

INDIAN MARRIAGES: THE UN-PREPARED PREPARATION LEADING TO SEPARATION

SHAILA

Abstract: This document is just a view from my side regarding the problems in married life of a women. A woman plays many roles and most of the time she faces some pressure or troubles which goes un-noticed. Unfortunately, it mostly remains un-noticed even by her. We need to be sure with our limits in our roles in life. Many a times we are just trained and told to bear things, and adjust in life. But it so happens that we can't decide whether we should continue bearing? Or should we speak up? By the time we realize that things are crossing the limit, it is too late. So I intend to make every woman realize that every lady has her own capacity and different problems in her married life, but the point is what you feel about it. Don't lose your self-respect, but make your own identity.

Keywords: Arranged marriage, Indian thought, secondary education, 'Things you can't bear should not be tolerated', separation, Indian parents.

Introduction: Well, let me apologize to all the adamant set of people those who still believe that Indian society is no longer a male dominated society. Surprisingly it is painful to know that such thoughts are well explained and only found in books. However, so often we come across people who are married purely by merit of caste, community, religion, family connections, etc., without getting to know the partner, simply because the families insisted on it and have lived to regret it. If you choose your own life partner, the responsibility of your actions lie with you and so in the eventuality, things don't work out and the decision to stay or end it lies with you. When families put pressure on their kids to marry, with an "our way or the highway," kind of attitude, it should be the parent's responsibility to protect, stand up for and help their children in the eventuality of abuse, in-law harassment or ill-treatment of any kind. Washing their hands off their daughters once they are married and turning their faces away when she cries for help, is like selling your daughter to slavery and sex. So this is a note to all parents out there who believe their kids must marry the partner of their choosing; that if they expect the trust and respect to be given to them by their children, then they must be live up to that trust and respect post the seven phera's. They helped keep your respect, now help them retain theirs.

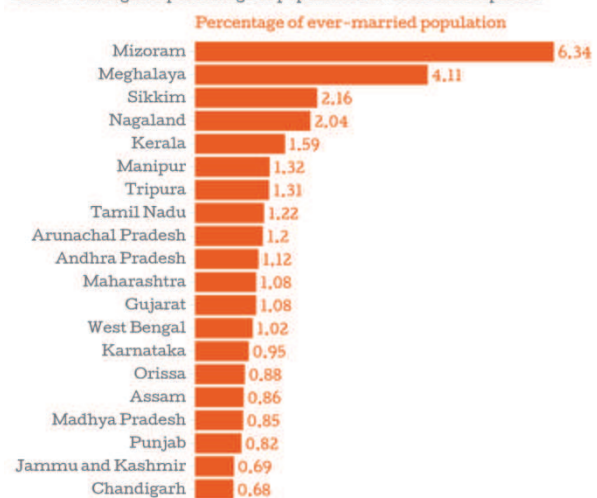
The Matter of Facts: The divorce rate in India is increasing among the young married couples, according to a report in Hindustan times.

This is an unusual trend in a country where the divorce rate was just 1 in 1,000 ten years ago, and is still a relatively low 13 per 1,000 – as compared to the US average of 500 per 1,000. While India has no central or even state-wise registry of divorce data, family court officials say the number of divorce applications has doubled and even tripled in cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata and Lucknow over the past five years.

The reasons are: the waning influence of the family and joint family; the growing psychological and financial independence of women; late marriages resulting in a greater reluctance to compromise or change set ways and lifestyles. These are some facts about the increasing divorce rate in India 1,667 cases of divorce were filed in Mumbai in 2014 (till November 30), up from 5245 cases in 2010. 8347 Divorce cases were filed in Kolkata in 2014 (till November 30), a 350% increase from the 2,388 divorce cases in 2003. About 2000 Divorce Cases were filed in the Lucknow family court in 2014. Of these about 900 were filed by young couples married less than a year. In 2009, the number of the cases filed by young couples married less than a year was 300.3 more family courts were opened in Bangalore in 2013, to cater to demand to the total number increasing to six. There are 8,600 cases pending in the courts and 500 new cases are added every year.

Source: Hindustan Times (5th January 2015)

States with highest percentage of population divorced and separated



Scroll.in

Data: Census 2011

Fig. State-wise percentage of divorced and separated population

As Per Indian Divorce Law: Acknowledging India's respect for its culture and social ethics, one can guess that India enjoys a lowest divorce rate. But it is more surprising to know that the divorce rate in India ranks lowest among all the countries of the world. Statistics shows that only 1 out of 100 Indian marriages end up to a divorce which is quite low in comparison to America's 50% of marriages turning into breakups. The rate of divorce in India was even low in the previous decade, where only 7.40 marriages out of 1,000 marriages were annulled. The divorce rate in Indian villages is even lower in comparison to urban India. In Hindu religion marriage is sacrament and not a contract; hence divorce was not recognized before the codification of the Hindu Marriage Act in 1955. With the codification of this law, men and women both are equally eligible to seek divorce. Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains are governed by the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, Christians are governed by The Divorce Act 1869, Parsis by the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act 1936, Muslims by the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act 1939 and Inter-religious marriages are governed by The Special Marriage Act 1954.

Conditions are laid down to perform a marriage between a man and woman by these laws. Based on these a marriage is validated, if not it is termed as void marriage or voidable marriage at the option of either of the spouse. Here upon filing a petition by any one spouse before the Court of law a decree of nullity is passed declaring the marriage as null and void. Divorce can be applied only after one year of marriage. But the numbers seemed to be increasing at alarming rate. Here, Marriages need not be registered and only Divorce is registered. So it's hard to infer the percentage of divorce as percentage of marriage. But the number of divorce can be counted. One of the major reasons for low rate of divorce in India is a Arrange marriage. Arranged marriages have been the tradition in Indian society for centuries. Even today an overwhelming majority of Indians in India have their marriages planned by their parents and other respected family-members. Arranged matches were made after taking into account factors such as age, height, personal values and tastes, the backgrounds of their families (wealth, social standing) and their castes and the astrological compatibility of the couples horoscopes. In general both the parents and the young people feel that since they were older and wiser than their progeny, they would be able to find a suitable match for their children with more prudence than the latter. Although most marriages are arranged, some couples in India opt for selecting their partners by themselves, based on their direct interaction with those partners. This is often termed

as "love marriage" in India. Love marriages tend to be more common in the urban areas. Among the overseas Indians, many marriages are still arranged with the assistance of the parents. Even the so called love marriages in India generally happen with the approval of the parents, although their blessing may sometimes be reluctant. In India, the marriage is thought to be for life, and the divorce rate is extremely low.

The Real Spoiling Thought: Today when someone drops garbage on the road, he knows it that he is wrong. This is because of the basic education given to him in schools. The question is not whether we follow it or not, but the matter is that we know what's right and wrong in such instances. When some unknown person touches a girl she knows that it is wrong, but why does it confuse a married lady to realize that the things happening with her are not supposed to be tolerated? Why does it happen that even today women bear torture just with an intention that 'one day soon things will be fine'. Wake up ladies. It's time to know the fact that you all are not puppets. Being born as girl is not a sin. Obviously people may feel that my statements are so old or even sounding stupid, but also keep the thought alive that the day your sister speaks up about her troubles it will be too late to react. It is quite easy to blame people. But my intention is to pass a message that bearing and blaming are two different concepts. When we know that after marriage things will change. Life is not going to be the same, why can't we be prepared for it much before? In arranged marriages we often don't know our partner before marriage. But what can be done when the person turns out to be a jerk? Or what if you realize that your life is ruined? Obviously you can't think of a second chance in marriage so easily. But did you concentrate on where things went wrong? Stop blaming your fate each time. It's just still very taboo to talk about Indian couples having problems, or talking about divorce. There's a lot of social pressure within the community to make relationships work.

Role of Education: Educating people on this issue is a major requirement. Everyone wants to get married and stay happy. Where and why does the happiness vanish so easily? This is worth answering. What happens if you don't prepare for your exam and you appear for the exam? Truly, the success factor is then unpredictable, and so is the success factor for marriages. It is high time that we Indians realize that marriage is truly a sacred concept. But accept the fact that it needs lots of effort to spread the 'good marriage' message all over. 'Good marriage' doesn't really mean that life is going to be a piece of cake. But yes it means that you don't get a feel of being stuck up in life. The best way for this is to educate students from an early stage. Indian education system needs to

politely discuss on this concept of educating about marriage. Dr. Rashmin Cholera (a famous Psychiatrist from Goreagon, Mumbai) clearly says, "People need to know that there is no concept of happy or sad marriages. Marriage is just a part of life, and life as we know is made of ups and downs." So all those men waiting to get married with any intentions like his wife is only meant to serve him or take care of his house and family should change their thinking. Men need to be sure that marriage is not a way of financial stability through the source of dowry. When we can train and produce individuals to be good professionals, why can't we take an effort to prepare people to be respectable life partners???

My Suggestion: I suggest that we need to have marriage as a topic in secondary school education at a sensible age itself. This doesn't mean that we are going to be associated with developing a non-divorce society, but we would surely help develop a peaceful country. This education should concentrate on different areas of mental preparation for marriages. Firstly teach them to respect the opposite gender. Implant knowledge and understanding that beauty comes with brain and not color. Beauty is to be observed from heart and not from eyes. Simple steps to avoid dangerous consequences in future need to be emphasized. Teach daughters to keep a stand in life. Never lose your identity. You are not born to impress anyone. You need not be acceptable by all. You are the only one who can live for yourself. The one who considers you as someone to be just misused or play with, is not a human but needs to be treated worse than an animal. The one who points his finger to put you down for his benefits or pleasure, is the one who is happily spoiling your life. There is no second thought to the fact that you are your daddy's princess. But don't dream to become your husband's queen. Because if he was brought up by a queen, he surely will treat you like one. You need not struggle for it. Every marriage requires some adjustment and if you were recently married into a conventional family, you could find it difficult to learn the ropes and find a balance. Most headstrong women find it problematic to compromise on their lifestyle. Most women who face problems in Indian arranged marriages find it difficult to follow certain expectations such as the clothes to wear, social gathering to attend and food habits to follow. Be specific when things are not bearable. Things that you can't bear should not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Train Your Sons: Teach your sons that never hesitate to share your thoughts with your partner. The day they do that they prove themselves to be married. You have full rights to dream, but fulfill them either before your marriage or with your partner. But never do it just for your happiness and risking others happiness. Your dreams are worth only if they don't

make anybody else struggle or suffer. Understand the fact that you have full rights to be happy, but if you still can't switch your priorities then you are not worth a husband. Life doesn't change much, in fact they should not change either but yes if you can't take up your wife's responsibility then you are playing with her family's life, and to the most you are proving yourself bad. Teach them to respect every individual. Don't overload with too much of training or ideas. But when few things are made crystal clear then it will surely create a good impact. The only need is to live to understand the other and not yourself. Adding up to the burden of the other by just ignoring his/her state of mind is horrible. Live totally for the others smile. And remember smile can never be bought with money, it happens once you are made to feel that 'you are truly married and to the most you are rightly married'.

Dear women, hereafter kindly understand the fact that empowerment is with respect to the difference between deserve and desire. Train yourselves before you train your daughter-in-laws, because your son's behavior will clearly state your true colors. If your sons don't know what their wives deserve and desire then it is high time you realize they not matured to be married. It is very much alright if you make them sit at home and handle household work or you sell them to their organizations and keep enjoying their hard-earned money, rather than taking a chance of getting them married and troubling any innocent girl and her family.

Crack the Facts about Marriage: First things first, it's perfectly okay to never get married. In India, you don't just marry your partner, you marry their whole family. Sometimes, Indian families over-involve themselves and end up ruining their children's marriages. Sometimes, they just don't understand each other. But sadly, Indian parents don't consider these reasons good enough for someone to walk out of a marriage. And that needs to change. We need to reinvent the definition of a successful marriage. Marriage is not the ultimate solution to every problem. We need to stop believing that a person from our own caste, religion or region is going to be the best choice as a partner. There's no 'perfect time' to get married. It is perfectly okay if a marriage doesn't work out. It's no stigma. It is sad how Indian parents think their daughters' dignity lies in holding on to their marriages, no matter how much she suffers in it. Everybody likes elaborate weddings, but is it really necessary? A lot of times, parents oppose cross-cultural or inter-religion marriages though only under societal pressure, even if they like the prospective groom or bride themselves.

Conclusion: My basic idea in this paper is to spread a message that when nearly everyone in this universe aims to have a good job with good salary for a happy

future family life, then why are we not concentrating in improving the quality of marriages in India. Every lady who walks on the road, has her head down and imagining and thinking lot many things within a fraction of second. She really needs some peace and reason to smile. She needs confident that when she walks ahead there is surely a trustworthy hand on her shoulder, just patting her for her ever struggling days to fulfill her dreams of a joyful and peaceful family. Make them realize when things actually are not bearable; they need not be beard under any cost. We now need to know that marriage preparation has nothing to do with shopping, or spending money unnecessarily. It is just a mental preparation to continue being yourself and maintaining your self-respect and to the most speaking up for what you feel is wrong. People will oppose you, but learn that you too have to have your choices and opinions in life. Every second in your life too is precious. Respect the ones who deserve it, not the ones who ask for it. Don't entertain people who don't respect you as an individual.

Prepare your minds to reflect your presence even in your absence.

Acknowledgment: I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my mother Leela Sunder and my father Sunder Anthony who are the finest blessings of God to me. They have continuously nourished me with knowledge and qualities that are just remarkably worth appreciable. I feel lucky to be born to these great parents. Their dream to see me doing something better each time has surely refined me. Also special thanks to my sister Advocate Mrs. Shalini Aji and Shini Sunder for all the mental and financial support given by them needed for this paper. Their views and suggestions have played a major role towards the successful completion of this paper. Thank you Aaron and Blessy for filling my life with smiles always, that keeps me going. I would also be thankful to my Principal Dr. Satheesh Menon and my entire group of colleagues for always encouraging each other in every possible way.

References:

1. Geeta M Jaisingh, Dr. Jaya Mathew, Making Women Matter- Best Women Empowerment; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 256-261
2. Dr.S.K.Sheela, Challenges and Empowerment of Women in Media; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 297-298
3. <http://www.boldsky.com/relationship/marriage-and-beyond/2015/problems-that-every-new-couple-in-arranged-marriage-faces-061025.html>
4. Dr. Sneh Pandey, Empowerment of Women and toward A Solution; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 286-290
5. <http://indiafacts.in/uncategorized/divorce-rate-india/>
6. Daino Basumatary, Psychological Impact of Conflict on Tribal Girlin North; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 291-296
7. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/sex-and-relationships/how-and-why-number-of-young-indian-couples-getting-divorced-has-risen-sharply/story-mEuaEoviW4od6sLLZbGu6J.html>
8. Dr.Rita Kumari, Political Participation of Women in Gram Panchayat; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 280-285
9. <https://sites.google.com/site/indiandivorcelaws/divorce-rate-in-india>
10. Dr.E.Raju, Chukka Jyothi, Women's Participation in HRD - An Over-View; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 248-255
11. Anjali Agarwal, Gender Justice:A Milestone to Achieve Women; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 262-265
12. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/relationships/man-woman/The-problem-with-arranged-marriages/articleshow/11401660.cms>
13. Dr. Devakumar Jacob, Access to Rural Women in Higher Education; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 266-274
14. <http://scroll.in/article/71115/charts-and-maps-why-are-divorces-and-separations-more-common-in-north-east-india>
15. Yadam Ram Kumar, A Study on the Development of Women's Rights; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 275-279

Shaila/ Room no. D-304/ Bhagath Singh Nagar No-1/ Goregaon (West)/ Mumbai -400 104/ Assistant Professor/ Department of Information Technology/ Valia C. L. College/ Andheri(W)/ Mumbai/