

Innovations

Divorce and the Lives of Women in Rural Areas of Dembecha Woreda, West Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia

Ayene Mammo Seyoum (PhD)

Debre Markos University

Abstract

The issue of divorce is as old as human existence. Divorce affects children, women, and men differ in terms of how they go through the process and how they deal with the aftermath. Members of the same family can have very different experiences. A lot of divorcing families face a slew of issues involving the family, particularly the children; Mothers are, in most situations, the primary caregivers. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to investigate the causes of divorce and the lives of divorced women in rural areas of Dembecha District. To address the objective, the researcher uses a qualitative approach, ethnographic study design, and purposive sampling technique. The methods of data collection were: - in-depth interview, key informant interview, focus group discussion, and documents recorded in Dembecha District court office. The collected data were analyzed thematically. The finding of this study showed that divorce has different major causes in the study area such as - poverty, women taking family low as an advantage, relatives and friends' interference, inability to give birth, cheating, the existence of stepchildren, and jealousy. Divorced women challenging economic, social, and psychological problems, to cope with those problems, they used; land rent, local Areki extraction, bull power, and daily labor. This can conclude as Divorce has different causes, it also becomes a serious problem especially for women because they have social and cultural influence to leave out the house and to care for children. Divorced women use different coping mechanisms but they do have not enough options to cope and resist the situation. Finally, this study suggests some implications such as, to escape the negative impacts of divorce, the habit of marriage counselling should be enhanced; creating awareness to the local people about the family law including the sharing of properties during a divorce is used to minimize the challenges of women, no one is asking them to give any governmental or non-governmental support but by seeing the seriousness of the problem, for example, giving a separate house, creating work opportunities, and other supports to them is mandatory.

Key words: Divorce, Marriage, Challenges, Coping Mechanisms, Dembecha District

I. Background of the Study

Marriage is a vital social event as individuals get involved in each other's, lives and start their marital union based upon mutual and continued choice and affection. Marriage life gives couples emotional support and care in their lives by protecting their mental health and enables them to fulfill multiple social roles. Therefore, marriage guarantees emotional health for couples and it allows them to demonstrate higher level of psychological as well as physical well-being (Wubedel 2014). Marriage, on the other hand, may not last till the couple's death. There are a variety of natural and man-made events that occur and cause marital instabilities

in marriage activities, with the end outcome being divorce. Divorce is the dissolution of a marriage contract that can be completed by the husband's act, the wife's demand, mutual agreement, or the operation of the law (Musa 2008). Wubedel (2014) also stated that divorce is the outcome of the couple's depletion of all hopes and emotions to live together for the rest of their lives. It denotes the reversal of all statements, love, and attachments made by the partner at the start. It comes as a result of the desire each has to avoid the other, due to the others failure to fulfill the duties expected of him or her. Divorce rates among couples are rising rapidly around the world, and family structures are collapsing globally, spreading like an infection that has impacted the structures of all countries. As a result, many people actually believe this is becoming a global fad (Khurshid&Khatoon, 2012). In Ethiopia approximately 45% of all first marriages end in divorce within 30 years (Tilson and Larsen, 2000). Besides in the country, 32 % of weddings have ended in divorce with 23%, not to mention the unregistered marriages and divorces across the country (Herald Magazine, 2019). The arguments behind the rising number of divorces in Ethiopia are both internal and external to the family. Ethnic politics, job displacement, economic crises, and changing attitudes regarding divorce are among the reasons unique to the country's circumstances. An agreement between spouses and/or a divorce petition is the result of a family dysfunction for a variety of personal, social, and financial reasons (Wubedel 2014).

Disappointment, incompatibility, annoyance, adultery, anxiety, drug or alcohol addiction, physical or emotional abuse, lack of communication, and other factors are among the leading causes of divorce around the world (Kavas, 2010). The age gap, the couple's background, social and economic standing, religion, and inability to conceive children, as well as personality and interpersonal characteristics, are all demographic factors that may lead to couples divorcing. Alcoholism and poor communication skills are personality traits and behaviors that can degrade the quality of a marriage and lead to divorce (Clarke and Brentano, 2008). In addition, economic problems, child bearing issues, pressure or intervention from friends and family members and differences in ethnic and religious background of the couples among others are some of the factors for divorce to happen. The absence of well skilled marriage counseling services may also make the situation worse. Divorce affects children, women, and men differently in terms of how they go through the process and how they deal with the aftermath. Members in the same family can have very different experiences. A lot of divorcing families face a slew of issues involving the family, particularly the children, while the impact on others may be more minor. Mothers are, in most situations, the primary caregivers. Divorce isn't always portrayed as a horrible experience. It could be an opportunity to quit a toxic relationship and achieve some of your personal goals and aspirations (Kendall, 2015). Divorce has a variety of psychological, emotional, social, educational, and economic consequences for all members of the family. As a result, concerns about the increasing marital instability and potentially serious consequences for the wellbeing of divorced men and women, as well as children with divorced parents, are growing (Amato, 2000). The psychological impacts of divorce on women are numerous, but guilt is one of the most fundamental feelings. Whether or not they begin the divorce process, women often feel guilty about their failure to keep the marriage together. Divorced women suffer from depression and anxiety as a result of their emotional trauma (Ghana, 2011). Similarly, in the study area divorce is common and divorced women's are facing various challenges thus this research aims to investigate the post-divorce challenges and coping mechanisms of divorced women's in rural areas of Dembecha District.

II. Major Causes of Divorce in Rural Areas of Dembecha District

According to the participants, there were different reasons for the initiation of divorce in their marriage. Among the causes; poverty, females thinking of family law as an advantage, relative and friend interference, cheating, the existence of a stepchild, jealousy, and husband addiction to alcohol contributed the larger share.

In addition, fertility problems, pressure from friends and families, economic and health problems were reported. One key informant describes the causes of divorce in the study area as follows; In the rural part of Dembecha District, the most dominant cause of divorce to come to our office is a land-related cause. Divorced peoples come to our court office when the disagreement on sharing their properties becomes difficult to manage by elders and religious leaders; as a result, women come to our court office to get their half share. Husbands are not willing to share the properties equally with women (female court KII 38 years, 11/04/2021 at reception office). Regarding the above explanation, the researcher can understand that the repeated cause in the court office is land-related. The last way for women to get their property is by law. In addition, an 81-year-old elder also explains the issue; Divorced families try to make hidden their cause of divorce from societies. But as the elder of the village says, we keep their confidentiality; as a result, they informed us of their cause to us. Especially if the cause is sexual disagreement, they try to create another falsified cause, but directly or indirectly we try to get the real cause. As a result, we are not willing to separate them. At that time, they inform their real cause, and as the severity of the cause, we decide to separate them (male KKI 81-year-old). The above statement describes that the cause of divorce was sometimes hidden, and elders are the best alternative to get the real cause of divorce. Especially, sexual-related cases are not directly informed to the society.

1. Financial difficulties

Money is quite strong in our culture, and it is believed that the desire for money is the foundation of all events. Financial difficulties are becoming one of the most common reasons for divorce in families (Oforchukwu 2000). As the FGD participants discussed that, the economic problem is the cause for divorce. Because as the market becomes very inflated all the goods and services become very expensive. As a result, in the District especially in the rural parts, there are extra expenses during weddings, Christian meetings, and graduation ceremonies. This highly goes to their economic desperation as a main cause of divorce. One informant who is a victim of such a problem said that she has seen no other reason for ending her marriage except poverty. She said

I am divorced because of poverty. We lived together for seventeen years, and we have four children and 0.5 hectares of laughable land. As a result, we were often deprived of necessities, such as food and clothing were repeatedly scarce. We could not afford to pay for social services, such as weddings, Christian meetings, graduation ceremonies, and so on. So there was an argument at home, He began to tell me that he was destined to be poor because he had married me. Finally, as a solution, we agreed to take out a loan from ACSI (Amhara Credit and Savings Institution) for land rent, fertilizer, and seed purchase. According to our agreement, we borrowed 4,000 birrs. However, we could not use the money for the purpose. Before summer dawned, we had run out of money. Our poverty has increased again. During the winter, we sow only 0.5 hectares of land. After a few days, we were told to start the repayment. The loan reached about 6,000 birr and we had no choice but to sell our two oxen. Next, he was blaming me for his idleness he forced me to leave the house. Although I knew that I was not the cause of our poverty, and as I had no food to eat I decided to divorce and I joined my family taking my share of 0.25 hectares. My three children were with me, and I sent my first child away from to uncle (Female 33 years).

The above statement implies that poverty is the cause for divorce in the rural area of Dembecha District. Women are seen as a cause of poverty in the family. Giving extra lone from the institution also very hard because as they are lack education and managing resources. Women are a high victim of poverty up to divorce. They are caring for children because almost 28 all children choose to live with their mothers instead of fathers. As a result, women are highly exposed to hunger. Generally, the researcher understands from the

above statement, there are many reasons for those exposed to economic problems up to absolute poverty and then it riches up to divorce in the rural part of Dembecha District.

2. Women taking family law as an advantage

FGD discussants explain that: - women in the rural part of Dembecha District have some knowhow about family law and have the right to participate by any idea in their family. But as norms and values of rural areas of Dembecha District societies, women have no right to make a decision and a long-term plan about their life in the home. Women think about their right to participate in overall activities in the family. They think about the family law. So they become harder to control by their husband as a result, disagreement occurs in the family and its riches up to divorce. One of the informants tells us, how women are thinking of family law as an advantage becomes a cause for divorce.

My wife and I have been married for nine years, and over time, my wife began to express her dissatisfaction and disobedience. When I tried to convince her why she was like that, she said, "You are evil. I can take revenge on you." As a result, I was rejected by the family. For she wanted to divorce me and share all my possessions, she kept creating a mess in the house. I decided to call off my marriage and share my possessions though I did not want to. So I shared with her the bull she had brought when we got married, 0.5 hectares of land, and the whole house furniture. But she was not happy about it. She sent me an elder to negotiate for she wanted to share a house in the town which is my personal property. I insisted that it was my property which I built before marrying her, and, I said no, but she suing me of sharing the house. According to the indictment, the court ruled in her favor. Then, I went to Finoteselam Court to appeal, since I was never convinced. However, Finoteselam Court still judged me to my property with her. I had no option but to share, so I demolished my heartfelt house and shared the house equally. Sharing of the property was completed, after losing my money on suing and transportation costs. Even if I want to propose to marry again, I do not think that she will live with me but share my property, so I am cooking and eating alone without getting married and, at times, buying food from the city. Instead of being judged fairly by the 29 elders, many are women who have gone to great lengths to sue and share properties that are not their own. They are making a living (Male 42 years).

The above statement implies that, in the rural part of Dembecha District women try to understand their rights in their house. Yet they abuse the wealth of husbands, by using the family law for achieving their goal of sharing the husband's private resource in a wrong way as their true equal resource. The above statement also explained the role of elders affected by the law that is to say women's not agree by the judge of elders, because they want to judge by the court to get extra resources and using the law is highly expensive for transport and writhing costs during the process of divorce. And also the law is highly time-consuming; the value of elders also becomes declines. "...Our son began to listen to her advice. He said he did not work and did not respect me as his father. My son received money from his mother and went to wander in the city; He became a thief, disobedient and jobless" (male 42 years). Standing from the above statement the researcher can understand that, the disagreement between wife and husband in the house highly affects children behaviour. Children become workless because there is no equal agreement with their children's activity, and women try to support children's bad behaviour as it is. So it makes children more violent and aggressive. As a result, the husband fights with his wife because of their children and it riches up to divorce.

3. Relative and friend interference

In the study area relatives and friends become the cause for divorce. And the one who divorced because of her family interface narrated her experience below;

I have been married twice and divorced twice. My mother is the reason for my divorce. When I got married and had a baby, my mother insisted that my husband was not comfortable with me. But my husband wanted to work with us, so he did not want us to spend money to hire a maid. Finally, my mother told him that he was not comfortable with her daughter, I and that he had to minimize workload or else she would take me. If she doesn't, I'll take her and feed her. Then he said, "If she does not want to cook and feed me, you can take her". My mother divorced me, saying, "Leave me alone and I will take care of you." I divorced her and told me that she should not listen to anyone but her 30 mother. If I were mature that today, I would not have to live without my husband. My mother, however, dismissed my older brother's wife as unwise and unprofessional (Female 28 years).

The above account depicted that, friends and relatives' interference to married family causes divorce. Because the way they want to live and other external person see their marriage on the outside may become mismatched. The plan that married families used to manage their family may also not be similar to the outside relatives thinking. As she narrated all the plans and decisions about the family may not interfere with the outside family because it becomes highly unfair and difficult to manage.

4. Inability to give birth

The inability to give birth is the problem of both husbands and wives, but, if there is a problem of getting children in the family, husbands decide it as a problem of the wife. Husbands want to divorce and get another wife but the problem of getting children will be the problem of the husband by himself (FGD1). The story taken from the in-depth informant women illustrates this point very well below;

I have stayed 3 years with my ex-husband and then I get divorced. During a marriage, I can't give birth to my husband. And my husband highly wants to get children. My husband wants to marry another wife she can give birth and he forced me to out of the house. This is the reason for my divorce (female 28-year-old).

This reveals, on the values and norms of the study area societies one marries a woman must get birth a child unless she will be replaced by another wife by nothing consideration of the women health condition and the risk of her life after divorce. And also she may give birth some years ago, but as she said if she does not give birth at the appropriate time immediately she becomes divorced.

5. Infidelity

Infidelity on any partner is the most devastating blow to a marriage's happiness. It should not be assumed that a dissatisfied marriage will lead to a search for sexual fulfilment elsewhere as temptations and chances abound in today's society. An adulterous relationship is fashionable and attractive because it is connected with excitement and a break from the monotony of the marriage, therefore 'a fresh experience' (Consumer Insight, 2012). Infidelity/Cheating is the cause of divorce in the study area. As the FGD discussants discussed that in their living place especially males are exposed to cheating. The reason for their cheating is sometimes hereditary and sometimes cheating is occurred because of when there is an uncomfortable condition in the home. This discomfort creates because women after they give birth to a baby they may not want to keep their self-care their attention focuses on their children. The sexual activity of women also decreases. At that time

the husband sees other best females for the fulfilment of his sexual demand. Sometimes women also cheat on their husbands because if she is not getting love as she expected from her husband she may cheat. But in our living area, women cheating is very rare than the cheating of husbands. One in-depth informant describes how cheating cause her divorce is as follows;

We had six children and had been married for 24 years. He had three more children. I was patient with everyone to rear and bring up my children. However, he rarely spends a night at home. He also took cereal to his mistress pretending that it was for sale. He was taking cattle or sheep and slaughtering them for his children's Christian festivity. But while I was enduring all this, he yelled out saying he did not like all the food and what he said and finally evicted me out of the house and asked me to divorce him, saying that he was comfortable with his ex-girlfriend that he wanted to marry. To make matters worse, he asked my family to take their daughter, me as if I did wrong to him and did not treat him properly. When my family asked me to leave, I divorced. He shared, not everything, but what he believed and wanted to give. I accepted what he has given me and build a small house in my family's neighborhood and teach my children alone that my children will not see the face of a stepfather. When he gets a good yield of production, he gives us food to eat. He comes to me while he is still married. Generally, I think promiscuity is inherited. His brother also has at least three mistresses (38 years old).

Regarding the above statement, cheating is the cause of divorce really in the study area. Cheating affects the economy of the family and it creates a difficult situation to live together in the house. As a result, divorce occurs. There is also some indication about the inheritance of cheating.

6. The existence of a stepchild

According to the information from the FGD discussant, in the study area, the existence of stepchildren in the family is also the cause for divorce, because the husband or wife who has stepchildren thinks for his/her stepchildren than the other new-born children. They assume that they have a responsibility to grow up the stepchildren because children lack their mother or father. At a time, the father or mother of new-born children becomes sad and ignores his/her, stepchild, as a result, there is a disruption each other and disagreement in the family then it causes divorce. Beyond this the informants describe it as follows below;

Some cases in our court office are by the gifts of stepchildren. During their life of marriage, they give land to/her stepchildren but after divorce, one side that has no stepchildren stands to complain about that gift land because they want to share that gift land also (female court KII 38years old).

This reveals, stepchildren are the cause of divorce and the fight of couples after divorce also. The gifts of stepchildren are not decided by the full agreement of the family. 34-year-old female highly supported this idea by illustrating her life as can see below;

My husband had two stepchildren, and he and I had four children. But he was arguing with me every day, saying that I was discriminating against stepchildren. He was saying that I was forcing his children to look after other kids and complaining as if I did not give them enough food to eat. Then, as one of his stepchildren began to govern herself, she was married and separated herself from the house, and started her life with her husband. We give her a plot of land and food for a year. However, a year later, he still gave her 0.5 hectares of land without my permission. When our arguments soothed, she still was given an ox and cow though she owned her cows and began to give away my possessions. There was no peace in the house, for I complain that he was giving property only for his child. She became richer than me. But I began to regret the exploitation of the property of my four

children and the provision of permanent property. To make matters worse, he still gave her the most fertile plot of land. I rebuked her, saying that I was overwhelmed by her thoughtfulness for the rest of her life. She never thought about how children would grow up. He preferred divorce more than to hear complaints about his daughter. I got divorced and went to my mother's house with half of my possessions (Female 34 years).

From the above evidence, the researcher agreed that the existence of stepchildren is the cause of divorce in the study area. The above statement implies that, if there are stepchildren in the family it is difficult to trust each other. Because stepchildren think as they are exploited by the stepmother and the fathers of stepchildren also think as she exploits them. The fathers of stepchildren also try to create a more comfortable situation for their stepchildren in a special way by exploiting the wealth of all family members without considering the remaining family members.

7. Jealousy

Jealousy is the cause of divorce in the study area. The man or the women both have equal opportunity to jealousy when the women are more beautiful than the husband become jealousy and reciprocal. Because they assume that if she/he gets a more handsome/beautiful man or woman he /she will be going to that one. As a result of this frustration, they become jealousy (the data from FGD participants). Based on jealousy one in-depth informant describes as follow;

My husband and I were married according to our tradition. An elderly man whom I did not know was sent to my family's house. I asked them what was going to happen when there were a lot of clothes and parties at home and I heard that they were arranging to wed. I was 14 years old and my husband was 29 years old when we got married. We have 5 children, and we lived together for 23 years though there were some arguments. However, over time, his behavior changed. I was not allowed to buy new clothes, go out in new clothes, go to another relative's house, or a neighbors' house without him. While I was walking with him, he used to force me to change my clothes. When I reported this to friends and family they would say that it was jealousy. I waited for a long time, wondering if he loved me, but his behavior was getting worse. His friends said he was tired but I am still young and wanted a potential man. Hence, His friends aggravated the situation. Consequently, every time I left, he started waiting for me and fighting. Eventually, I became disappointed, and I decided to divorce him. (Female 35 years).

Regarding the above description, the researcher can understand that in the rural part of Dembecha District jealousy is the cause of divorce. Because as the woman narrates if there is jealousy it is difficult to trust each other in the home and also it is also difficult to live without freedom. As the way of marriage is traditional the marriage becomes unfair according to age, beauty, and such things. So after marriage, it creates disagreement between them.

III. Divorced women challenges

Divorce highly affects women. In the study area, husbands never leave out the house and husbands are also not willing to share the property with the women. Children also want to live with their mothers and as a result, women become the victim of divorce directly or indirectly (the data from FGD participants). From the documents of the District, only 404 divorced families are registered but informally there are many divorced families who never registered in the District document. As the office workers describe that;

The reason why only a few divorced families registered in the District is the illiteracy of the society they are not willing to pass through all steps up to the registration. After they get their share they terminate the process

informally. This situation creates a difficult environment for divorced women (male KII civil service office worker aged 43).

Depend on the above statement; the District is failing to register all divorced families. The local communities also have no awareness about the advantage of registration of their divorce in the District. One key informant describes the issue below;

Women are the near victim of divorce because in our norms and values during divorce women leave the house and husbands do not leave out the house. At that time women become highly exposed to the problem. The works and the decisions of the family are mostly done by the husbands. As a result, they assume that all the properties as their own 35 as a result they become unwilling to share the property with women. So women are exposed to too many problems (male KII 81 years old).

1. Economic problems

One of the problems of women after a divorce is an economic issue. About divorce and separation family member has different reactions. Most of the time spousal support and child support are denied to women, when this happens, women are put under tremendous stress to bear the burden of a single parent. Sometimes the family members go to her except her ex-husband. The family who is managed by two-person become dependent on her, and this situation becomes hard for her (the data from FGD participants). Most of the informants were not working before divorce because, they simply care for children and do home activities instead of doing outside activities, but they took jobs after their divorce to adjust to their economic expenses. As the informants explained that after divorce they start to work but they are not successful in the work. As a result, they become financially problematic is difficult to upgrade her children starting from their basic needs like feeding.

1.1 Financial stress

Divorced women in the study area were exposed to various stressful events such as financial stress. One of an in-depth interview informant revealed that;

I had been in marriage for nine years. After the divorce, I lived with my two children in my mother's house. I engaged myself in daily works. I struggle to resist financial difficulties. I worked hard to take care of the children and manage the house. But daily work is not accessible in our village. I didn't receive sufficient child support on time from my ex-husband. I got little financial support from my parents because they are also very poor, and couldn't help me up to what I wanted to get. I have no extra expenses but buying soap and feeding challenging me. This is all about my worst life (female 36 years old).

Standing from the above statement the researcher can understand that, financial stress is one challenge of divorced women. They try to cope with the problem but it is difficult to get works the ex-husbands are also not willing to give child support at the time or on time. As a result, they become financially stressed up buying soap and feeding the children.

1.2. Residence issues

Almost all of the informants stated that they faced challenges in getting a separate house. When they move back to their family, their relationship with their family becomes disturbed. They tried to get a separate house for themselves but being divorced and having children, they were unable to get a separate house. So, many of

them decide to live with their families as a last and the only solution. One informant describes the situation as follows;

After a divorce, I go to my mother's house she accepts me. After I start to live with my families my sister start to convince me with different words. And I asked my mother to live on another floor of the same house she agreed with me on the idea I told to her to live on another floor of the same house. I start to live on the other floor but it is not the only hard part. My sister asks me to leave the house but I have no option that I can go. Still, now I continued to live in my mother's house (female 30 years old).

Getting a separate house is the worst problem they faced as a result of their divorce. It is very difficult and shameful to return their parent with children after divorce. The time that they left with their parent after divorce is depressed for them. Particularly, their families are angry with their children, they become upset. Most divorced women were forcibly evicted from their house by their husbands. As a result, they become homeless.

1.3. Decreasing productivity

Based on the data gained through FGD discussant, being unproductive is identified as part of the economic problem of divorced women. The participants were described that before being divorcees, their family was under the influence of their ex-husband. He was the main and decision-maker in the family. But women are not participants in the decision and long-term plans. As a result, adopting a new environment of being an earner may be a difficult task for divorced women. Their ex-husband did not return the bride price and divided their matrimonial property evenly during their divorce; as a result, their agricultural output has suffered from time to time due to a lack of assets and access to resources such as land and oxen. One of the informants defined the situation in which divorce causes economic inefficiency as follows: -

During the time of divorce, my ex-husband was not willing to share the resource equally. To get my share I go to the legal court to secure my legal right after that I get my share of the land but the process was very challenging for me. After that my ex-husband becomes unwilling to give my land to another sharecropper household, because, he went to a sharecropper of my land (female 45-year-old).

Some divorced women were not entitled to the right to access the land; they also couldn't choose their sharecropper. This implies that in the area some women haven't the right to control their land since their ex-husband was not interested to give the land to other households as a sharecropper after divorce and as a result women were forced to make their ex-husbands a sharecropper. Another informant also describes it as follows;

I got 0.5 hectares of land from my ex-husband and I used it as a source of income to raise my children. I have one ox, and my son plough the land by joining up with another ox from another household, literally called Kenja. The amount of production I got from the land is very small and decreased by half. Because of this, during the summer season, I borrow crops from relatives since the crops harvested from my land are insufficient to feed my children annually (female 51 years old).

Divorced women have exposed to the insecurity of land ownership. This also exacerbates them unproductively in agriculture. Before they got divorced their household used to have relatively enough cultivation that covered the household need, but after a sharecropper started to work on their farming the

production there has never been enough food to feed all of the members of the family (the data from FGD participants). Others described the situation as follows:

After I got divorced, my husband becomes my sharecropper. He always fought with others who try to make share arrangements with me. He also owns land adjacent to the mine. Because both lands are close by, he would follow up on mine just as quickly as he would on his. But after two years of hard work, I discovered he was attempting to deceive me. I have discovered that he had moved his hand towards mine and took some portion from my land. At that time, I did not have a formal certificate that shows the size and location of my land. However, we have a traditional method of determining the size and location. After a long time of quarrel, the neighbors tried to mediate it. But I couldn't get my portion back. Now I lost approximately 0.25 hectares. As I lost some portion of my land and was divorced and make a sharecropper, my agricultural productivity gets decreased (female 39 years old).

2. The social challenges of divorce on divorced women

In the current research, divorced women face the social impact of divorce in a more negative way. According to research by Wubedel (2014), people after divorce tend to interrupt most partner-oriented activities after the breakdown of their marriage, and the relationships and social connections they retained before divorce are also lost during this weather. Therefore, the size of the divorced people's network shrinks and fluctuates with different forms of contact and interaction. When informants were asked about the social challenges of divorce on their lives after divorce, almost all interviewees said that social challenges are the most serious consequence of their divorce. The social reaction and attitude towards her divorce greatly aggravated her pain. Because of the divorce, they face social exclusion. Some social consequences are described below.

2.1 Limited participation in community affairs

Some female stories interviewed show that divorce leads to social exclusion. Due to the divorce, most informants are considered to belong to different groups. They talked about how divorced women are socially excluded from married friends in many ways. They feel embarrassed that they are not married and are also afraid of contacting old friends. Sometimes the need to go home to reunite with family and old friends is overwhelming, but fear of rejection prevents them from making such a move. Several interviewees stated that they had lost many friends due to the divorce. Many of them are unwilling to keep in touch with their friends. Therefore, they stay away from their friends and social circles.

One informant recounted how her friends and the community treated her a few days after her divorce as follows:

After the divorce, my mother's home environment was unexpected and incredible, because I saw that the attitudes of my brothers and sisters towards me changed. They did not blame me directly, but their behavior changed completely. Sometimes they made me understand. I miss that house. So I shouldn't get involved in family decisions and affairs. Since my two children are very young, I have to stay with my mother just because my father is no longer alive (female 29 years old).

From the above statement, the researcher can be understood that even their mother did not say anything directly out of affection; their siblings were dissatisfied with them after the divorce. Most of them stated that their relationship with their siblings is not what they were before the divorce. Many of them believe that the reason for the bad relationship with their brothers and sisters is that their brothers and sisters are socially

harmed by the divorce. Divorced women are marginalized from social institutions. Especially after divorce, women cannot become members of social events. This is because their community refuses to organize with married families. After all, they cannot repay their loans on time. Therefore, the social problem of rejection perpetuates the economic problem. Almost all participants described the experience of feeling rejected, discriminated against, and socially marginalized as a consequence of being divorced women. The social relations of divorced women in the area are still reported to be stereotyped. They are usually seen as a threat to other people's relationships. Although certain social environments provide space to meet and socialize with others, it is not always easy for them to establish a social network or make new friends. In addition, because they are divorced women, most participants have lost their voice in the community. Regarding the interview boy/man who tried to rape her at night, she could not speak out for anyone, even the police, and local leaders, because they blamed her for the behavior. Because she has lost her social capital, most community members imagine her as a commercial and violent sex worker. He is now suffering from social isolation from social life, which has caused him to lose recognition in the community. Divorced women have a sense of social stigma. Community opposition to divorced women is stronger than other forms of women leaders. This study found that divorced women pose a threat 40 to society in the study area. The community believes that she has a bad personality and can harm married women (the data from FGD participants).

2.2 The decline in social and family support and respect

Similarly, divorced women also face the loss of social support, mainly from the ex-husband's family and friends, shared by their partners. Research has also shown that older women and women with lower socioeconomic status experience more complicated periods after divorce (Ambert, 2009). In-depth interviews and most women in FGD revealed that they had the same experience with their ex-husband relatives. This keeps them away from social interaction. One of the informants reported that;

I was able to observe the social reaction. People respected me when I was with him. I discussed the various subjects of my life with married ladies with my old pals. My friends refused to discuss their life experiences after I got divorced. They even discussed the topic at home when I approached our Mehaber (religious institution established to strengthen social support). They shifted the conversation's focus and began discussing unrelated issues. When women go to someone's wedding room to do "Mehaber" job, they become meek and ignore me inadvertently. As a result, I am hesitant to visit. In my experience, I've seen societal marginalization. Married women gather to socialize with other married women. This makes it difficult for me to engage in social activities (female 45 years old).

From the above explanation, People can understand have different concerns and considerations for divorced women. They feel that they cannot survive and are incapable. It can be seen from the above description that the life and social status of divorced women are negatively affected by social exclusion. The data obtained from interviews shows that women after divorce are not respected and considered by relatives. The data collected shows that divorced women will blame my sister, brother, and friends.

Similarly, one of the interviewees explained that

...after the divorce, I returned to my mother's place with my son. I have seen changes in the attitudes of my sister and brother towards me. My mother always stands with me. She discussed them. They don't want to live in that house. My sisters and brothers were not allowed to participate and make decisions. They don't understand me and it hurts a lot. They need to live in their house and tell me that I have my own private house. My mother tried to persuade them. But they don't want to consider my mother. For my son, I live with them (female 40 years old).

As can be seen from the previous narrative, after the participants returned to their homes, their mothers' homes accused them more and more. Some participants also described participation in social activities. They report that their performance is of high quality. After the divorce, their participation in the social world declined due to interpersonal conflicts. For fear of being humiliated and gossiping, they have isolated themselves from them. Most divorced women said that they lived with their parents immediately after the divorce. Few people said that their relationship with their parents was not good at first because their family members and ex-husband's parents were under mental pressure due to social stigma. These Women were asked about their social life, family support, and relationship and social interaction with the ex-husband's family. They reported that during their marriage, they received support from their mothers, family members, and grandmothers. After the divorce, the relationship was interspersed between the ex-husband's relatives and married friends. Related to this, an in-depth interview participant told her story;

When I was with him, his mother, sisters, and brothers often went home. They brought us corn, barley, and other cereal crops... After the divorce, no one came to see me. I heard that they came to the village from the country, and sometimes I get them. They don't want to talk to me, and they don't want to invite my children. Even they don't want to see my child. I think they hate them. I have some friends. They knew I was in trouble. They do not voluntarily provide moral, psychological, and financial support. The social relationship with my ex-husband and friends separates me from the people I know (female 37 years old).

2.3 Feeling of Guilt

Some informants, particularly their relatives, said they were blamed for the divorce especially their relatives. In this sense, one of the informants reported how her brother and parents blamed her:

My sister blamed me for her illness. In addition, my brothers and sisters did not try to understand what psychological stress I was experiencing. However, for the sake of my child, I accepted all this. Many of my family have accused me of not being able to continue my married life. Just seeing my relationship with my ex-husband, friends, and father, they blame me. They said that you are responsible for the dissolution of the marriage. Your husband is very polite and will not do anything about your divorce (female farmer 33 years old).

As can be seen from the previous narrative, after the participants returned to their homes, their mothers' homes accused them more and more. No matter what problems his brothers commit, they are responsible for their actions. However, for the safety of their children, they accepted all this. Except for their brothers and sisters, the participants were blamed by their fathers for the failure of their marriage. One of the informants also expressed a similar statement, as she reviewed her previous experience of accusing her through the frustrating words of her friends. She stated that the way her brothers failed from an education became a source of guilt for her friends are as follows:

My family and friends, I always try to talk about my divorce. I saw the difference in their attitudes. They were not directly accusing me, but show me through their appearance or attitude, as if I cannot continue my marriage is my femininity. I isolate myself from them in every possible way to avoid these humiliations. I only follow the church with a few of my closest friends (female 33 years old).

The FGD participants also described how different types of violence can lead to guilt. This is because they have lost the social capital that most community members describe as commercial sex workers. They conveyed that most children in their community believed that no matter how divorced women were talking or dressing, they must first marry, be non-violent, and be 43 silent...Based on this traditional view, most

children hate them because they can't They are divorced and not violent in any way, according to the norm for appraising them.

3. Psychological problems

Another problem identified is the psychological problems that directly or indirectly affect women after divorce. In this broad category, some subtopics are categorized for easy understanding. From interviews with divorced women, different forms of psychological problems have been observed. When asked about the psychological impact of divorce, most interviewees said that divorce caused them to fall into depression problems because they could not continue their marriage for the rest of their lives. As a negative situation: the informant states "My relatives did not directly blame me; but they always talked curiously about my divorce, which embarrassed me" (female 30 years old). Another case also expressed a similarly: *My family or others are attempting to persuade me that I am unable to continue my marriage; as a result, I will no longer meet with them and will avoid having general conversations with them, Because, I want to forget the chapter of divorce in my life (female 34 years old).*

3.1 Feeling lonely and alone

Another psychological consequence of divorce is the problem of loneliness. Few participants said that their lives as divorced women are a life of loneliness and loneliness. An informant shared her experience below:

After the divorce, I had a lot of troubles. My status in society before the divorce was higher. This is a fact. Divorcing my first husband is the biggest mistake I have ever made. I must have adapted because my second marriage was more painful for me. At the moment I feel that no one in my life can tell me and share my feelings. It is difficult for me to get out of the trauma, which also affects my health. It destroyed me and ruined my children's lives (female 47 years old).

A similar statement is reflected below:

When my son was ill in the past, I could ask my ex-husband for help. But he refused. Now I think my mother only. The only person who can call when necessary, but in most cases, she is not always free I have to do everything on my own (female 39 years old).

A divorced woman is a very lonely existence.

3.2. Loss of trust

Among the determined divorce consequences of divorced women, loss of trust is classified as a psychological consequence. The trauma of separation, the lives of divorced women, and the attempt to find a niche suitable for their own lives have plunged participants into a crisis of self-confidence (the data from FGD participants). As the omnipresent sense of failure looms over daily life, each participant talked about how their current life is full of loss of confidence. One informant explained after her divorce, she did not believe in herself. When she frequently clashed with her second husband, she tried to rethink the causes of violence, which in turn

caused her to completely lose confidence. She does not want to remarry; she is afraid that the two failed marriages will be hurt again.

Regarding remarriage, she said that *I do not plan to get married at this time because I believe that deep down I am still afraid of promises and afraid of being hurt again. I am still afraid of investing myself in a long-term love relationship. I can't trust fully anyone (female 37 years old).*

The above story shows that after the divorce, women have a deep sense of distrust of men, let alone remarrying. When things became more normal and their children grew up, they did not consider remarrying. Doubts about who can be trusted further exacerbated her loneliness. Similarly, another informant also expressed her divorce experience and its impact on her confidence. She once thought of remarrying but did not think that a man would accept that she knew she had three children. As a divorced woman, she has almost no chance of attracting a good man who is willing to marry her. There are many women without children to choose from. As each year passes, your confidence will weaken to the point where you doubt more than expected. Without a husband, she felt that a part was missing. Every day she was single, she felt incomplete and purposeless. Nothing is safe in your life. She lost confidence in men and herself.

3.3 Insults

According to in-depth interviews with divorced women, insults were determined to be a psychological consequence. Some women interviewed reported that they had suffered insults in their lives. Her experience of abuse is mainly reflected in the local children's disrespect for divorced women.

3.4. Becoming violent

According to the data obtained during the FGD, this study investigated becoming violent in interpersonal relationships as one of the psychological consequences. When it comes to their interpersonal relationship, any small matter will make them feel uneasy. They may conflict with neighbors and friends for stupid reasons.

4. Coping mechanisms of Divorced Women

4.1. Land rent

Land rent is one of the coping mechanisms of divorced women in the study area. Divorced women get land from their ex-husband if they have their legal land but it may be very small at most 0.25 hectares of land may their own, because the best and we can say only permanent wealth was land in their living area. Their source of income is agriculture. Divorced women who have no mature male children to plough the land, their choice is the only renting the land. Women have no right to plough the land in their norms. If the farmers who plough her land are fast and hard workers the women become beneficiaries of it (the data from FGD participants).

The following informants describe the situation clearly that they practice in their real-life as follows;

I live on rented land. My husband and I have 1.75 hectares of land, and after divorce, I got 0.75 hectares of land. However, I had no oxen to plough the land, so I decided to rent it since I could not cultivate and it is not our norm. I have no other income because I am mothering a child under the age of one. The farmer who rented the three hectares of land will cover the total cost of seed; fertilizer, oxen, and manpower, and I will only receive the

land allowance. This means the renter will give me one-third of the land's production. I am the one who decides what kind of crop to sow because some farmers who rent land 46 decide to sow the kind of crop that does not require much labour. For example, Niger (noug) never needs fertilizer to be sown with. One hectare of land does not need much seed either. 0.25 hectares of land needs only half a kilo of Niger (nug). But for him, it has no labour and no fertilizer. Moreover, he uses the by-product to feed the cattle. I have started finding another farmer who can cover my land with wheat, maize, Teff, or millet for fear I may be starving. A well-to-do farmer does not hesitate to get involved, so I get one-third as soon as I can. By minimizing my expenditure, that one-third share would suffice. I still live on it. If wheat is sown, it will produce six quintals of wheat. So I get two quintals of wheat. The farmer sends me a messenger to inform me that the wheat is smashed and I would go to him to take the threshing floor on the donkeys back. When the renter takes two quintals, I will pick up one quintal, If I don't get a quintal, I will take one-third in a small quintal and then in a small bowl. I have full control over all 0.75 hectares. I manage not to starve my family. Although I do not celebrate my Sabbath as a society, I am not hungry (female 41 years old).

Standing from the above statement, divorced women in the study are used land rent for their survival. The normal land rent is 1/3 of the overall production of the land. The women have the right to choose the type of crop which cropping in their land and it makes them more benefited because the need of the farmer and women became clash. Women have no extra crop than the rented one. If the farmer chooses the type of crop it is difficult for women because the choice may not consider the living condition of women.

Another informant also describes the situation of her life on land rent as can see below:

My livelihood is land rent. After I was divorced, I got only 0.5 hectares of land and had three children. So my land is not enough to feed my family. I also worked hard to increase my allowance. I participate in labor and share the costs of, seeds, fertilizer, and labor for the weeds to share equally, even though he cultivates my land. When sowing seeds, I offer what should be included, and finally divide it into two equal parts (female 40 years old).

From the above narration, the researcher can understand that divorced women use land rents as a coping mechanism for their divorce. To maximize the rent of their land they share human labor and the raw materials needed to crop and then they become the equal share than the normal 1/3 share. This is more advantageous for them by getting more crops.

4.2 Local Liquor Distillation

Local liquor locally called Areki. Similar to land rent local liquor (Areki) distillation/extraction is one coping strategy of divorced women in the study area. In our living area, local Areki extraction is the best work of women not only divorced as well as married women who have not enough economic generation in the house also. But mainly prostitute women use this work repeatedly. Married peoples who want the by-product (residue) of local Areki extraction for their animals also do this work by labour workers or by their own.

The following women describe how local Areki extraction is used to their divorce coping mechanism as follows; *Since I was divorced, I have rented a 700-birr dormitory in the city and started making liquor. For it was difficult to fulfil utensils for liquor extraction, I sold two cows that I had received to buy a single utensil and when I made a small profit, I increased the facilities by four. When I still made some profit, they increased it to eight steps, and now I am planning to build my own house and move out of rent (female 36 years old).*

The above statement describes that divorced women in the study area may migrate to the city to get a rented house. And they use the extraction of local Areki as a coping mechanism for their divorce. In addition, another in-depth informant also narrates how she uses the extraction of local Areki for her coping mechanism as follows;

As soon as I was divorced, I took over half of my property and built a house on my land. Although I ran out of money in building my house, I borrowed one utensil from my sister who lived in the city and started working on it. Because I received the eucalyptus tree as my property during the share, I used it for firewood. Now I am fulfilling my accessories and extracting Areki and sending my children to school. My children are also helping me with fetching water whenever they are off school. They help me in getting cereals ground and boiling the by-product. Unless the brewery is broken or the quality of the Areki is poor, I will make a small profit (female 44 years old).

Regarding the above narration in the study area, local Areki extraction is the way to cope with their divorce. And they get profit from this work. Other informants also narrate how they use this work starting from its means of production up to the amount of production and her profit clearly as follows; *...I extract Areki twice a week. That means eating 50 pounds [50 kg] of malt and 100 pounds [100 kg] of dry matter. I get 120 liters of alcohol twice a week; I sell 240 liters of liquor. In one week and the price of a liter of beer varies from 45-55 birr depending on the quality of the drink. In general, I have my start-up business with sorghum malt (50 kg of wheat) for 30 Birr, roasted maize 100 kg of maize. I have 5 bundles of wood for the price of birr for 120 birrs; I have 80 Birr for a cart. For 120 liters' × if we think 50, it will be 600 birrs. 6000 - 4630 = 1370 I will make a profit. I make a profit of 2740 birr a week because I don't have a house rent cost and I use my on wood and hope for myself and I sell a by-product (residue) for 150 birrs. 6000 450 - 4630 = 1820 Birr I make a total profit and 3640 Birr per week. But during summer, there is not enough sun to dry the inputs for extracting Areki and at times the first by-product, the Tinsis, may not be clean, so I may not extract the liquor twice a week (female 44 years old).*

The above narration pointed out that, the extraction of local Areki can work in the rural part also. This work has more profit in the winter season because of the sunny season and also in the summer season it is difficult to dry the raw materials, as a result, it is difficult to get more profit and feed children.

4.3 Using human labor interchange with ox power

Bull power is also another coping mechanism of divorced women in the study area. Bull power is used when the divorced women have an ox she goes to another farmer who has no two oxen to merge the two different ox and plough together this way of bull power is literally called Kenja. When the divorced women have no ox and she became willing to labor work to the farmer who has extra work she can plough her land by using their agreement that she works for the farmer and the plough for her.

In line with this coping mechanisms describe it in their life as follows; *I received 0.75hectares of land and a bull. My four children and I lived in a small house with my sister, who lived nearby, and I made my ox live with my sister's cattle. However, I thought that it would be of no use for me to give the land to renter when I had a bull, so I needed someone who did not have a complete bull, so I arranged for him to plough on my land as well. The man began to plough with my ox and one bull of his own. He ploughs for two days and plough for me one day. My ox will spend two days with them and pay for their labour. After that, I provided the seed and fertilizer to be sown. I cover all the weeds outside the farm, whether it is labour or money and I bring in all the crops that my land has*

grown. I sell straw at the right time, and if I have maize straw, I collect it for my fire consumption. I am still living well because the neighbours in the village help me when they finish their work (female 46 years old).

This implies that, divorced women who have ox are advantageous to crop together with other farmers by cooperating. After that, she can take all crops that her land produces. This is important to women as an opportunity.

Another informant also explains her use of bull power in her life as follows below; After I divorced, I got 0.5 hectares and I have one child. I manage to cultivate my land with oxen. This meant that I had no oxen for me, so I had to work for three days for the farmer and one day for my farm. I cover the necessary crop or seed, fertilizer, and labour on my own, and I earn all the produce of my land or the crops that my land produces (female 30 years old).

From the above explanation, bull power is used for women that do not have an ox also. Bull power is the best option for women to crop on their land and to use all the products of their land as well.

4.4 Daily labor

In addition to the other coping mechanisms daily labor is also used by divorced women to cope problem of divorce in the rural part of Dembecha District. Daily labor is not highly accessible in the area because in our agriculturalist community daily labourers are seasonal. There are people commonly known in daily working especially prostitutes. At the time of the work season, those prostitutes and other daily worker peoples become busy peoples call them before one week to minimize the compilation of farmers who want them for work. Reversely at the time of ending works daily workers are not called by anyone because there is no work yet. In line with daily labour on informants explain the situation clearly in her life experience as follows below;

Since my divorce, I have been renting my farm, but I have to work part-time because I don't have enough land allowance. I work 150 birrs a day, but I work only on working days according to our Orthodox Tewahedo doctrine. I don't work on Sundays and Saturdays or other holidays. In addition, daily jobs are available regularly, which means I do winter weeding, preparing the land, and so on. In winter, there will be crop harvesting activities such as harvesting. Another benefit during harvesting time is having lunch at the workplace. Sometimes I even have an employer to take me to dinner. However, I am also worried that I may not be able to get another daily job as soon as the job is done. I am earning a living by renting one hectare and saving payments from daily work (female 32 years old).

From the above statement, one can understand that daily labour is one mechanism of divorced women in Dembecha District. But the work is seasonal and in the tradition of Christian Orthodox Tewahedo doctrine they do not get works each day.

4.5. Alimony

Most of divorced women cope with the financial crisis of divorce via receiving Alimony. It refers to payments from one spouse to the other. Alimony as money that a man or woman has been ordered to pay regularly to his or her former partner after they have been legally separated or divorced (Ernest, 2003). As the FGD participants discussed that child support is common in their locality. Children are not willing to live with their

fathers, as a result, the husbands are obligated to give child support to their ex but some husbands are not willing to give the support on time and it may not have matched with his income. One in-depth informant describes the case clearly on her life; *After divorce, my two children come with me as the court decides concerning my ex-husband's income of 300kg crops per year for those children. But he was not giving this crop on time and the full obliged 300kg of the crop. When I asked about this issue, he never listens to me (female 41 years old).* From the above explanation, husbands are not willing to give child support to their ex.

Conclusions

This study describes the causes of divorce, the challenges of divorced women, and the coping mechanisms of divorced women in Demebecha District three selected rural Kebeles. The causes of divorce are different from person to person. Sometimes some divorced peoples are not willing to describe the cause of their divorce especially if the cause is sexually related. Divorce has negative effects, especially on women. Women have social and cultural influence to leave out the house and to care for children. In addition, women are exposed to economic hardship and psychological stress. Husbands assume that the sharing of properties to the ex-wife is a humiliation. Elders have a great role during divorce by convincing husbands to share resources with women. They also have a great role to identify the hidden cause of divorced families. Divorced women use different mechanisms to cope with their problems. But they have no enough options to cope and resist the situation. Children from divorced families want to live with their mothers as a result woman has no comfortable conditions to do all available works with caring children.

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