as to lessen litigation and the amount of time spent in divorce court. The Parenting Coordinator (PC) is a combination of a counselor, the courts, and a family mediator, according to Mitcham Smith and Henry (2007). The PC aids divorcing partners in communication, conflict resolution, and learning new parenting skills suitable for the altered family structure, always keeping the children's wellbeing above the welfare of the parents themselves (Mitcham-Smith & Henry, 2007). Additionally, the PC assists the divorcing partners in developing and carrying out a parenting plan by mediating disputes, providing advice when the parties cannot come to an agreement, and eventually working within a court-defined framework. (Mitcham-Smith & Henry2007). Though this method has lot of scope it has to be empirically tested.

Bibliotherapy:

According to Pehrsson et al. (2007), bibliotherapy is the therapeutic use of books, literature, songs, and stories from a variety of different mediums. This therapy can create an impact in pre-adolescent minds in schools and clinical settings. Preadolescents are still in a phase of transition from the concrete to formal operational cognitive stages, and they frequently lack the verbal and cognitive complexity to engage in and maintain conversational treatment yet are too old for traditional play therapy. Bibliotherapy may enable discussion based on the plot of the book or narrative being utilized with a preadolescent child (Pehrsson et al., 2007). A child may benefit from reading certain novels or stories because they might frame especially tough themes, provide opportunity to talk about various divorce interpretations, and help children identify and manage their emotions (Pehrsson et al., 2007). Furthermore, children can emulate characters in novels and stories and transform them into their own unique set of coping mechanisms (Pehrsson et al., 2007). Since every individual reacts differently to a book or story, it is a problem for the counselor to choose one that is suitable for each child's developmental stage, circumstance, and interests (Pehrsson et al., 2007).

Family Therapy:

After a divorce, family therapy with the entire family can offer a special chance for intervention and life facilitation. A four-part approach for assistance for separating couples with a case report was created by Goldman and Coane in 1977. The first step is to redefine the family such that all members are included on an existential level. The process of parentification, which is frequently made worse by the physical absence of the parent, is then reduced by strengthening generational boundaries. In order to repair developmental distortions and give the family a chance to mourn the loss of the intact family, the family has to replay the history of the marriage. The therapists then make an effort to establish an emotional separation. The primary goal of therapeutic intervention is to change the underlying pathogenic patterns of interpersonal interaction and conflict resolution in order to stop them from recurring in a new relationship or in the following generation. However, aggressiveness, destructiveness, and resistance to working with key problems, which serve to avoid feelings of worry, shame, guilt, rage, and sadness, greatly hinder family therapy with divorce families. For the treatment of families with a parental divorce in which a kid was symptomatic, Kaplan (1977) offered another variant form of family therapy under the label "structural family therapy techniques." The types of families taken into account include those with a mother, child, and maternal grandparents; those with an overprotective mother and child; those with a helpless and somewhat neglectful mother; those with a father; those who have just started a family; and those who have divorced and remarried. To help these families, Lebow and Rekart (2007) presented an integrative family therapy strategy. This therapy's components include negotiating a crystal-clear therapy contract, forging a multiparty alliance with all parties, assessing through the prism of specific knowledge about these cases, utilizing multiple therapy session formats, holding both systemic and individual focused perspectives, incorporating a solution-oriented focus, and drawing from a wide range of resources.

The pertinent research on divorce and kids makes it quite evident that there are negative consequences on children from divorced families. The majority of research has a special focus on divorce's effects on children while downplaying its effects on teenagers, especially those who are attending college. Despite this, it has a significant and varied psycho-social and emotional impact, and children and adolescents may not benefit from the same treatment strategy. Research is needed to determine whether divorce affects kids and teenagers differently depending on their family structure, such as nuclear, joint, or extended. Factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, religion, and the type of marriage in general (such as arranged marriage, courtship, or love marriage) may have an impact on these outcomes because, in a country like India, different religions may have different psycho-social norms regarding marriage. According to Pehrsson et al. (2007), the effects of divorce and the restructuring of family structures only serve to exacerbate the developmental obstacles that children and adolescents already face in their familial, social, and academic domains. The overwhelming majority of study contends that these harmful impacts are quantifiable, and actual mountains of research back up this viewpoint. Even while the evidence for divorce's detrimental effects may appear overwhelming, some academics disagree, arguing that divorce does not have as much of an influence as the study implies.

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