

1. **Who is an ‘abandoned wife’?**
When the husband leaves the wife for minimum period of two years continuously, the law gives the ‘abandoned wife’ certain rights.
2. **What are the rights of the ‘abandoned wife’?**
A petition for divorce can be filed in the District Court by the wife, irrespective of her religion if she has been abandoned by her husband for two years continuously.
3. **Who is entitled to ask for maintenance?**
 - (a) Divorced woman
 - (b) Wives who do not have enough and reasonable means to maintain themselves (under Section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code).
4. **Which law governs the maintenance rights for divorced women?**
Maintenance rights for divorced women are governed by various religious personal laws in India. It makes it a duty of the husband to pay to his wife a lump sum or monthly payment, known as maintenance, after their divorce or separation.
 - (a) **Hindu law-** The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 grant the right to women to claim maintenance after divorce.
 - (b) **Muslim Personal law-** The law that governs maintenance of divorced women is the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986.
 - (c) Divorced **Christian** women can claim maintenance under the Indian Divorce Act, 1869.
5. **How is the amount of maintenance decided?**
The amount of maintenance is either decided by a mutual settlement between the husband and wife, or in accordance with the order received from the court.
6. **What is the right of a woman if the husband refuses to comply with the court’s maintenance order?**
In case of non-payment of maintenance money without any sufficient cause, the wife can approach the court and file a criminal case against him.
7. **What can I do if I don’t know whether my husband is alive or dead?**
If the wife who has been abandoned by her husband has not heard of him for seven years and if she does not know whether he is alive, she can file a divorce petition.