



Why do men and women get divorced?

Aims and Understanding:

Hypothesis: People do not have as much interest nowadays as they had before about marriage and family as societies' norms and values have gone about a sea change.

I am interested in this topic because I feel that I have a lot of opinions and arguments to give towards it also to see how society norms and values have changed.

Aim: To see why and what has changed the western worlds views and attitudes that have contributed to the sharp rise in the rate of divorce over the last 40 years.

My 3 research questions are:

- Has the divorce rates risen in the past 40 years? If so why?
- What are the effects of divorce ?
- Has the role of women changed dramatically?

I will carry out my research through past statistics e.g. graphs, tables and a questionnaire based upon men/women in their 18 – 55 on their views on feminists rights. Doing this I hope to gain a better insight into the men and women dynamics that will support my hypothesis.

Methodology:

In order to get clear facts and figures of the changing trend in the break of marriage leading up to divorce by gathering information from past statistics for the divorce rates over the past 40 years, I will be looking into compelling factors preventing men and women wanting to get married and the evolved role of women in the society.

The methods employed;-

- I will be using the national statistics website for official statistics which will be used to collect data that will provide us with an objective measure of the social facts on the rate of divorces occurring within the last 40 years.
- Another method of research will be carrying out a survey by distributing 2 questionnaires to men and women on women rights in the changing society and the effects on divorce. The first questionnaire will be given to 10 men and women within the age group of 18 – 55 to gain a balanced view. The second questionnaire will be based upon 10 divorced parents and 10 children and their experiences with divorce and how it changed them.

The strengths gained using the methods employed above is an authentic website providing an objective measure of social facts and for the second method of questionnaires provide feedback from a wide age group giving insight into the reasons that effect them which is leading to divorce and the effects on lives after divorce.

The weakness in the first method is limited because it's a national website rather than international. For the second method that the feedback gained could be biased because of culture, age group, social stratus.

The ethical concern that I have to be political sensitive to the culturally diverse group of people I interview.

The types of questions I will ask in my first questionnaire:

- In your family who does the housework (cleaning, ironing, cooking)?
- In general who takes care of the children?
- Do you work?
- Does your partner work?
- How do you feel about women rights and their equality?
- Do you think the women rights have changed your lifestyle? If so how does it?

The types of questions I will ask in my second questionnaire:

- **Have you been divorced? Were you involved with a divorce?**
- **What were your reasons to get divorced?**
- **If you had children who got custody of them? How did they feel about it?**
- **How old were you when you got divorced? How old were your children?**
- **How did you find the whole experience? Did things settle down after a while?**
- **How were your kids affected by the situation?**

I will design and pilot my data collection tool by presenting graphs showing information based on my research questions. To find this information I will use the internet as my resource another source of information will be people for my first and second questionnaires based upon people in the age group of 18 – 55 for my first questionnaire and for my second p eople who have been divorced or involved in a divorce.

Content and Analysis:



This is a graph taken from Google images on the divorce rate from 1950-2000. It is clearly evident since the divorce act of 1971 came into effect the divorce rate dramatically escalated and has remained quite high till date.

I believe such escalation that came immediately after the divorce act of 1971 was primarily due to:

- It became easier because it was cheaper.
- It had longer been necessary to provide evidence for the marriage break up as one could get divorce on grounds of “irretrievable breakdown” after a period of separation.
- Divorce since became acceptable, and morally right to do for the children. Divorce had no longer brought you shame or social disapproval as so many people were doing it and this became acknowledgeable through publicity of divorces of high profile people.
- People have become more self centred and look out for themselves first and no longer feel the need to obey their vows “till death us do part”, they see it in a relaxed and casual attitudes.

Stephen J. Bahr, Chao-Chin Lu and Jonathan H. Westover are sociologists who also have done an investigation on the recent increase in divorce rates and how social trends, characteristics and many other possibilities have caused couples and families to get divorced.

Survey conducted via the first questionnaire circulated to 10 men and women :

- In your family who does the housework (cleaning, ironing, cooking) do you share the work load?

7/10 men felt that they do help with the housework and other 3/10 men said that they don't feel that it is their place to do .

6/10 women feel that men do help with the housework but don't take full responsibility for all of the workload and one woman said that her husband doesn't help at all with work and leaves it all her.

- In general who takes care of the children?

4/10 men felt that they take care of their children more than their spouse and 6/10 felt that they don't have the patience or the ability to take care of the child but will be able to do so for a short period of time.

8/10 women more or less look after their children in contrast with the other 2/10 women which are busy with work life therefore their spouse take care of their children.

- Do you work?

10/10 men from my questionnaire said that they were working and added that they had to dew to the recent economic pressures.

8/10 women said that they also worked but the other two women could not get a job because they had their children to take of.

- Does your partner work?

6/10 men from the questionnaire said their partner also worked and 4/10 men said that there partner did not work and wouldn't like them t o unless they were desperate for money.

10/10 women said that their partner worked.

- How do you feel about women rights and their equality?

8/10 men thought prenuptial agreements are necessary before marriage as they don't want their spouse to end up with their assets whereas the other men were pleased that women were now started to treated equal to men.

10/10 of the women said that it was better that women are now starting to get treated equally and fairly but 7/10 said that women they are still b eing treated unfairly such as in work they think that most women are being payed less than less men even though they are equally capable or even more capable than men.

- Do you think women rights have changed your lifestyle? If so h as it?

8/10 men like the fact that women now are all working like them so they appreciate the fact there is an extra source of income but 4/10 of them still feel that they shouldn't be working because they feel emasculated .

8/10 women said that yes wo men rights changed their lives giving them the opportunity to work and almost be treated equally to men but the two women were 19 and 22 years old so they didn't realise the effect because the grew up in the era where women are equal.

Doing this questionnaire which answers my third research question that "has the role of women changed dramatically"; yes it definitely has due to the 1960s where women rights to work was starting to be initiated . Women started to work and achieve more confidence, independence and freedom away from the family life and this is one of the most important key points to why divorce rates have risen over the past 40 – 50 years as it creates a roll on effect because when women were allowed to work and make their living there was no one left to support the children.

Everything around the house was hectic because earlier men will go out and earn for food and shelter while women stayed home looking after the kids and maintaining the house but now when women also work the duties become twice as hard and this causes frustration and fights between the couple which may lead to divorce. Seeing this struggle and constant break up of marriages through the media young women and men are now more wary about when to get married and start settling down and have a family as the average now when women have babies is 29“ Over the last 20 years the average age for a woman to have their first baby has risen from 26 to 29” taken from the BBC website of a report of Delaying babies 'defies nature'. Even though now some men resent that women should work, in the current environment they have no choice but to because of the recession and the economic downfall and the new law legislated by Gordon Brown that even people on benefits have to now get a job no matter the conditions they're aren't just going to hand away their benefits as they did before.

Survey conducted via the second questionnaire circulated to 10 divorced parents and 10 children who have seen and experienced their parents getting divorced:

- What were your reasons to get divorced?

Majority of the people said three common grounds for the irretrievable break up of the marriage to be:

- 1. Excessive focus on their careers resulting in neglect of spouse and children.*
- 2. Adultery.*
- 3. Finances.*

- Do you have children and who got their custody? How did they feel about it?

Overall most of them felt guilty of making children go through such a traumatic experience and felt very bitter about losing out to their spouse, usually the mother who got the custody of the children .

- How old were you when you got divorced? How old were your children?

6/10 parents who were within the age group of 18-25 said they were too young to realise what a marriage entailed. Whilst the other four who were in their 40-50 felt that they had grown apart and had nothing in common to remain in their 'empty shell' marriages.

- What was your experience while going through the divorce procedures ?

Nearly all the 10 parents interviewed felt that the experience was very painful and those who had children felt very guilty of making them face such traumatic and stressful time at venerable age.

- How were your kids affected by the situation?

Some felt that they could not communicate and were torn between the two parents. Some children showed no interest in their schools and studies and fell in to the wrong company and did not value family life.

Divorce is a very painful experience for anyone who goes through it be that parents or children. It can be even more traumatic for the children who fall can fall prey to anti social behaviour and have a very low esteem of themselves . However it depends on individual case like how well off is a family after divorce, is there less conflict then before, during and after the divorce and how well new changes are adapted to i.e. a new home or a single parent family or a reconstituted family. In addition to the above it is very detrimental to the children overall well being to have contact with the parent they don't live with.

Evaluation

It was my aim to get an insight in to what made p eople change their attitudes that contributed to the sharp rise in the divorce over the last 40 years. I conducted my research through questionnaires, relevant websites and textbooks. I have been able to get wide range of opinions from people of different age groups and walks of life. This has given me clarity on the attitudinal shift in the minds of people over the 40 years. I can safely conclude that the roles, goals and expectations of women have undergone a sea change which has led to women demanding equal rights. Women are independent in aspects of life and are not prepared to be seen as being inferior to men which have led to a power struggle leaving the children trapped in the middle. Divorce now being easier to obtain due to the divorce act of 1971 a nd the social stigma of divorce no longer being an issue, men and women feel they have the right to end a bad marriage and seek happiness. The methods I selected worked because it gave clear and easy information to evaluate and the questionnaires were filled in anonymously but I could have improved my method of research through using an interview as answers the question individually with all of the people unique interpretation behind it.

Bibliography

I conducted this coursework using only Google, Google images, bbc.co.uk and my mums' sociology book.