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Research Proposal on

“Life After Divorce: A Qualitative Study on Experiences of Young Women in Chandpur, Bangladesh

Broad Area: Life After Divorce

Title: Life After Divorce: A Qualitative Study on Experiences of Young Women in Chandpur, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Divorce is a Social Fact [5]. It has become a widespread occurrence in modern societies, affecting couples from all social, political, economic, and ethnic backgrounds [11]. “Divorce is defined as a final legal dissolution of a marriage according to the laws of each country” [3]. The American Psychological Association (APA) estimates a 41% chance that a first marriage will end in divorce in 2024. Studies on divorce indicate that the global average crude divorce rate in 2023 is around 1.8 per 1000 individuals.

Problem Statement

A developing country like Bangladesh is not lagging in the percentage of divorce. The rate of divorce in Bangladesh is 1.4 per 1000 people in 2022 [12]. According to the BBS, 2024, marriage and divorce rates tend to be higher in villages than in cities [8]. The age range of “young women” is considered around 18-30 years old who face divorce mostly after 1-2 years of marriage without children in rural areas. Research indicates that of those who married in their teenage years (13-19) nearly 8% of the women had marital disruption compared to 7.4% of those who married later [9]. According to the District Register's office, about 60,000 marriages were registered in Chandpur district over the last five years, while the number of divorces is around 16,000 [2].

Justification of the Study

In Bangladesh, most research on divorce is urban-based, primarily on adult women who experience divorce with children. In cases of divorce involving children, remarriage is rare and researchers examine the impact of divorce on women's social, financial and children. However, currently, the divorce rate is higher in Chandpur. Due to the geographical distance between spouses, complexities related to motherhood, most of the divorce occurs before having children where remarriage is very common. ICDDR, B conducted some work on divorce in certain sub-districts of Chandpur, but that was in the 1990s. Therefore, I have chosen Chandpur as the demographic area for my research.

Research Objectives

The general objectives of the research:

- To investigate the social (stigma and discrimination), financial and personal (emotional and mental health) challenges young divorced women face.
- To explore the family and community support system affect the post-divorce experiences of young women.
- To analyze the pressures and compromises young divorced women face regarding remarriage.

Research Questions

1. What are the main social, financial, and personal challenges faced by young divorced women?
2. How do family and community support systems affect the post-divorce experiences of young women?

3. What compromises might young divorced women need to make when considering remarriage?

Literature Review

Young divorced women face more intense social, financial, and personal difficulties than older women due to a limited ability to adapt effectively. According to **H. Al-Abed** (2018), age has no connection to divorce [7]. But age is the most crucial factor in adjusting to married life; otherwise, immaturity can disrupt the relationship. The findings of **Mofizul Islam** suggest that the rates of marital disruption are significantly lower among women who married later compared to those who experienced child marriage [9]. Research has shown that divorced women are more likely to encounter workplace sexual harassment than married women [10]. In villages like **Chandpur**, there are not enough employment opportunities for men let alone young divorced women. The most dangerous problem they face is the financial crisis. To experience sexual harassment, it's not important to have a workplace rather they face it from people in their vicinity [13]. **Sharma** (2011) asserted that divorced women often enjoy an improved psychological state after divorce [1]. It's a very rare case that a divorce can be a favorable option for women in specific situations [9]. The study of **E. Akhtar** indicates that most of the women (72%) face mental stress [4]. Depression, insecurity, and diffidence are quite common among young women who have gone through a divorce. The experience of divorce differs across societies. People with family and social support tend to face less hardship compared to those who lack such support [13]. In Bangladeshi rural society, people tend to insult divorcees instead of offering them any support. The social-economic factors of Bangladesh create pressure on divorced women to remarry. When considering remarriage, they often tend to make compromises in choosing partners, accepting factors like huge age differences, previous wives or children from prior relationships [9]. It's no longer rare in society for very beautiful women (desirable traits of Bangladesh from brides regarding marriage), whether they are divorced or come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, to marry unmarried men.

Research Methodology

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of young divorced women, this study will employ a qualitative phenomenological approach [6]. A non-probability sampling technique will be applied, using open-ended and in-depth interviews (**IDIs**) with participants selected through purposive and snowball sampling in **Chandpur, Bangladesh**. The study will cover the 8 Upazila of Chandpur to collect data cross-sectionally. The sample size of this study will be 50. The data will be collected through unstructured questionnaires. The IDI's average length will be 30-40 minutes and recorded using the Android mobile phone.. The audio content will be transcribed exactly as spoken and then translated into English. Afterward, the data will be manually coded following the code list. Finally, the collected data will be arranged for analysis.

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