

# Infidelity in marriages | analysis



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## **Introduction**

Infidelity is perhaps the most complex issue faced by spouses in the marital relationship. Usually, when the discovery of an affair is done, it can be very annoying for the person on the receiving end of the case. Obviously the blame on oneself is the primary response after the information and facts are understood and then the person must be willing to understand that he / she has failed to respect the other person to take this step. This results in a lot of pain, confusion and emotional problems for people that are involved in such a relation. This can affect the person and make him very depressed and even become suicidal. A person may lose confidence in future relationships and also the ability of having faith in people because of the enormous injustice caused by infidelity. Maybe this can lead to a process of divorce and custody battles cruel and endless tension.

Barta and Drigotas (2001) defined infidelity as “ a partner’s violations of norms regulating the level of emotional and physical relationship with people out side the relationship. Moreover, it is a breach of trust or an act of disloyalty in a committed relationship. In this modern era where a lot of facilities are available in the shape of mobile telephone and Internet chatting, it is greatly accessible and easier to make any kind of relationship and stay in regular contact with them. Hence, it may result in shortage of time for one to spend with his or her spouse and greater contact with outsiders. In short, it can occur abruptly and unexpectedly by intention, incidence or chance or can extend over a long period of time. They can proceed for a very short time or a life span. This is one of the key reasons for

enhance in extra marital affairs and its following adverse impact on the rate of divorce and suicide.

## **Types of Infidelity**

Buss and Shackelford (1997) report that there are two types of infidelity exist: sexual infidelity, emotional infidelity or both. Sexual infidelity is consisting of sexual contact such as kissing, touching, oral sex, or physical contact. on the other hand, emotional infidelity includes the creation of emotional affection or warmth for another individual, and can involve the actions as flirting, dating, lovely talk, feeling interest towards some one else, or falling in love.

Pittman (1989) marriage includes the hope of primariness and assurance of both partners to remain loyal with each other and keeping each other the most significant person for life time. Generally couples agree that primaries will contain the probability in which partners guarantee to have physical contact only with each other. Despite of this marital infidelity is very common across world even though, society is not permitted or accepted it. Knowingly or unknowingly, Most of marriages are now victim of this serious issue almost couples are experiencing it either being of a betrayed receiver or being of disloyal one. Even many famous persons have done marital infidelities, presidents, such as John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton and other public figures, such as Prince Charles, Marion Barry, and Princess Diana was strongly rumored to have had an extra marital affair. Actors and actresses have long presented continual material to the tabloids on affairs and infidelity.

## **Gender Difference and Infidelity**

Gender based studies divided into two parts. The first group of researches focused on sex differences in reaction to a partner's infidelity. Shackelford and Buss (2002) sex differences in reaction to a partner's emotional and sexual infidelity are well documented and hypothesized adaptive problems (Buss et al., 1992) Due to adaptive problem of parental uncertainty, men are more upset than women by a partner's sexual infidelity. Also, adaptive concern with parental investment and resources diversion makes women feel more upset than men by a partner's emotional infidelity (Shackelford et al., 2000).

Another part of literature about sex differences and infidelity refers to different rates of men and women involvement in infidelity. Some researchers strongly assert that men are more engaged in infidelity than women (Allen & Baucom, 2004). They have significantly more sexual partners outside of their primary relationship (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983) and they have more permissive attitudes toward sex outside of marriage (Thompson, 1984) and also have a strong desire to engage in infidelity (Prins, 1993). At the same time, other studies suggest that men and women's rate of infidelity are becoming increasingly similar (Oliver & Hyde, 1993) and they are not differing in terms of behavior (Prins et al., 1993).

Betzig (1989) infidelity is a core base cited when pleading for divorce and those who are disloyal likely to be vigilant discussing such activity. It is neither only a male behavior while the ratio of infidelity among female is going to equal the proportion of males. Not surprisingly a third of all marriages now a days dealing with this issue. However, no doubt it is

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anticipated responsible of dissolution of a marriage bond cruelly. Most notably, females role have been change now they are not simply responsible for maintaining home work while working outside of home. Both male and female have almost equal opportunities due to rapid change in living structure of modern aged societies and late night travels, work related activities, and meetings these all responsible to some extent for significant increasing rate of divorce as regardless of gender no one is remain dependent on their partner for life accessories.

## **Causes of Infidelity**

Thompson (1983) infidelity can exist in marital, or in any committed relationships. Therefore it considered an illegal or wrong act. The clarifications people often make regarding their illegal sexual terms are several and varied. Whatever the reason of an act of infidelity but it is certainly varies between and within cultures. Presence of sexual behavior is not must or always the case of infidelity. Ideas and perceptions of infidelity are might be different among people of same culture or between the people who have close relationship with each other.

Sptizberg and Cupach (1998) infidelity provides a means of exploring the darker and more problematic side of human experience with out having to examine actual criminal offending. Affairs come in diverse forms. All affairs are not surely same: they supply unusual purposes, are done by several types of persons, fueled by a range of motivations and having dissimilar effects. One of the most obvious weaknesses in infidelity research is the shortage of discrimination between types of affairs. This has often lead to erroneous, confusing and unsupportive generalizations or stat averages

about the nature, implications and what constitutes effective intervention with affairs. Considerate the individual, biographical, domestic, marital and cultural-anthropological reason of affairs is vital to planning successful intervention.

Guerin et al. (1996) in a study reported that Spouse often involves in infidelity in order to protect themselves from taking responsibilities or adopting new roles. They want to escape from discomfort and pain which comes from boring and difficult marital life. With out disturbing marital life or other spouse an infidel person have has relation with person other than committed relationship. This betrayal provides him/her temporarily calmness.

Psychologist Allen (2001) in a study based on Bowlby attachment theory reports that comparatively to secure attachment a person with dismissive attachment style is probable to have one infidelity atleast to his/her spouse because he/she wants self affirmation.

Chen (2001) noted in his research findings that it is considered as a symbol of respect and privilege for a wealthy and influential personality to have has relations with the person of other than his/her spouse. Many times, these relations are secret in nature and based on long term and seldom have these affairs disturbed their primary marital life and relations.

## **Prevalence of Infidelity**

Ninety-nine percent of married persons surveyed expect their spouse to be faithful after they are married, and 99% assume their partner expects sexual exclusivity of them (Treas & Giesen, 2000). Despite these expectations, the

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actual occurrence of marital infidelity is much higher. According to a survey of over 1000 Americans, done by the National Opinion Research Center in 1991, eleven percent of the female respondents and 21% of the males surveyed admitted to engaging in extramarital sex (Greeley, 1994). Thus, marital infidelity is a perplexing phenomenon and research indicates that this is also true for other types of infidelity, such as infidelity occurring in dating relationships.

Blow and Harnett (2005) report that rates of infidelity are vary across universe due to types of infidelity. Although, the prevalence of sexual infidelity is higher than emotional one and most of the infidelity researches have focused on sexual infidelity rather than emotional infidelity and almost result are drawn by non random sample. Further more the issue of infidelity is very sensitive and personal so, individual may show some kind of reluctance to disclose it or admit it openly. In Pakistan the rate of infidelity reported by private TV channel in a program among male is 45% and among female is 32% but these rates are not specifically for marital infidelity however, these rates are may be overestimated or underestimated at some point because there is no researches or official data is available in Pakistan.

Allen et al. (2005) found that 25% committed relationships are experiencing infidelity. 22% to 25% male and 11% to 15% females are unfaithful to their partners. Other less conservative reviews reported that 25 to 50% male and approximately 10% to 25% females are engaged in infidelity during the course of their marriages. An estimated figure shows the adverse effects of infidelity that almost 50% married couple across the universe are experiencing in their marriages. Moreover, these responses of infidelity can

also be varied depend on individual difference or level of affection and these response can be also extremist in nature or less extremist and threatening.

Glass and Staeheli (2003) almost every marriage is suffering with the issue of infidelity regardless of love, arrange and forced marriage and status of marriage such as happy or unhappy marriage. mid life crises and other factors are responsible for trigger anyone towards infidelity (Cole, 1999).

### **Consequences of Infidelity**

Brown (1999) found that discovery of spousal infidelity is always being distressing for both concerned spouses. Usually, sudden encounter of infidelity make them unable to behave normally. The disloyal person feel gloomy, desperate and victim of many doubts regarding his/her future marital life either it may remain joyous as it was before, he/she really feel the pain of that third person with whom he/she had extramarital affairs. Sexual life affected of a disloyal spouse in his/her marriage but despite of confession being wrong they tried ever to minimize their guilt by blaming others for the responsibilities of their infidelities (Chen, 2001).

Bergcross (1997) in a study concluded that many probable risk factors including suicidal thoughts, homicidal, health issues, are the result of infidelity. Many others responses are noted such as violence, divorce, dissatisfaction, flirting behavior, revenge, angry, jealous, shame and so on.

Some studies showed that only a small percentage of couples who experience infidelity can save their marriage after an affair (Hansen, 1987) and all marriage with infidelity do not end with divorce (Charny & Parnass, 1995). Studies about consequences of infidelity showed negative outcomes

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like: rage, lost of trust, decreased personal and sexual confidence, suicidal behavior, depression, damaged self esteem, fear of abandonment and surge of justification to leave the spouse (Charny & Parnass, 1995).

Spanier and Margolis (1983) concluded that partners who divorce because of their spouse's infidelity experienced less depression than those who end their marriage for other reasons. The unfaithful spouse has initiated the divorce but the faithful spouse is more likely to develop depression. When a person discovers a partner's infidelity, he should decide about forgiving the partner and remain together or end the relationship. Shackelford et al. (2000) found that men and women who face different adaptive problems over evolutionary history related to various types of infidelity have different reaction to partner's infidelity. It is more difficult for men to forgive a sexual infidelity than an emotional infidelity and they are more likely to end a current relationship following a partner's sexual infidelity (Shackelford et al, 2002).

## **Evolutionary theory**

Evolutionary theory (Nannini & Myers, 2000) supported the view that gender difference present in response to partner's infidelity (Sheets & Wolfe, 2001) and provides one explanation for gender differences in reactions to infidelity. According to this theory, a man is jealous about his female partner's sexual infidelity, because if his partner has intercourse with another man, there is no guarantee that offspring he raises with her are his genetic children. The uncertainty of paternity gives rise to excellent reasons for a man to be intolerant of adulterous sex in his partner. A male in this position may contribute resources to this offspring, as well as squander opportunities to

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reproduce elsewhere (Buss, et al., 1992). Using this same model, a woman is concerned about her partner becoming emotionally attached, lest he abandon her for the new partner, leaving her to rear their offspring without resources or assistance from the father. If her partner is investing more assets into another woman's offspring, whether in a monogamous or polygynous relationship, it is to the detriment of her children.

This theory is consistent with results wherein women overwhelmingly selected emotional infidelity as more distressing, and more men selected physical infidelity (Harris & Christenfeld, 1996; Whitty & Quigley, 2008). Additionally, physiological studies support this perspective, finding that men demonstrate greater autonomic arousal response to sexual infidelity and women have a greater response to emotional infidelity (Buss et al., 1992).

Buss (1995) and other evolutionary psychologists argue that men and women differ in their responses to infidelity in ways that has resulted from different adaptations to different reproductive problems. The evolutionary perspective does not dispute that both forms of infidelity, emotional and sexual, are disturbing to both sexes. Instead, evolutionary perspective argues that “men and women put different ‘emotional weighting’ on the different aspects of infidelity” (Buss et al., 1999).

The theory is consistent with a good deal of research data. However, there are some noteworthy shortcomings inherent in this perspective. Firstly, the core premise of the standard evolutionary model is that sex differences in mating behavior exist as a consequence of the differential costs for each sex to reproduce their genes (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Infidelity can be efficiently

explained this way by advocates of this theory in the light of higher rates of male infidelity historically (Allen et al., 2005). The theory acknowledges that members of both sexes pursue extra-pair/short term strategies; however, recent research findings show that rates of female infidelity are rapidly closing the gap (Allen et al., 2005) and the theory at present does not appear to adequately address this. In two studies (Harris, 2002; 2003) of responses to actual infidelity, men and women showed no difference in the degree to which they were distressed by emotional vs. sexual infidelity. Furthermore, both males and females reported focusing slightly more on emotional than sexual aspects of their partner's infidelity.

Roscoe et al. (1988) significant differences have not been found in several studies of 'actual', as opposed to 'potential', extradyadic behavior (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Seal et al., 1994). Further, studies including aspects of infidelity apart from sexual behaviors are another example where significant differences between the sexes have not generally been found. Wiederman (1997) for example, found that there were no differences in the type of infidelity entered into or in the incidence of infidelity for men and women under the age of 40. Clear gender differences in the incidence of infidelity are difficult to determine in the light of such inconsistent research.

## **Divorce**

Buss and Shackelford (1997) infidelity leads to divorce and is most likely the single most harmful thing that can occur to a marriage. Divorce refers to the often messy and painful dissolution of a marriage. Either for good or for bad, divorce is a very ordinary incident in recent days. Most everyone has been experienced it, either by going through it themselves as a spouse or a child,

or knowing someone who has gone through it as a spouse or as a child.

Regardless of recognized understanding with the sound effects of divorce.

Waite (1995) good psychological and physiological health of both spouses can be achieved by stable and satisfied marriage; it also contributes to marital wealth and children wellbeing. But the fact is these all advantage only possible when marriage protective from high conflicts. Severe mental and emotional health problems can be protected by a sound marriage. a part of knowing this well known realities some marriages still suffer from problems and endless issues and spouse their selves are responsible for that issues which causes marriage beak downs. Surely, an unstable marriage is responsible for adverse outcomes for all family members and even upon other concerned relation.

## **Rate of Divorce**

Vaus et al. (1997) most young adults when surveyed about relationships indicate that they want to marry and have a committed, trusting, respectful relationship for themselves and for any children they may have Any attempt to explain the reasons couples separate and divorce must take into account both the nature of marriage as an institution within a given social and cultural context, and its particular meaning for the individuals involved. It's remarking that the dramatic increase in the lifetime divorce probability from 10 percent to more than 50 percent in the United States and to 25 percent in Pakistan since the 1960s cannot be explained only at the personal or micro level.

Dagatan (2012) investigated there is a significant raise in the rate of divorce universally on the account of everyday. Day by day Marriage is losing its worth especially in some specific societies. Many reasons are attached to failure of stable marriages such as infidelity, violence, financial crises and so on. Russia is standing on top for highest divorce rates with 5.30% while Panama with 3.80% is on 4th ranking of highest divorce rate due to infidelity. Similarly, there is surprising increase in the rate of divorce in Pakistan from few decades. Currently 10 to 15 divorce cases are being filed by females per day in Pakistan. However, divorce rates are varying in different status it's higher among upper class while middle class takes divorce as a stigma and comparatively to other classes its prevalence is low in lower class.

## **Effect of Globalization on Divorce**

Mansfield et al. (1999) the degree to which family law reform may influence rates of divorce is debatable. In many perspectives, especially for women marriage is not only remaining the source of financial security, social status in the community, sexual activity and social companionship. Globalization has affected the thought and living structure and values across culturally. Now almost every sphere of the world people have different and more liberal attitude regarding divorce while it's not consider stigma as it was. Now men and women both talk about it openly. Across the entire main reasons for divorce, women more than men tended to initiate the separation and be more likely to have sought counseling advice prior to separation. The perceived reason for divorce did not appear to influence whether men or women made preparations for living without their partner.

## **Gender, Attitude and Divorce**

Differences between men and women emerged mainly in relation to specific spousal behaviors. Women were significantly more likely than men to mention abusive behaviors their spouse's drinking and drug use and being the victim of physical and emotional violence as the main reason for divorce. Although ending a marriage can never be easy and may be traumatic or have detrimental consequences for either or both partners and any children involved the majority of women and men, whatever the perceived reason for divorce, claimed that in retrospect they still would have separated and felt they never wanted to get back with their former spouse. Again, women who mentioned abusive behaviors as a reason for divorce were most emphatic in their agreement with this statement (Waite et al, 1995).

## **Impact of Divorce**

Bowlby (1969) a broken Marriage always left highly significant consequences. As one grow older, build new relationships with numerous important figures throughout one's lives. It is natural to form affection with the people who care for them most, in regards to their physiological and emotional needs. However, marital relationship is considering the most respective way to form relationship with people of opposite sex. In marriages there are some obligations which should be followed by both spouse and it's obligatory on them to respect each other values and expectation but if any spouse doesn't care these values then marital dissatisfaction can come in existence and divorce or marital conflict occur in result which impact badly on physical, emotional and psychological health.

Walsh (2008) reported that marriage is source of getting respect, status, and recognition in a society. Psychological satisfaction can be got through marriage by which individual get kids, companion for life and completeness of home structure. As it is truly said man is a social animal therefore, man cannot survive in isolation for goodness of life one need to be remain with others. Marriage is regarded as a best source of getting all these things it provides peace and emotional support on individual level. Both concerned partner sooth each other by providing their support in all situation of life. But at the same time it's a very weak as well as strong one. Divorce shelters all of these and affected must feel hopelessness and experience high emotional torture that sometime intend a person suicidal.

## **Suicidal Ideation**

Suicidal ideation, attempts and completed suicides are all referred to suicidal behavior. Weather suicidal ideation refers to any thought, intention which is readily made to harm one self or its any self inflicting behavior in which one is thinking to take his/her life. It happens most often in reaction to a crisis such as the loss of a relationship, death, inevitable life situation where one's feel extremist level of hopelessness, worthlessness and infidelity in highly affiliated relationship. Usually, people experience a variety of feelings during the time of crises, and each person's shows different response towards crises even in same crises. It is common to feel scared or worried or depressed. If a person feels overwhelmed or unable to cope, he or she may try to commit suicide. Thus far researchers have been unable to predict potential suicidal consistency so effectively (Goldstein, 1999).

## Causes of Suicide

Suicide is defined as the act of intentionally taking one's own life. It happens most often in reaction to a crisis such as the loss of a relationship, death, inevitable life situation where one's feel extremist level of hopelessness, worthlessness and infidelity in highly affiliated relationship. Usually, people experience a variety of feelings during the time of crises, and each person's shows different response towards crises even in same crises. It is common to feel scared or worried or depressed. If a person feels overwhelmed or unable to cope, he or she may try to commit suicide. Thus far researchers have been unable to predict potential suicidal consistency so effectively (Prokorny, 1983).

Overall it is on 8th number cause of death through out the world, it's a major, preventable public health problem. Psychological causes may be one factor of it like unable to cope depression, it may be due to lack of others supports, or burden of guilt, to examine the feelings and love of other people, relationship failure, shock on incident like infidelity or divorce. It may have also origins from cultural and social pressure often in case of isolation, although, the act of suicide is varied in distinctive cultures and ages.

Foster (1999) various risk factors have been studied with suicide like divorce, financial issues, marital conflicts, life satisfaction, depression, unemployment, parental deprivation and many others. Researches claim that emotional instability, psychotic disorder, major depression, personality disorder, substance dependence, marital status and affairs are usually responsible as a major cause of suicide. Despite of these known causes many other reasons can be responsible for this act. Actually, suicidal ideation

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or suicide is usually an individual act. There may be individual causes present for such act. However, the more common causes associated with suicidal ideation are marital affairs among married and parental or other factors are related to unmarried persons.

## **Suicide in Pakistan**

In past, official statistics for suicide in Pakistan was un-available.

Nevertheless, there was some evidence suggested by NGOs, newspaper reports, police that the suicide ratio has slowly been raising in Pakistan from the last few years. The increasing inclination has been very theatrical with almost 3, 000 cases of suicide being reported in 2001 nationally, “ Even this is considered to be an underestimation, as it is well known that in many developing countries suicide tends to be grossly under-reported.” In the month of Ramadan of 2012 a private news channel surveyed that near about 300 people attempted suicide during Ramadan and this rate of suicide is very alarming and surprising.

Particularly, “ many factors are associated with the phenomena of suicide which cannot be treated in isolation from the societal and emotional factors compelling a person to think about this act”. Like other developing countries, Pakistan, too, faces the dilemma of increasing cases of suicide. Suicide is view different in every society depending on its culture and religion. For instance, Islam, Judaism, Christianity and some western cultures take it negative and sin. Its wrongly consider as a result of mental illness. Even in some societies it is considered a crime. But on the other hand, in certain situation it's regarded as a symbol of honor like suicide bombers, in battle, etc.

Larsson et al. (1998) reported that the probability of suicidal attempts in course of an individual life could be assessed by the history of suicide in one's family members or other social network like friends etc and also by considering the level of suicidal ideation. Suicide is considered as a major preventable public health issue and ranked on 8th leading cause of death world overall. It may have also origins from cultural and social pressure often in case of isolation, although, the act of suicide is varied in distinctive cultures and ages. Many decades back suicide was understood the issue of only western countries. Since 1960's somewhat suicide cases reported in under develop countries including Pakistan but in Pakistan no official statistic data record were available. Nevertheless, reported cases are considered under estimated.

Khan et al. (2008) a study conducted in Karachi, reported that risk factors of suicide include, negative and desperate or stress full events, marital status (marriage), unemployment, and psychiatric disorder are considerable indicators of suicide. There was some other evidence suggested by NGOs, newspaper reports, police that the suicide ratio has slowly been raising in Pakistan from the last few years. The increasing inclination has been very theatrical with almost 3, 000 cases of suicide being reported in 2001 nationally, " Even this is considered to be an underestimation, as it is well known that in many developing countries suicide tends to be grossly under-reported".

Bertolote and Fleischmann (2002) every year near about one million people die due to suicide universally. According to a report by WHO less number of suicide cases are reported by outside of western countries especially from

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Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia. These less reported cases of Pakistan may be the result of unavailability of official record of suicide in earlier decades and secondly, it is an understudied subject in Pakistan. Many factors including religion, legal and social issues make it difficult to collect data regarding suicidal behaviors. However, in the month of Ramadan of 2012 a private news channel surveyed that near about 300 people attempted suicide during Ramadan and rate of suicide is very alarming and surprising. This proportion is very threatening especially an underdeveloped country with lesser reporting record of suicidal cases globally.

Khan et al. (2000) numerous hurdles are present in open discussion of phenomenon of suicide in predominantly Muslim country Pakistan. However, suicide is view different in every society depending on its culture and religion. For instance, Islam, Judaism, Christianity and some western cultures take it negative and sin. Its wrongly consider as a result of mental illness. Even in some societies it is considered a crime. But on the other hand, in certain situation it's regarded as a symbol of honor like suicide bombers, in battle, etc. Particularly, " many factors are associated with the phenomena of suicide which cannot be treated in isolation from the societal and emotional factors compelling a person to think about this act". Like other developing countries, Pakistan, too, faces the dilemma of increasing cases of suicide.

Hassan et al. (2009) two years based research an analysis of suicide findings shows more than 300 suicides were committed in different cities of Pakistan. It reported that mostly men who commit suicide were unmarried and men 2: 1 Outnumber of females. While in case of women a quite opposite result of

men has found. Majority of suicidal committers were under the age of 30 the most prominent reason for suicide was domestic problems such as health issues, poverty, social pressure, forced marriages, marital conflicts. On the other side the most common adopted method of suicide were firearms, insecticides and hanging.

Anonymous (1989) a cross national research on 71 nation result showed that an independent effect of Islam in lowering the rate of suicide is considerable when others factors like economic imbalance and social injustice are controlled. However, study showed Muslim countries as compare to non Muslim countries have considerable less suicidal ratio. Nevertheless, suicides occur on regular basis in Muslim countries also because some remarkable evidence has met by many Muslim countries like Bangladesh, Iran, and Turkey.

Mahmood (1989) study evidence showed the underestimated death by suicide perhaps due to legal procedure by which one is subject of convicted and financial penalty. Analyzing the report of 17 Islamic countries reports experts say that this is due to cultural and religious impact that in many Islamic countries suicide is culturall