

Effect of parental separation on adolescence



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PARENTAL SEPARATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR ADOLESCENCE

Family is one of the important social spaces which give you identity; shelter, security, senses of belonging and also nurtures the personality of a person.

Parents play an important role to run the family with harmony. They provide basis for the development of personality and, guide their children to face the challenges of the real world. Child learn to adjust in society and make relations with others by observing the role of their parents (Bandura, 1989).

Parents influence on child development in three different ways which includes direct interaction with child in activities, emotional identification and, telling stories about family members and relatives (Kagan, 1999).

The interpersonal relation of parents also has an impact on child development. According to Moore, Kinghorne and Bandy (2011), the quality of parental relationship is allied with the positive or negative outcome in child's behavior, social competence, and engagement in school, parent-child communication and parental feeling of aggravation. The reflection of parental relation either lifts up or disrupts the child development. If the conflict persists and parents get divorced so it will impact the development of children. This paper will explore worldwide and Pakistan's prevalence, causes of divorce, and its impact on child's development in different stages of life briefly, with more focus on adolescence stage. Furthermore, it will also provide some possible interventions for children to cope up with this emotional trauma without compromising their development.

The reason for choosing this topic is that I have witnessed a 14 years old girl during my clinical whose parents got divorced that influenced on her life positively and negatively. She involved in studies more and became resilient but simultaneously, she was depressed, had fear about future life, and didn't participate in any social activities.

Prevalence

Divorce is the physical and legal separation of spouse from their relation (Parveen, 2010). The rate of divorce is increasing day by day. Worldwide Divorce Statistics, (n. d.), states that Beralus, United Kingdom and United states are among top twenty countries with the highest divorce rate of 68%, 53% and 49% respectively. According to Avila (2013), " The United States Bureau of the Census (2005) estimated over 1 million children experience parental divorce each year. According to Strohschein et al. (2009) and Juby et al. (2005) as cited in Ambert& Vanier Institute of the Family (2005), about 20% -30% children experience parental divorce at the age of 18 and 15 respectively.

According to the statistics retrieved from the court of senior civil judge Lahore and Faisalabad, cited in Parveen (2010), since January to April 2008, 3223 and 1466 cases were registered respectively. About 80 to 85 cases are being registered daily. In addition, a study was conducted in Karachi showed that parental conflict results in negative outcome among their children. The study also suggests that 80. 5% to 97. 5% of children got affected by parental conflicts (Ali, Assad, Mogren, &Krantz, 2011). This frequency shows

that it is the most scorching issue in our society and around world that compels me to review this issue through my paper.

Causes of divorce

There is a temporality in the world that every cause precedes an effect. Similarly, there are certain causes that may leads to dissolution of the marital bond. There is no similar cause for every divorce. Frolick, (2011) as cited in Khurshid, Khatoon, &Khurshid, (2012) affirms that, “ every divorce is unique like a snow flake”. There is an increasing rate of divorce in Pakistan, and the few prevalent reasons are; Lack of sacrifice, forced marriages, greed, Joint family system, difference in social status and highly career oriented women (Khurshid, Khatoon, &Khurshid, 2012).

There are incompatible differences between partners that become necessary for the person to get divorced. Lack of communication, poverty, difference in education level, any kind of abuse (physical, emotional, verbal or sexual), disloyalty, early marriages, mismatch (sexual, intellectual and emotional), sexual dysfunction or disease and drug addiction can also be the contributing factors of divorce (Khurshid, Khatoon, &Khurshid, 2012).

According to Ali, Assad, Mogren, &Krantz, (2011), there is a theoretical model that helps to depict the causes of intimate partner violence (IPV) that in my opinion, can leads to separation. These include psychopathological, sociological, gender, and family systems theories. Sociological theories portrayed that low education, economic vulnerability and stress can leads to conflict. Gender theories states the cultural and social construct of gender, where man have power and superiority, while women have inferior status

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that makes women dependent and vulnerable for violence. Furthermore, in my opinion, uncertainty and hesitation towards spouse can be a risk factor and it was the main cause of divorce in my patient's case. Moreover, psychopathological theory suggests that certain psychiatric diseases and disorders maybe a contributing factor. Likewise, family system theories revealed that lack of communication, ineffective problem solving can leads to violence. Therefore it can be assumed that these factors can ultimately lead to divorce.

Consequences of divorce

Consequences for the couple: Divorce can be both positive and negative. In my opinion, getting away from the stressful relationship could be helpful for a person. Individual can live happy life a head if they are not happy and satisfied with their existing marital life. Literature also suggests that those who ends their relation due to high conflict and violence and grasps an opportunity to change are happier in their later life (Waite & Gallagher, n. d.).

On the other hand, divorce can be a stressful event too. Initially, the divorced couple feels relaxed but as time passes, they become harsh, fragile and easy to break. They become socially isolated and anxious. Furthermore, men are at risk of substance abuse while women are more prone towards depression, poverty, loneliness and stigmatization (Waite & Gallagher, n. d.). Literature suggests that regardless of poverty and depression, women get back from the trauma easily as compared to men (Amato & Cheadle, 2005).

Consequences for children:

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Attachment theory: The relation and attachment between parents and children is very important for personality development and intimacy in later life. According to John Bowlby theory of attachment cited in Fraley, (n. d.), there are three types of attachment i. e. secure, avoidant and resistant. In the first type of attachment, the child experiences unconditioned positive regard, loving, warm and responsive attitude of parents. It helps to build intimacy, empathic and supportive behaviors towards their partner and tends resolve their conflicts with constructive strategies. In avoidant attachment, parents shows demanding, disrespectful, critical and harsh attitude towards their children. It leads to jealousy, lack of intimacy and love in adulthood. The resistant attachment is the situation of jump in and out that means that the attitude of parents is unpredictable. This pursued the child to amalgamate completely with others and build their relations quickly but it cannot exist for long.

The initial years of life is marked with physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development and it is also vulnerable for acquiring negative things (McIntosh, 2011).

The infancy is a very crucial time in which child develop trust in the world with healthy parenting (America's Angel, 2011). After divorce, the custody of child is given to one parent due to which, the child lacks attention and care from other parent. For example, if an infant is separated from mother, the primary source of satisfaction in infancy, the child will end up in separation anxiety (Stuart, 2009). In my opinion it will develops mistrust in child for the real world.

According to Erickson, preschooler stage is marked with initiative vs. guilt (America's Angel, 2011). They suffers from depression, confusion, indulge in joyless play, desire for the absent parent, feel guilty and blame themselves for the conflict and divorce of their parents (Kruk, 2013). In my view, if parents don't give attention to their children due to their marital conflicts and separation, this may develops avoidant attachment which subsequently leads to jealousy and lack of intimacy in later life.

Likewise, school-age children build competency and mastery by participating more in academics. They make friends that play an important role in developing self-esteem in child (McLeod, 2008). Following divorce, children doesn't interact with friends more, they suffer from sleep problems and have low grade academic performance (Ambert& Vanier Institute of the Family, 2005). In my opinion, low grade results from lack of parental participation in academics and avoidance of children due to marital conflict.

Adolescence (11-20 years) is a stage where drastic change occurs such as pubertal changes, peer relation and physical maturity. Stuart (2009) affirms that it is a period where child is moving towards adulthood, preparing for marriage, career, acquiring sets of values and an ethical system. According to Erickson, in this stage, an adolescent forms his own identity which helps to make intimacy in young adulthood. Consequences of separation are equal for both girls and boys (Department of Justice Canada, 1997). Furthermore, I have detected some sign and symptoms in patient and also supported by a literature, adolescents may feel anger, depression, anxiety and fear, and emotional distress, early or late menarche and blame themselves for separation of their parents. Garvin and colleagues (1991) cited in Avila(2013) <https://assignbuster.com/effect-of-parental-separation-on-adolescence/>

affirms that children whose parent got divorce had higher rates of depression, sexual acting out, substance abuse, conduct disorders, school problems, and delinquent behavior as compared to the children of intact family. Furthermore, according to attachment theory, child may feel avoidant and resistant attachment with parents' that deteriorates academic performance. In my belief it is because of lack of participation of parents in school due to which child get demotivated and shows poor performance at school. According to Stuart (2009), the children face difficulty in identification of one parent as a victim and develop rejection for other. Literature suggests that parental separation also puts a child at risk for divorce (Amato & Cheadle, 2005). They become pessimistic about their future intimate relation (Stuart, 2009). Therefore, I believe that this stage is very crucial and could have dangerous affects of suffering.

Furthermore, it is also observed that if the custody of child is given to opposite sex parent, it can also lead to problematic circumstances. For example, in Pakistan's context, if an adolescent girl is living with her father so she may face many problems at puberty because of lack of guidance from mother. Similar situation goes with boys. They cannot discuss their reproductive health problems with mother flexibly. Children might have problems in identification of their same-sex parents due to lack of interaction with non-custodial parents.

On the other hand, the divorce can leave positive effects as well. The patient that I had encountered showed positivity and coped with in an appropriate manner. She became resilient, indulges in studies and showed good academic performance. Middleton, (n. d.) insists that child learn positivity

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and becomes resilient, adaptable, have self-confidence, shows empathy, and learn more through quality time spent with each parent separately.

After adolescence, a person enters in adulthood phase where they make relations and start their own family. If the impact of parental divorce is positive, they are most likely to build good relation with their spouse and children. According to Erickson, they develop intimacy and generativity however, in my opinion, they will get isolated from society and family and experience despair because they haven't achieved their goal due to parental conflict and separation.

Recommendations

As health care personnel, we need to support child during this traumatic event. It is important to help child in the grieving period. Friends and family member can play a significant role in it. Furthermore, we can involve child in different group work that help to alleviate the depressive symptoms and provides opportunity to deal with pre and post divorce stress. Besides we can support child in reframing their perception about divorce and help to modify their thoughts into positivity. Avila (2013) states that it can be attain with Psycho-educational and counseling which help child to cope with the reality and impacts of separation. Cognitive behavioral therapy can be given to child in order to change their negative thinking (Avila, 2013). Indulge child in activities to divert their mind from stressful situation to the relaxed situation such as sports. Show empathy towards child to make them realize that they are not alone in this situation. Moreover we can refer child to those who has coped with parental divorce appropriately.

In my opinion, it is also important to teach family to support child during this period. Instruct family and custodial parent to allow child to maintain relation with the absent parent. Allow child to choose with whom they want to live. Guide them not to discuss about the absent parent in front of child otherwise it will make child more depressed. Parents are required to fulfill the need of child and spend more time with them.

In conclusion, the inter-parental relation plays an important role in the development of child. They can influence both positively and negatively. Good parental relation can enhance well-being of a child otherwise it will disrupt the development of child. Divorce is the legal separation of spouses. It has both positive and negative impact on the couple as well on their children. Additionally, child will have psychological, behavioral, social, physical and emotional problem in their development. Every stage is very crucial but adolescences are at greater risk to be affected with parental separation as it provides identity to children which help to develop intimacy in later life. By following above mentioned strategies, children can cope up with this painful event smoothly.