



## **PERCEPTIONS OF INDIAN WOMEN TOWARD A DESERTED WOMAN**

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### **Abstract:-**

Marriage is a sacred and essential ritual of Indian society. The failure of a marriage is devastating to both parties, especially a woman suffers from intense feelings of anxiety, guilt, anger, depression and low self-confidence after separation. Indian women in particular make post-desertion experiences more complicated as they are the worst critic of the divorcee/deserted woman in social periphery. Indian women look upon a divorcee/deserted woman in a pseudo-superiority complex that they have been able to maintain their matrimonial relation whereas particular divorcee/deserted woman has failed. It is tough enough to survive as a woman in patriarchal society of India, so a change in mindset of the Indian women is required to let divorcee/deserted women breathe freely get their respectful place in developing society.

**Keywords :** Deserted, Depression, Matrimonial, Pseudo-superiority, Patriarchal.

A woman is God's best creation, she adds beauty, charm and grace to every aspect of life but unfortunately she has been neglected from many decades and her virtues are glossed over by the male dominated society.

Our first law-giver Manu said long ago, “where women are respected there reside the God and where they are not, all the efforts and work prove useless.” There is no denying the fact that women in India have made a considerable progress in the last sixty years but yet they have to struggle against many social evils in the male dominated society in order to prove themselves equal to the dignity and status.

A lot has been said and written on different issues related to 'Woman', through various platforms which divert social attention to the sufferings of a woman in different spheres of life because of male dominance.

The present research paper aims at highlighting the hypocritical and biased attitude of Indian women to a divorce/deserted woman. This paper is based on the personal interviews of many divorcee/deserted women of different age groups ranging from 25 years to 51 years who come from different financial status of society i.e., lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class & normal rich class. In India, post marriage situations turn out to be an unequal affair between a man and woman because of which sometimes marriage crumbles. Whatever may be the reasons behind the failure of matrimonial relations, my research only concerns to the life of Indian woman after separation, with special reference to the small cities of North-India.

### **Status Of Woman In India:-**

Indian society is patriarchal, where a woman is supposed to live under the guidance and protection of her male-relative who can be her father, her husband, her brother or her son. Indian women have been systematically trained to be submissive and to suffer in silence. Although, rules for this training are laid by men but its execution was strictly followed by women on another woman. According to religious and judicial laws of India, matrimonial relation is based on perfect equality of man and woman but the status of woman changes from ancient time to present era. During Vedic period the wife was treated with immense respect and act as a true companion of husband but there is a gradual decline in the status of wife during post-Vedic period. Since, childhood marriage is posed as the be-all & end-all of a woman's life. She is compelled to identify herself as, “I am his daughter or his wife or his mother.” Indian woman is confined to home and traces her identity through a male member of her family. Hence, the absence of a man in her life makes the woman a non-entity, ultimately suffering a social death. Therefore, when an Indian woman senses the danger to her conjugal bond, she tries her level best to save it. Generally, an Indian wife swallow her self-respect



and beg her husband for not to desert her. She request her husband to accept her back on his own terms however, insulting and humiliating those terms may be.

In spite of all efforts to safeguard the marriage, when there is separation between husband and wife; the life of woman changes drastically. As a result, of separation a woman's identity falls out of common social introduction because of which a deserted woman may gains everyone's attention in surroundings for sometime but she continued to be the center of attention among the known females.

### **Women Versus Deserted Woman :-**

Generally, Indian women think that there must be something wrong on the part of the divorcee/deserted woman herself because of which she could not keep her husband to herself and sustain the matrimony.

Indian women have certain set of prejudices about divorced/deserted woman and when any divorcee/deserted woman's approach to life violates or mismatches from their fixed image then that particular divorcee/deserted woman have to face a lot of direct or indirect humiliation from the known females. It is very hard for normal women to accept the fact, how can a divorcee/deserted woman be happy? When the life of a divorced/deserted woman is miserable and she is dependent on any male-relative then it is easily acceptable by other women in small cities of India.

On the other hand, when a deserted woman tries to follow a popular saying, "A smiling face is always welcome", then she is mostly welcome by men. Sometimes, a particular group of married woman starts ignoring, bitching, defaming and envying to divorced/deserted woman.

Generally, more women eyebrows are raised on the dressing style, body language and greeting gestures of a divorcee/deserted woman in any personal or professional functions. If either married or unmarried man talks to a divorcee/deserted woman for more than the expected time by other surrounding women, the common rumour initiate by Indian women is, "something is cooking between them."

In India, women perceptions are different from men about a divorcee/deserted woman. When a divorcee/deserted woman maintains a healthy routine in her life by taking balanced diet and regular exercise to keep herself fit, many women from known surroundings think that she is trying to keep herself physically attractive for men. Isn't it a character analytical attitude of women towards a victim

who belong to them more rather than the other gender (male) to whom she is related only by being human.

Besides, some exceptions no woman has an eye on the need of being healthy for a divorcee/deserted woman and analyses the practical aspects of single woman's life. What happens when she is ill and laying alone in house? Who is going to help her in regular routine?

In an ordinary family responsibilities of work and stress are divided among family members but it is a compulsion for single woman to manage personal and professional responsibilities by herself and this can be done only when she remains physically and mentally healthy.

So, the reasons behind joining a gym or any hobby class by a divorcee/deserted woman are not always according to the perceptions of normal women, in fact it may be she is trying to keep herself busy and bursting her grief and anger through her sweat & smile.

The most psychological trauma to a woman after separation is caused by her female friends and relatives; by not inviting her on their family functions and avoiding her in social gatherings. Especially, when a deserted/divorcee woman is beautiful and smart then by suspecting her during the conversation to any male member of friend's family in spite of their age-difference and previous relation between them. As a result, divorcee/deserted woman felt ashamed of her presence at that place and try to avoid these kind of situations by refusing to attend social gatherings.

If a divorcee/deserted woman dares to live out of the limit of staring telescopic eye of society ladies and keep herself involved in her own business; even then some Indian women will not stop following and popping into her life.

Generally, Indian women initiates the gossips and declares particular deserted/divorcee woman with a tag of 'shrewd lady' or 'a loose character woman' to all their respective male relatives. As a result, all the surrounding wolves shun their mask of decent man and start their search for an easy prey. Mostly, men made a false image about the emotions of a divorcee/deserted woman on the basis of reporting done by females of their family and neighbourhood.

Some men think that a divorcee/deserted woman is always an object of pity and can be easily deceived with some sympathetic sentences, even if particular woman is well-educated and well settled.

Most of the white-collared man approaches a divorcee/deserted woman for physical relation and the proposal is given in a way which seems like the man is trying to help her. He pretend to do a favour by letting divorcee/deserted woman not to repress her sexual desires. Sometimes, these kind of proposals are wrapped around the long philosophical, religious and moral teachings about the need of human body and duties of a woman to the nature or God's world. Consequences of these incidents leads to extreme reactions in life of any woman. It may end with a dangerous step taken by a woman of low self-esteem and weak will-power, either she physically hurts that man or herself by committing suicide.

While, in other case, a strong-headed woman refuses wrong proposals with smart wrapping of sentences due to which that man may act as a live-messenger for her and no other man will dares to ask any illegitimate demands in future. Else, rejection may hurts the male - ego which sometimes, turns into the physical torture done by men to women.

Many incidents in India, reports the physical and mental harassment to a deserted/divorced woman are done by known man from her surroundings but by digging deep in the root of initiation of these illegitimate demands of men we may find another woman actions or words beneath the surface about the victims.

### **Different Aspects Of Psychology Of A Deserted Woman :-**

Divorce and desertion are among the toughest experience of a woman's life. The dreams of future may be wrapped up in her marriage and now that hope for the future appears to be gone. Increased responsibility combined with the realization that the life she envisioned no longer exists correlates with the fact that women are more likely to suffer from feelings of anxiety, despair, depression, fear, bitterness and low self-esteem.

On the other hand, when any stressful and burden marriage comes to end then separation may provides the opportunity for personal growth and can affect women's lives positively. There are many factors that influence positive effects of separation primarily if that woman have a greater support system for comfort and guidance. In the past, women may have limited themselves by focusing solely on their duties as wives and mothers but now they can expand their personal and professional roles. A divorcee/deserted woman may seek out new careers, volunteer opportunities and social networking that will increase her self-esteem.

In other words, what changes separation brings in a woman's life are mainly directed by the psychology of deserted woman. Negative and positive aspects of psychology of divorcee/deserted woman can be easily judged in their behaviour and attitude toward life.

There is another side of the coin of psychology of a deserted woman which was rarely discussed. Many divorcee/deserted women revealed from their experiences that it is not only the behaviour of women living with their families insults them but also the attitude of some divorcee/deserted women hurts the wounded lady.

Some successful divorcee/deserted women told that psychological hindrances in their path of healing from the pain of failed marriage are created by other divorcee/deserted woman of negative attitude towards life. Divorcee/deserted women who are negative thinkers not only made their own life vulnerable after separation but also feel jealous to other woman who tries hard to come out of the crisis in life. Remaining in contact with a negative deserted woman may lead another one into depression. A divorcee/deserted woman who is filled with negativity always cries and only talks about her past and loss in life. If there is someone to support her then she will never interested in doing any kind of work and let the people to have pity on her and involved in different kinds of favour to her. Either with liability of children or without them, a negative divorcee/deserted woman always make a comfort zone of sadness around her and tries to escape from responsibilities of livelihood. If any crisis of life again puts a slight scratch on their comfort zone then they can not tolerate it and try to commit suicide.

On the other hand, a divorcee/deserted woman of positive attitude tries hard to overcome her weaknesses and starts learning new things, in order to manage her life with the new role of singlehood. She accepts the challenging life of separation and take precautionary steps to move on safely from future crisis of life. As a result, she touches new horizons of achievements some of which she had never dreamt either in childhood or in her married life.

### **Conclusion:-**

- 1) To bring a change in social behavior towards deserted woman in Indian society.
- 2) To correct the misconceptions about the psychology of deserted woman.
- 3) To support deserted woman in leading normal life in Indian society.
- 4) To enlighten Indian women for having positive attitude towards deserted woman



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