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## A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN IN INDIA

Rithish. D<sup>1</sup> & Mr. C.M. Selvamuthu<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract:**

Divorce is an extremely disturbing experience for all children depending upon the age or maturity level. The pain experienced by children is distressing as they see the family disintegrating and sense vulnerability. Divorce in any circumstance is a ripping of a child apart emotionally and psychologically thwarting upon the child's wellbeing. However in the long term the effects are determined by the behaviour on the part of the parents which determines good adjustment for children going through divorce. The quantity and quality of contact between children and non-custodial parents usually fathers tend to decrease the relationship and the mother shows signs of tension over the child. The main aim of this study is to discuss whether the children of divorced persons will experience physical and mental problems. This study has used primary data which is collected from 200 respondents with a simple random sampling method. The kind of research followed in this study is an empirical research method. The study has found that the children of divorced persons have experienced both physical and mental problems and the major impact of children due to divorce of their parents is that it is difficult to adapt to changes. The study concluded that there is a need for a law to govern the child rights in divorce cases and also to deal with the matters pertaining to custody and maintenance that must come into place for an enhanced framework for protecting the child's future.

### **Keywords:**

Divorce, Children, Mental illness, Physical problems, Child rights

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**Introduction:**

In today's society, there are many kinds of families. Some include joint, nuclear, single families and stepfamilies. A divorce is a random event in an exceedingly family's life. It is one thing that affects every member of a family at completely different times and in numerous ways. In many parts of Asia, non-marriage and divorce are becoming increasingly common. In East Asia with the exception of China, marriage rates have fallen and divorce rates briefly reached as high as the levels seen in countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Divorce is inarguably intensely distressing for children. Outside the realm of family, because of the stigmatisation of divorce, the child faces a tough time attempting to be accepted by a conservative society. In socioeconomic attainments, children who experience their parents' divorce have lower educational prospects than children from intact homes. Within the family the obvious effects are on the physiological behaviour of the child. There are also children who are left in a guilty conscience in the post-divorce period especially if they are a frequent witness to the parent's feuds. They are left thinking what they did to cause the divorce. Moreover, in older age groups the assumption of hyper-maturity is also common as children often assume the tasks of adults to stabilise the custodial parent's household. There is also a reciprocal dependency relationship between the child and the single parent which is in 90 percent of the cases the mother. This principally relates to a closer relationship between the parent and the child more as peers, both struggling to keep the family going. A lack of generational boundaries means a less hierarchical family and less authoritative generational distinctions. This is understood to inadequately socialise children or place them in a disadvantageous position when they find themselves in hierarchical organisations.

**Aim:**

To discuss whether the children of divorced persons will experience physical and mental problems.

**Objectives:**

To find out the major impact of children due to divorce of their parents.

To discuss whether divorce will lead the children to hate their parents and the society.

To discuss whether the children are the most affected due to divorce of their parents.

**Review of Literature:**

(Schwartz, 1985) has discussed the effects of divorce on children of different ages. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that forty-seven percent felt that physical abuse of children is much more common in such families. The author has concluded that children's adjustment is closely related to parental adjustment or that there are gender differences in children's reactions to divorce.

(Garg, 1998) has discussed the divorce system of India. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that a uniform code would empower Muslim wives by making them less susceptible to such an informal method of divorce as talaq. The author has concluded that if husbands are given a power to divorce under the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act as their wives are, so that the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act and Hindu Marriage Act both apply to husbands and wives, it is difficult to see what objection Muslims would have.

(Amato, 2000) has discussed the consequences of divorce for adults and children. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that slightly more than half of all divorces involve children under the age of 18. The author has concluded that adults and children from divorced families, as a group, score lower than their counterparts in married-couple families on a variety of indicators of well-being.

(Sonawat, 2001) has discussed regarding the families in India. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that the family institution continues to play a central role in the lives of people. The author has concluded that there is a need to aim on influencing family practices and family policy development.

(Alam et al., 2001) have discussed the effect of divorce on infant mortality. They have used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. They have found that among babies born more than 12 months before divorce happens more than their peers. The high mortality of infants born before and after mothers were divorced may reflect how abusive marriage and divorce increase the vulnerability of women and children in rural Bangladesh. The author has concluded that divorce and abuse of women are difficult and intractable social and health problems that must be addressed.

(Strow & Brasfield, 2006) have discussed the divorce probability and the preference for sons. They have used secondary information from different

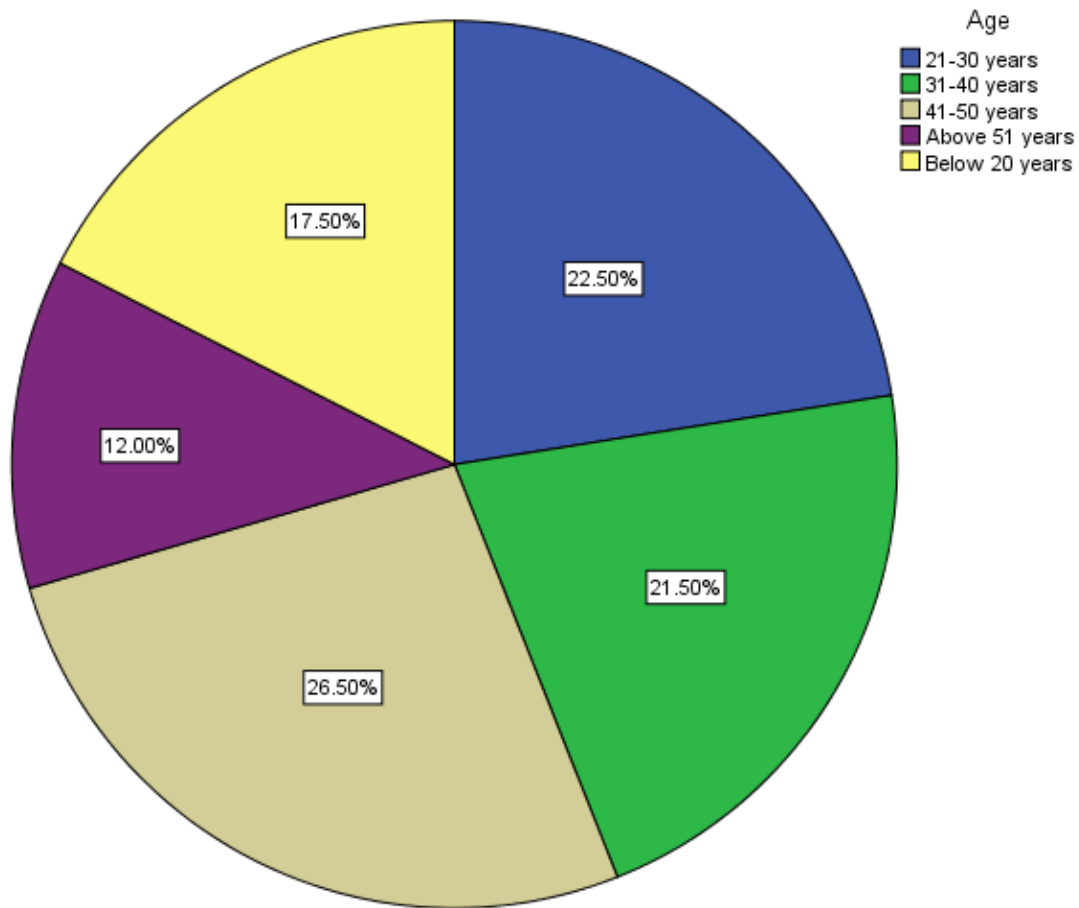
sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. They have found that couples with daughters have experienced a higher divorce rate than those with only sons. They have concluded that there is a need to reduce gender balance consequences. **(Onwuka, 2009)** has discussed the challenges faced by children in contemporary family life as a result of divorce. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that divorce is a stressful process that affects divorcing individuals and their children as well as their parents. The author has concluded that The effect of divorce on children is largely dependent on the childhood problems present prior to the divorce. **(Raj et al., 2009)** have discussed the problems of divorce in India. They have used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. They have found that child marriage in India is considered a major barrier to the nation's social and economic development. They have concluded that child marriage remains pervasive in India and is linked to high and less controlled fertility, as well as increased likelihood of termination and sterilization by young adulthood. **(Kumar, 2011)** has discussed the impact of divorce on children. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that the major impact of divorce is on the parent-child relationship. The author has concluded that divorce is inarguably intensely distressing for children. **(Dommaraju, 2016)** has discussed the divorce and separation in India. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that marriage among higher educated women is more durable and that the difference between higher and lower educated women has widened over time. The author has concluded that there is a need for collection of data using survey instruments that are responsive and sensitive to the complexities and pluralities of marital dissolution in India. **(Gore & Lakhe, 2019)** have discussed the effect of parent's divorce on growing children's health. They have used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. They have found that boys many times become addicted and delinquent gain weight. They have concluded that parents divorce effect is more or less the same amongst the boys and girls. **(Damota, 2019)** has discussed the effect of divorce on families' lives. The author has used secondary information

from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that divorce leads custodial parents to experience major changes in their lives including a change in residential arrangements, economic disadvantage, loneliness associated with social network changes. The author has concluded that divorce also has a positive side which is relief from chaotic relationships. So, a lot has to be done before couples are going to divorce. **(Thadathil & Sriram, 2019)** have discussed Divorce, families and adolescents in India. They have used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. They have found that there are more negative consequences for adolescents after their parents' divorce. They have concluded that families in India are confronted by divorce as a challenging issue. **(Ganai, 2019)** has discussed the effects of divorce on children. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that there is great influence of divorce on children's lives. The author has concluded that the effect of divorced couples with children may cause a lifespan impact on them. **(Lakhe & Gore, 2019)** have discussed the effect of parents' divorce on growing children's behaviour. They have used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. They have found that in school children are less likely to exhibit disruptive behaviour such as disobeying a teacher or behaving aggressively with peers and children also show depression, grieving, fear, anger, confusion, frustration. They have concluded that the effect of parents' divorce on the behaviour of female children is more than that of male children at school. **(Nanda & Chaudhury, 2020)** have discussed the divorce trends in India. They have used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. They have found that higher-educated marriage is more stable. They have concluded that the gap between higher-educated and lower-educated women has risen over time. **(Shaw, 2020)** has discussed the justified parity of right and obligation of divorce in India. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that the increase in divorce rate took place across ages and religion too. The author has concluded that socio-cultural acceptance is more important for parity in society. **(Chimienti, 2021)** has discussed the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement. The author has used secondary information from different

sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that the divorce on its own can be a factor in children's lower academic achievement. The author has concluded that a model of practical school based strategies need to be proposed. (Sheoran, 2021) has discussed the effects of divorce on children. The author has used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. The author has found that children of divorced couples do not have proper social and mental development. They also lag behind other children in studies. The author has concluded that divorce has a profound effect on the mind of a child and its effect can be on his mind and social relationships throughout his life. (Poddar & Mukhopadhyay, 2021) have discussed post- divorce child custody complications with special reference to hindu personal law. They have used secondary information from different sources such as books, journal articles, reports of various government organisations and commissions, articles, newspapers etc. They have found that the primary effect of the breakdown of the marital bond is on the spouses. They have concluded that it is the duty of both the spouses to maintain the child even after divorce.

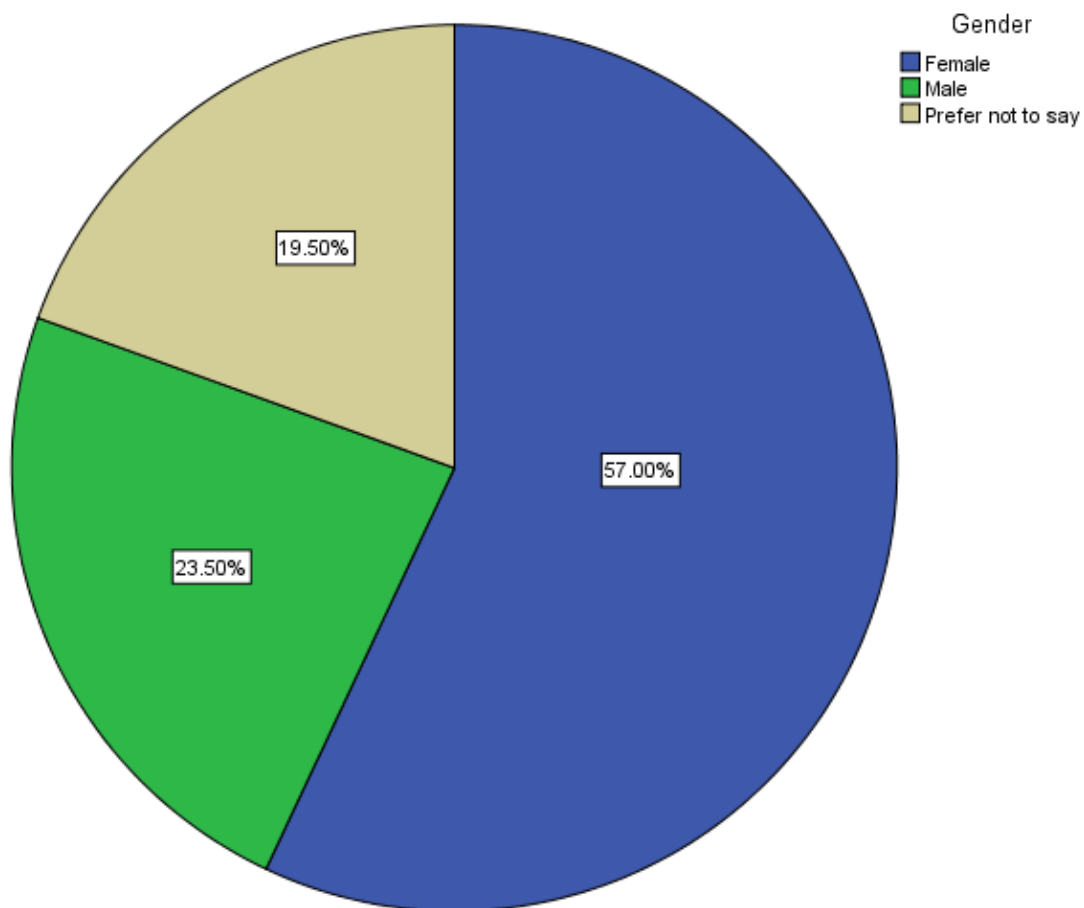
### **Methodology:**

This study used primary data .This primary data was collected from 200 respondents and it was with a simple random sampling method. The data has been collected through dependent variables like age, gender, educational qualification, occupation and independent variables like Do you think whether the children of divorced persons will experience physical and mental problems? The major impact of children due to divorce of their parents? Based on the agreeability rate, whether divorce will lead the children to hate their parents and the society? Based on the agreeability scale rate whether the children are the most affected due to divorce of their parents? and On the scale of 1 to 5 rate the role of government intervention in protecting the divorced children? In this study Simple percentage analysis with graphical representation and Chi-square analysis are the methods used for analysis.

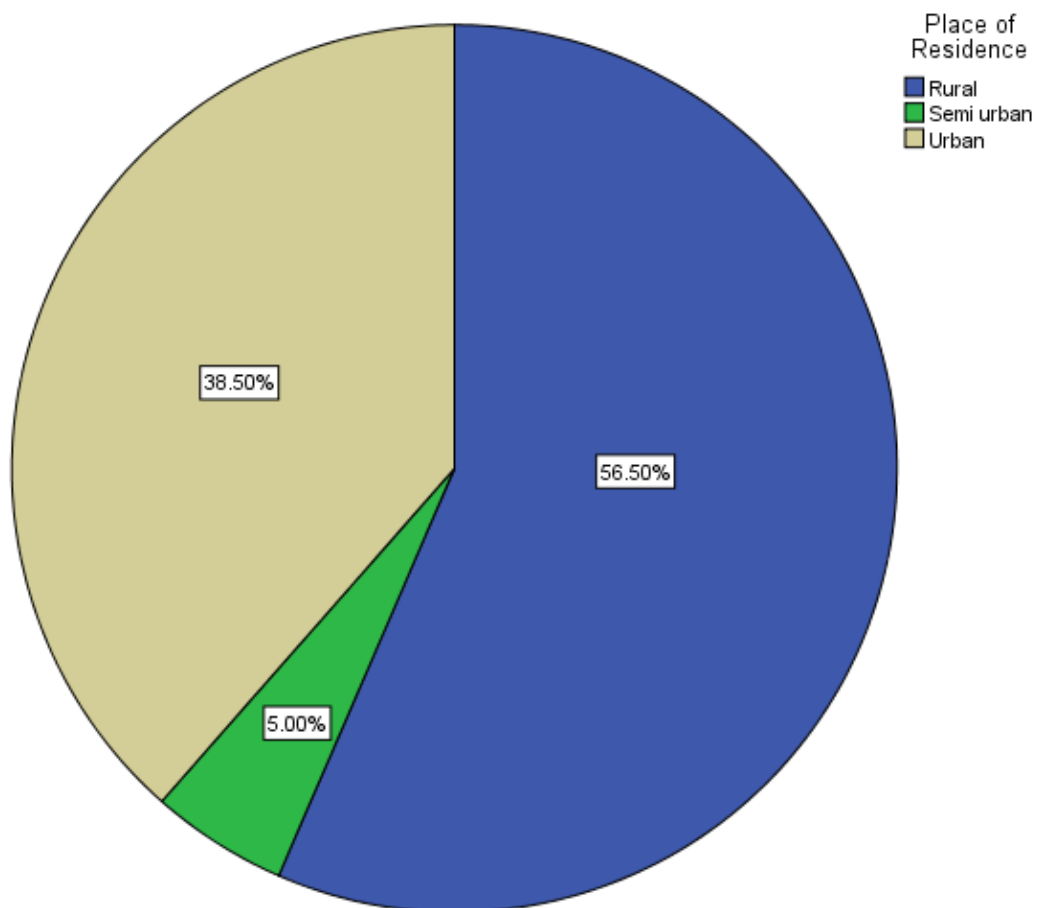
**ANALYSIS:****FIGURE 1:**

**LEGEND:** Figure 1 shows the opinion of the respondents based on their Age group.

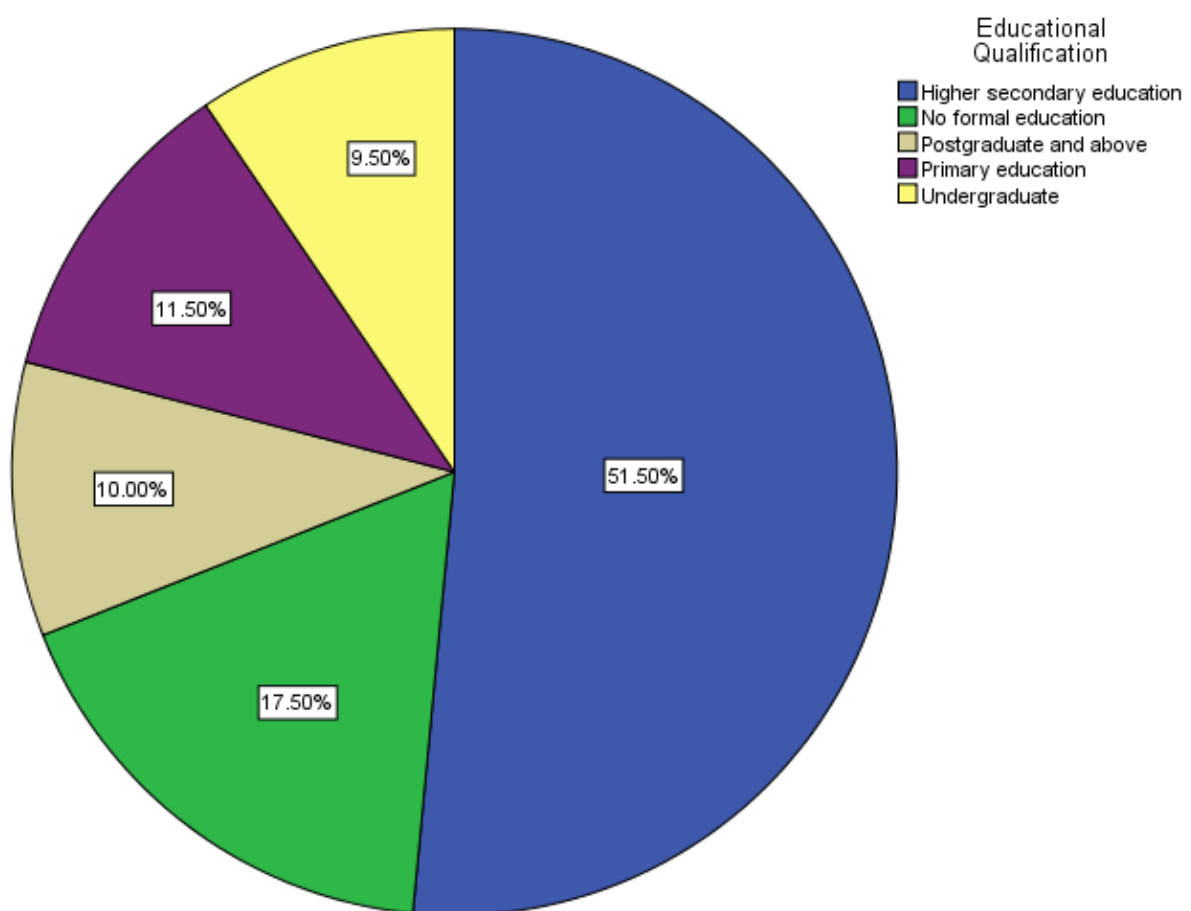


**FIGURE 2:**

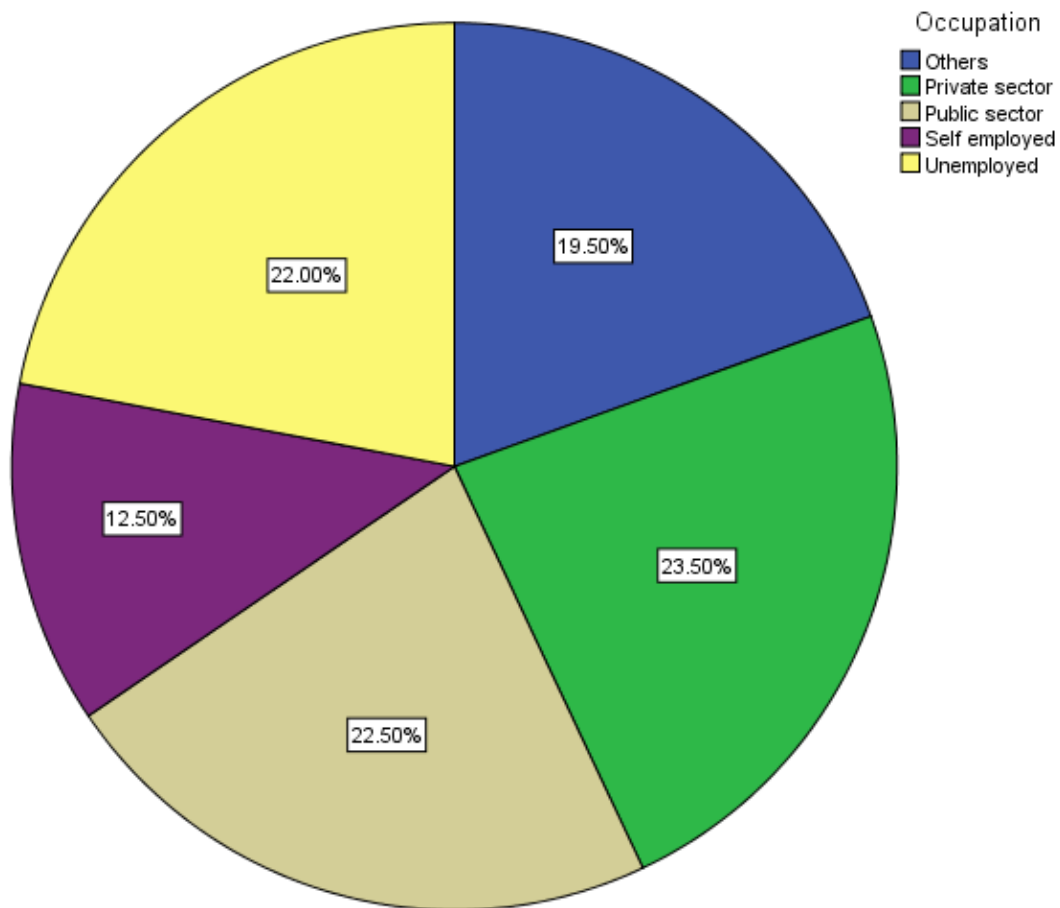
**LEGEND:** Figure 2 represents the opinions of the respondents based on the category of gender.

**FIGURE 3:**

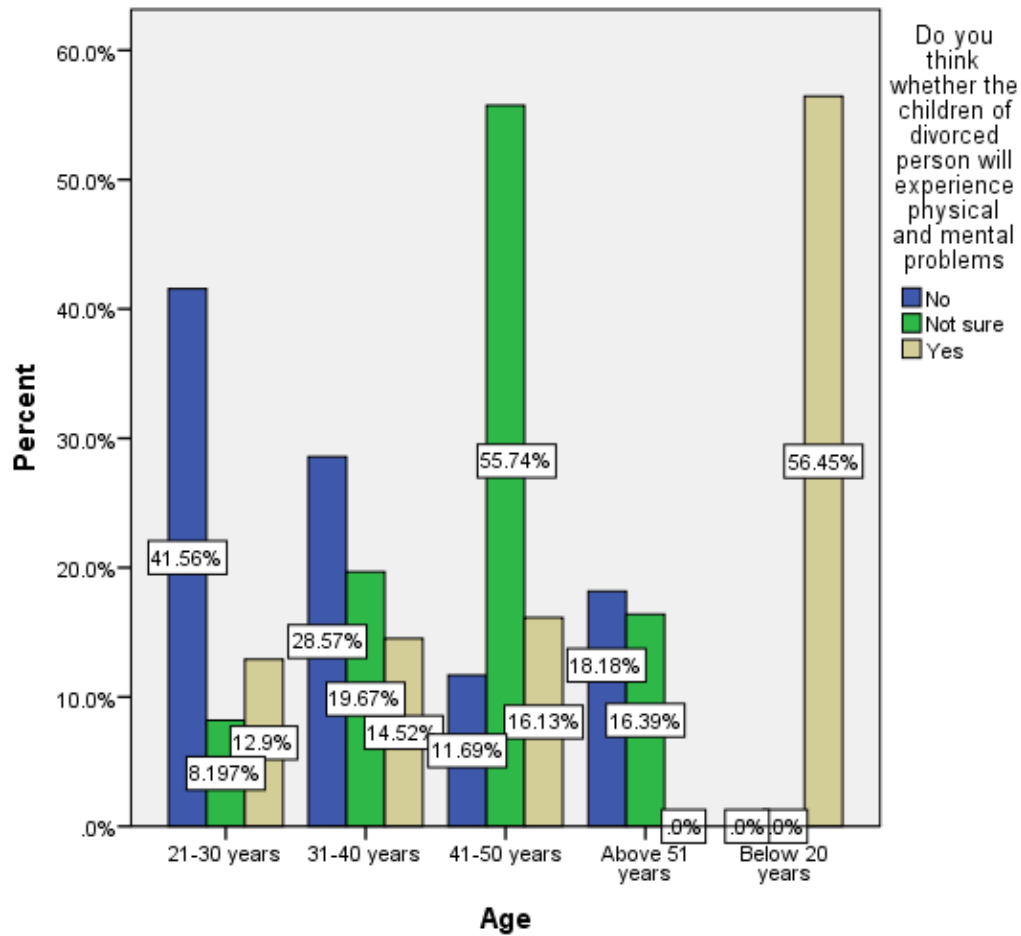
**LEGEND:** Figure 3 represents the opinion of the respondents based on the category of place of residence.

**FIGURE 4:**

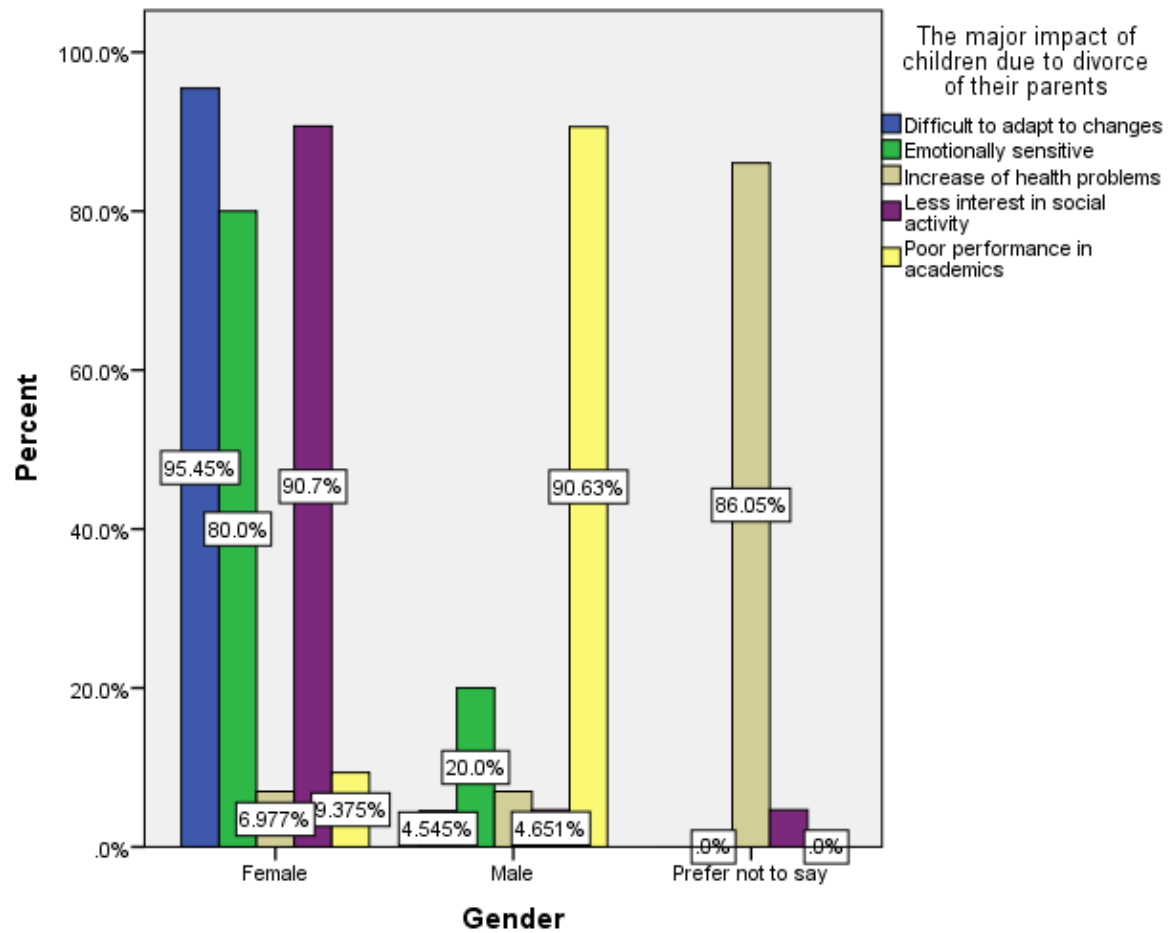
**LEGEND:** Figure 4 represents the opinion of the respondents based on the category of Educational Qualifications.

**FIGURE 5:**

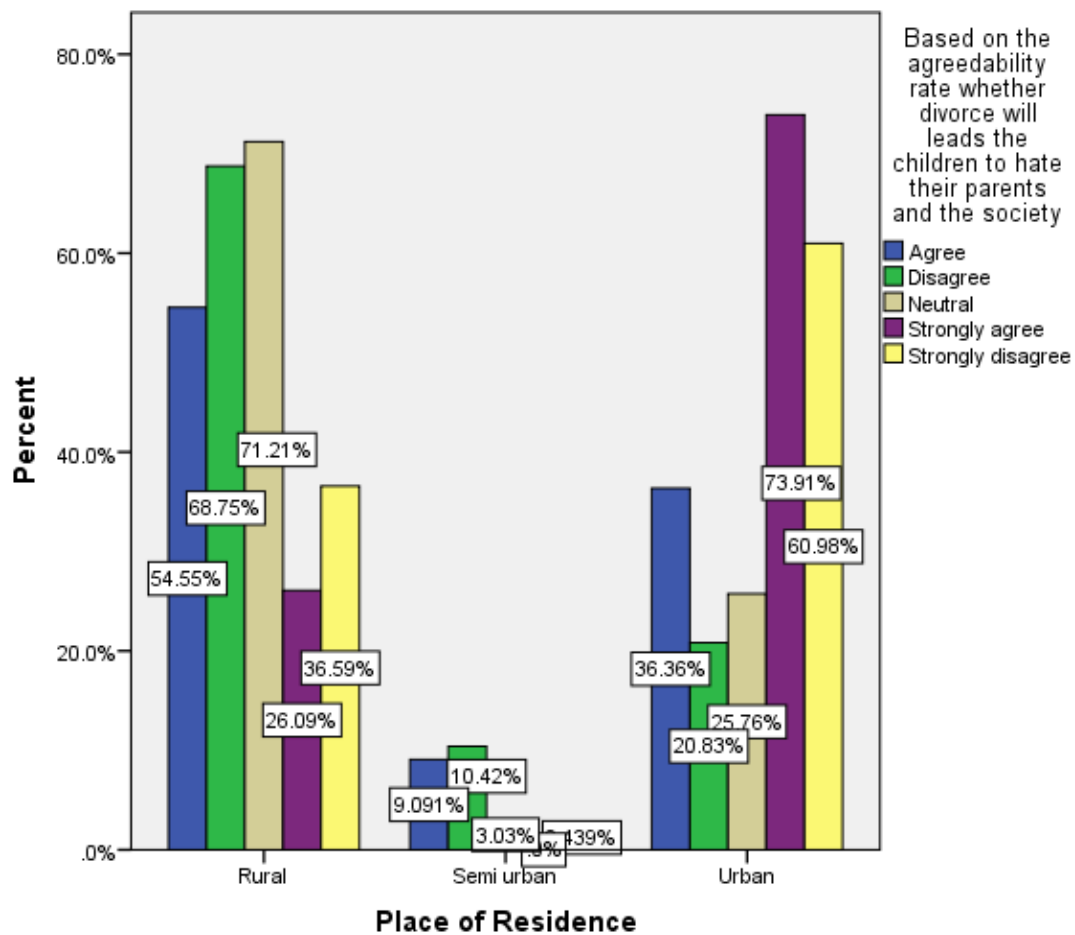
**LEGEND:** Figure 5 represents the opinion of the respondents based on the category of Occupation.

**FIGURE 6:**

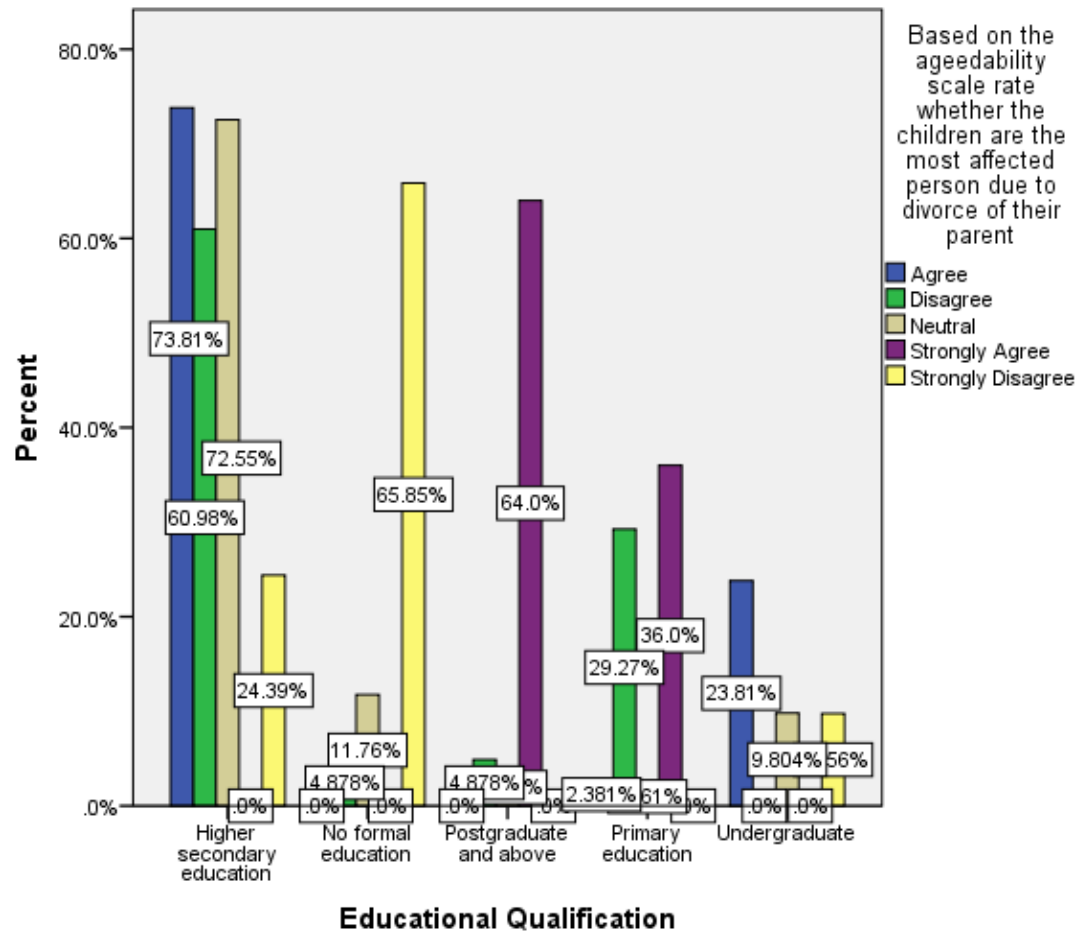
**LEGEND:** Figure 6 shows the opinion of the respondents of different age groups for the questionnaire Do you think whether the children of divorced persons will experience physical and mental problems.

**FIGURE 7:**

**LEGEND:** Figure 7 shows the opinion of respondents from different gender for the questionnaire regarding the major impact of children due to divorce of their parents.

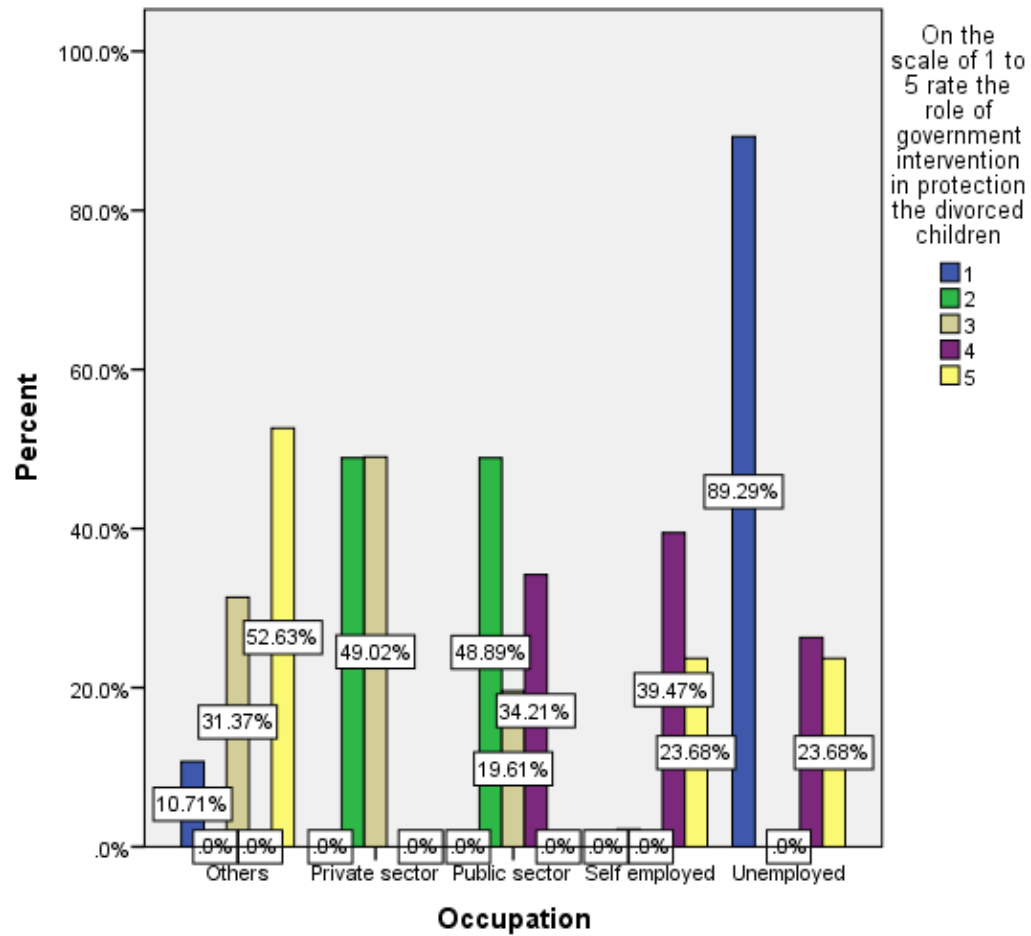
**FIGURE 8:**

**LEGEND:** Figure 8 shows the opinion of the respondents of different localities for the questionnaire that Based on the agreeability rate, whether divorce will lead the children to hate their parents and the society.

**FIGURE 9:**

**LEGEND:** Figure 9 shows the opinion of respondents from different educational qualifications for the questionnaire that Based on the agreeability scale rate whether the children are the most affected due to divorce of their parents.



**FIGURE 10:**

**LEGEND:** Figure 10 shows the opinion of the respondents of different occupations for the questionnaire regarding the role of government intervention in protecting the divorced children.

**FIGURE 11:****Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Place of Residence * Based on the ageedability scale rate whether the children are the most affected person due to divorce of their parent	200	100.0%	0	0.0%	200	100.0%

**Place of Residence \* Based on the ageedability scale rate whether the children are the most affected person due to divorce of their parent Crosstabulation**

Count

		Based on the ageedability scale rate whether the children are the most affected person due to divorce of their parent					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
Place of Residence	Rural	19	39	40	15	0	113
	Semi urban	0	0	0	0	10	10
	Urban	23	2	11	10	31	77
Total		42	41	51	25	41	200

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	111.510 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	129.727	8	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 5 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.25.

**LEGEND:** Figure 11 shows chi-square of the responses obtained through dependent variable place of residence and independent variable questionnaire that Based on the agreeability scale rate whether the children are the most affected due to divorce of their parents.

**Result:**

In **Figure 1** it shows the responses of different age groups. In this the highest responses from the age category of 41-50 years have responded to the questionnaires. In **Figure 2** it shows the responses of different gender categories. In this the highest responses from the gender category of female have responded to the questionnaires. In **Figure 3** it shows the responses of different places of residence. In this the highest responses are from the respondents of the rural areas. In **Figure 4** it shows the responses of different educational qualifications. In this the highest respondents from higher secondary education have responded to the questionnaires. In **Figure 5** it shows the responses of different occupation categories. In this the highest respondents from the category of private sector have responded to the questionnaires. In **Figure 6** it shows the responses from the different age groups for the questionnaire that shows Do you think whether the children of divorced persons will experience physical and mental problems. In this the highest responses from the age category of Below 20 years have responded as Yes. In **Figure 7** it shows the opinion of the respondents of different gender for the questionnaire regarding the major impact of children due to divorce of their parents. In this the highest responses from the gender category of female have responded as Difficult to adapt to changes. In **Figure 8** it shows the opinion of respondents from different places of residence for the questionnaire that Based on the agreeability rate, whether divorce will lead the children to hate their parents and the society. In this the highest responses from the locality of urban areas have responded as Strongly Agree. In **Figure 9** it shows the opinion of respondents from different educational qualifications for the questionnaire about Based on the agreeability scale rate whether the children are the most affected due to divorce of their parents. In this the highest responses from the education qualification as Higher secondary education have responded as Agree. In **Figure 10** it shows the opinion of the respondents of different occupations for the questionnaire regarding the role of government intervention in protecting the divorced children. In this the highest responses from the occupation as Unemployed have responded as 1. In **Figure 11** it shows the chi-square analysis of the responses obtained through dependent variable place of residence and independent variable questionnaire that Based on the agreeability scale rate whether the children are the most affected due to divorce of their parents. In this the p value is described as 1.25.

**Discussion:**

The respondents from the age category of 41-50 years have responded to the questionnaire at large. This states that most of the respondents for the questionnaires are from the age category of 41-50 years (**Figure1**). The respondents from the gender category of Female have responded to the questionnaire at large. This states that most of the respondents for the questionnaires are from the gender category of Female (**Figure2**). The respondents from the place of residence as Rural areas have responded to the questionnaire at large. This states that most of the respondents for the questionnaires are from the place of residence as Rural areas (**Figure3**). The respondents from the education qualification of Higher secondary education have responded to the questionnaire at large. This states that most of the respondents for the questionnaires are from the persons of having educational qualification as Higher secondary education (**Figure4**). The respondents from the occupation category of the Private sector have responded to the questionnaire at large. This states that most of the respondents for the questionnaires are from the occupation category of the Private sector (**Figure5**). The respondents from the different age category have expressed their view regarding the questionnaire about Do you think whether the children of divorced persons will experience physical and mental problems. In that the highest respondents to the questionnaire from the age category of Below 20 years have responded as Yes. This states that the respondents of the age category from Below 20 years have accepted that the children of divorced persons will experience both physical and mental problems. This indicates that the children of divorced persons will experience both physical and mental problems as their parents got separated (**Figure 6**). The respondents from the different gender have expressed their view regarding the questionnaire regarding the major impact of children due to divorce of their parents. In this the highest responses from the gender category of Female have responded as Difficult to adapt to changes. This states that the Female respondents have stated that difficulty in adapting to changes is the major impact of children due to divorce of their parents. (**Figure 7**). The respondents from the different places of residence have expressed their view regarding the questionnaire that Based on the agreeability rate, whether divorce will lead the children to hate their parents and the society. In that the highest respondents to the questionnaire from the place of residence as urban areas have responded as Strongly Agree. This states that the respondents from urban areas have strongly agreed to the statement that divorce will lead the children to hate their parents and the society (**Figure 8**). The respondents from the different education qualifications have expressed their view regarding the questionnaire Based on the agreeability scale rate whether the children are the most affected due to divorce of their parents. In this the

highest responses from the education qualification as Higher secondary education have responded as Agree. This states that the respondents of the education qualification of higher secondary education have agreed that the children are the most affected due to divorce of their parents as they will have lack of emotional support by the family. **(Figure 9)**. The respondents from the different occupation categories have expressed their view to the questionnaire regarding the role of government intervention in protecting the divorced children. In this the highest responses from the occupation as Unemployed have responded as 1 that is, it is very important. This response from the respondents states that the role of government is very important in protecting the interest of the children when they are not taken care of by their parents. **(Figure 10)**. The respondents from the different places of residence have expressed their view regarding the questionnaire determining whether the children are the most affected due to divorce of their parents. In this the p value is described as 1.25. This states that there is no relationship between the effect of divorce and their place of residence **(Figure 11)**.

**Limitation:**

The sampling method followed in this study is a simple random sampling method. The study is unable to collect data sufficiently due to the reduced geographical area. Since the study is restricted to the territory within Tamil Nadu and therefore the conclusion derived by average is not perfectly accurate. Since the study collected responses from the general public at large, the findings are mostly based on generalized opinion rather than legal or scientific background.

**Suggestions:**

To protect the divorced children the study suggests that a single law governing child rights in divorce cases and also matters pertaining to custody and maintenance must come into place for an enhanced framework protecting the child's future. To ensure that the child receives a stable and nurturing environment after the divorce of the parents, some scholars have opined that if a parent fails to promote the child's interest at some threshold level of adequacy, a form of intervention, ranging from counselling to obtaining fine from the parent as well as loss of parental rights to the child, may be legitimate. These are the suggestions which may also be worked out to protect the children of the divorced and to encourage them to overcome their problems to live in the society with a peaceful mind like others.

**Conclusion:**

The children's psychological balance will be highly affected through the disruption in the marriage and adjustment for changes is affected by the way parents continue positive relationships with their children. It is noted that there needs to be a rise in female headed households and the fathers need to take up a larger responsibility and provide for timely maintenance. Rather than the developmental considerations which are due to disruption in the family there are certain rights for the children which need to be looked into from a distinct standpoint and tackle some situations in which the children are found in during the time of their parents' divorce. These rights of the children are even though cannot be distinctively articulated from that of the parent's rights but, the child should be considered as an autonomous self to be accorded with some individual rights.