

## **Mental Health Status of Divorcees from Different Cultural Backgrounds in Kathmandu**

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**Abstract:** Divorcees have different psychological impacts because of their different caste/ethnicity, gender and socio-cultural backgrounds. This study is about cultural psychological factors of divorce and its different psychological impacts on different cultural groups. This research is designed in the mixed method to understand the “Mental Health Status of Divorcees from Different Cultural Backgrounds in Kathmandu”. The total numbers of participants are 48 and selected by the purposive sampling lead by snowball methods. The qualitative data is analyzed through narrative techniques. Among the total population, it is found that the psychological issues are significantly higher among females than males. The prevalence of stress, anxiety and depression is higher in less educated females in comparison to highly educated females. Similarly, it has been found that differences in cultural practices including language, food, festivals, and family role lead to divorce. Data show that one-third of the informants have a severe level of anxiety and depression respectively after they had divorced but nearly fifty per cent are in mild to moderate level of psychological issues including anxiety, stress and depression. Regarding their cultural issues, even normal behaviors act like cumulative frequency also gradually hampers their relationship. The research also shows that the higher the education of female, the higher the rate of divorce case and lower psychosocial impact.

**Keywords:** anxiety, culture, depression, divorce, mental health, stress & society.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Divorce is a legal term defined as the dissolution of marriage. People marry each other after having many consensus and agreements during the time of the marriage process but they decide to end their marriage legally due to various circumstances. Divorce is the dissolution of marital relations; in this process, marriage is completely broken down either in a social or legal context. Divorce is differently perceived in different cultural groups. Therefore, there are various cultural as well as psychological consequences of divorce. This study tries to explore cultural psychological dimensions and the mental health status of divorce among cross-cultural divorcee couples in Kathmandu, Nepal. The concept of divorce is traumatic in the Hindu society because of the cultural interpretation of bad fortune attached to divorced women. Moreover, the family denies cross-cultural marriage. It is the couples themselves who have to initiate and fight for marriage also take responsibility of divorce. Remarriage of divorcee girl considered problematic. The concept and importance of marriage and divorce vary largely from place to place and from community to community.

In Nepal, according to the Nepali Hindu high caste culture, the couples are made in heaven and marriages are the sacred social institution and divorce is still a social taboo (Bennett, 1983). She stresses that divorce is not easy for them to have a regular life as they are judged enormously and their morality is questioned highly shows series of symbolic violence to the divorcees of cross-cultural women as they mostly marry without the consent of the family due to which they normally do not have the support of their family during the process and after divorce. The cases of divorces due to cross-cultural issues have not properly analyzed in Nepal. Due to the legal, cultural and property matters, most of the married couple holds the hand forever even after their bad relation (Thapalia & Subedee, 2006). With time, there is a slight change in the concept of divorce; the current status shows that divorce in Nepal is increasing with increasing women education and empowerment (Thapalia & Subedee, 2006).

The word divorce itself marks a distinct legal presence in the English language as demonstrated by the lexical entry of the word in the Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford, 2021). This defines divorce as an official or legal process to end a marriage. Generally, it is the process where married partners legally separate from their matrimonial relationship. Article published on Lexpertease about the divorce law in Nepal defined the as the

“dissolution of marriage”. By extension, then, to be divorced the two parties must be legally married to each other. This article examines divorce law in Nepal, identifies the grounds for filing for a divorce and details the procedures for filing (Lexpertease, 2020).

Marriage refers to a legal contract and civil status, a religious, and a social practice, all of which vary by legal jurisdiction, religious doctrine, and culture. Marriage, while carrying broader connotations elsewhere across various jurisdictions, has a strictly defined constitutional context in Nepal. In Nepali civil code (2074) a marriage may be legitimized between a man and a woman if

- a) Both have attained twenty years of age; they are not relatives,
- b) Prior matrimonial relationship of both parties does not exist; and
- c) Both agree to accept each other as husband and wife (Civil Code, 2074)

Nepal’s laws contain some provisions regarding divorce in Nepal. The Civil Code 2074, as the governing civil law, has made it possible for both husband and wife to get a divorce. As per the divorce law in Nepal, husband or wife cannot file for a divorce for trivial reasons. The claim for the divorce must fulfill the grounds for divorce that are mentioned in the Civil Code, 2074 otherwise the suit cannot be entertained in the courthouse (Lexpertease, 2020).

Divorce has been a famous word during the past ten years in Nepal. The word meaning of divorce is known as dissolution of marriage and is the process of terminating a marriage or marital union. The types of marriages are different in a different geography. In Nepal, love marriage, arrange, love-arrange (elopement) and court marriage are popular. Love-arrange marriage and elopement are more common in a cross-cultural marriage. This study investigates socio-cultural dimensions of divorce among newly divorced and separated couples of cross-cultural background in Kathmandu. Moreover, this study tries to explore cultural psychological aspects of divorce among cross-cultural divorcee people in Kathmandu.

### **1.1.1 Divorces in Nepal**

Divorce is multidimensional and involves multifactor social events. It can be found in each and every society, which may be either in customary or in legal form. Basically, it occurs easily within a more open and industrial society. It is emerging as a form of new sociological events due to the pattern of socio-cultural changes by the process of modernization and simultaneously urbanization. In our context, it should be sociologically investigated. This study has been an attempt to identify the causes of divorce, which provides sociological insight to further researcher. The pattern of divorce in this study is diverse and it is found in each community even in Hindus, in which marriage is taken for life or it is for after death, therefore divorce and remarriage is not culturally and socially accepted in almost all Hindu dominant Nepalese society where nearly eighty per cent people belong to Hindu religion (Acharya, 1998). Divorce may give pain to someone and joy to the next one after their dissolution of marriage. Acharya has addressed the issues after the divorce people are facing some sort of problem into their life and the list of more than 18 problems is being addressed (Acharya, 1998). After their divorce, if anyone can’t cope with the situation they may go through the issues but what are the issues particularly Nepalese divorcee individual are facing has yet to the matter of study and this research has addressed it. The rate of divorces has been increased according to the district court of the Palpa in Nepal (The Kathmandu Post, 2021) but it has not been identified about the psychological impact of divorce in divorcee couple and cross-cultural issues among the divorcee individual.

### **1.1.2 Cultural Psychology**

Cultural psychology is the study of how cultures reflect and shape the psychological processes of their members. The main tenet of cultural psychology is that mind and culture are inseparable and mutually constitutive, meaning that people are shaped by their culture and their culture is also shaped by them. One of the major proponents of the field, writes, "Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, and transform the human psyche, resulting in less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotion (Shweder, 2003). Therefore, one who grows up in Newari culture has a different view regarding marriage-not only marriage but to see the world differently from the people who grow up in other culture called cross-cultural marriage. Due to cross-cultural marriage, one may face different types of issues such as language, behaviors, food, dress up and the festivals they celebrate in their culture (Ruggles, 1997). From different cultural views, the marriage has been defined differently: their worldview-the perspective that individually developed from birth to now. They see things or behave on the basis of their worldview, have unique qualities and personality due to it.

Some of the cultural issues that have a great impact on their mental health status are socioeconomic class, education, caste/ethnicity, perception and belief respectively. Socioeconomic class is a significant variable in this study. Socioeconomic status supports them to stay strong in a bad situation. Upper-class family doesn’t bother whether someone goes or come into their life but it is a matter of thinking for middle-class family

background; they lost someone who helps to run the family. Similarly, education is described here as a formal academic degree that the person has received from the university or any institution.

In this research, education has played a significant role in the mental health of the divorcee. Education plays a significant role in terms of hope. It gives them hope to do anything; they have the knowledge and can easily survive the situation. In this research, inter-caste marriage is considered a major variable for divorce. Once the divorcee women remarried then the caste of that Brahmin caste will automatically fall down. People in society do not value their interest and desires which leads them towards psychosocial issues. The perception and their beliefs are also major factors which contribute on the mental health of divorcee. Different culture has different belief and perceptions, according to that perception; the way people think and get a sense towards something; they act towards the things and accept the exiting things as a true whether it is real for others or not.

## **1.2 Research problem**

Marriages are socio-cultural treats of love, procreation, reciprocity and support to each other. People are getting so ease to engage in the marital relationship and instant get ready for separation. According to the research conducted by (Bhusal, 2012), education and awareness spread throughout the world about independence and empowerments, independent women are avoiding constraints of their life for the cause of freedom in their life. Different articles on divorce have focused on the causes of divorce (Madara, 2019, Thapalia & Subedee 2006) but this research explored the cross-cultural causes and consequences of divorce in different cultural background. The concept of divorce is not similar in different communities. Gellner (1991) and Nepali (1965) noted that the Newar women did not suffer much after divorce because their permanent husband 'Bel' and sun remained forever with them. It is important to explore cross-cultural differences in mental health status and the impacts of divorce.

According to a multinational study of mental disorders, marriage and divorce, a sample of 18 illnesses were found to increase with divorce with others increasing at a rate of even up to 80 per cent (Akter & Begum, 2012). What is the prevalence of mental health of divorcee individual in Nepal? There are not enough pieces of evidence regarding the mental health status of a divorcee in Nepal that is why it is very important to know that the mental health status including stress, anxiety and depression of divorcee individual in Nepal. The nature of causes differs from men to women. Occupational mobility and the situation of an agreement to the opposite sex, low age at marriage and immaturity, adjustment problems of new wives, traditional and modern expectations between the mother-in-law and sister-in-law are found as causal factors in the present study. Similarly, legal provisions for divorce support such kind spouses who are felt very uneasy to stay together in the family (Acharya & Bennett, 1981). Social consequences are being addressed by the research conducted by Acharya but it had not addressed psychological issues which are very necessary to examine in the present time.

Multiple stakeholders (women activist and police departments) are into it to understand the causal factors for divorce and psychological impact after divorce; however, it is hard to find out enough information regarding bearing the psychological problem after divorce. Most of the research shows that female are more sufferers of divorce (Stewart & Brentano, 2006). Because of less information regarding male psychology after divorce, the researcher has preliminary observation regarding male sufferer after divorce and therefore, interested to explore the psychological impact on both male and female. The District Court Palpa has registered 122 divorce cases in the first six months of the current fiscal year. Among those seeking divorce were 87 women and 35 men (The Kathmandu Post, 2021). It has been identified that the number of cases has been increased this is year but yet to come that what happened to the divorcee individuals after divorce. And what causes divorce actually is still unknown. This research has explored the psychological issues among divorcee individuals of cross-cultural background in Kathmandu valley.

## **1.3 Objective of the study**

Diversity of cultural practice reflects on the variation of mental health status among different cultural background. Documentation and analysis of different mental health status among the divorcee in various cultural groups is the general objective of the study.

### **1.3.1 Specific objective**

- I. To find out the level of stress, anxiety and depression among cross-cultural divorcees.
- II. To identify the cultural issues that contributes to divorce.
- III. To find out the psychological impact among different cultural divorcees.

## **1.4 Rational of the study**

The research explored cross-cultural issues of divorce and mental health status of divorce which is very important points for the counseling intervention in the community. The researcher is a counselor and one of the major responsibilities is to aware people regarding mental health. If it can be addressed during the initial phase it

can be cured immediately but if it leaves unsettle then someone may go into the disorder. This research has worth understanding the mental health problem of a divorcee in detail so that researcher can implement this into her counseling setting. Knowing the issues, the psychological effect due to the incident could be vastly noteworthy for counselor and different stakeholders: once we understand the problem, it can be helpful to sort out a program for their mental health. Upcoming students of psychology may read the story of divorcee individual and can learn something from it. People working with cultural issues and women would benefit from it because they can understand the issues of cross-culture and its impact on human life. The study also contributes methodological uniqueness and practical implementation of findings in counseling field. It indicates further areas of explorations in the field of divorce's mental health status.

### 1.5 Limitations of the study

This study cannot generalize the overall divorce situation of Nepal, because it has been conducted inside Kathmandu valley. The research has limited sample size and purposive sampling, which may not match the data with different sampling method and may not generalize the finding of this research to others. This study has basically focused on depression, anxiety and stress among various psychological impacts after divorce and has not covered other psychological issues. This research is based on primary data and useful for academic purpose but it may not help to find out the solution for divorcee client in counseling. Due to limited time and resources, the findings may not match others. The study has used a mixed method which may not match with other findings.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research design

This research is a mixed method. Quantitative research design has focused on the quantitative data of this research which are measured in terms of quantity such as, how many of the informants have similar or different issues in terms of psychological stress, anxiety and depression respectively. Qualitative research design has focused on the cultural issues among different informants. Individual experiences have given priority to understand the different cultural impact on divorce to answer questions about why and how people behave in the way that they do. It provided in-depth information about human behaviors and cultural practices.

### 2.2 Sampling and sample size

The researcher employed purposive and snowball sampling methods to get informant. The researcher has selected the divorcee respondents purposively. After that, the second and third sample has been selected on the basis of the divorcee individual's information respectively which is called snowball sampling processes. Snowball is good because the total universe or total numbers of divorcee are not identified. The total numbers of participants are 48 different divorcees. Both male and female are included equally, 24 male and 24 female respectively. The units of sample in this research are originally from different parts of Nepal but they are currently living in the Kathmandu valley.

### 2.3 Data collection tools

**A. DASS-21:** It is an instrument that is often used to assess subjective depression, anxiety and stress, developed by Lovibond & Lovibond, (1995). Nepali version of DASS-21 is a comprehensive data collection tool for depression, anxiety and stress measurement in this research DASS-21 item tool support the 3-factorial dimensionality of reliability and validity of 0.82 respectively (Tonsing, 2014). This tool really made researcher easy and fast to understand the depression, anxiety and stress level of the participants. It is a quantitative measure of distress along the 3 axes of depression, anxiety and stress. It is not a categorical measure of clinical diagnoses. The statement that the participants were asked is calculated as per its scoring key; zero to three. 0 did not apply to me at all – NEVER, 1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time – SOMETIMES, 2 Applied to me to a considerable degree- OFTEN, 3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS. Finally, their obtained score is categorized into normal to extremely severe level. Thus the following cut-off scores have been developed for defining mild/moderate/severe/ extremely severe scores for each DASS scale.

*Table 1: DASS scoring key*

Level	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Normal	0-4	0-3	0-7
Mild	5-6	4-5	8-9
Moderate	7-10	6-7	10-12
Severe	11-13	8-9	13-16

Extremely Severe	14+	10+	17+
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Data source: (Tonsing, 2014)

This tool has five categories including normal, mild, moderate, severe and extremely severe. Among the 21 items of the research tool, the score was calculated and categorized into five major categories. It is categorized from zero to 21 item score into different category such as 0-4 score of depression refer that it is in normal condition, 5-6 is mild, 7-10 is moderate, 11-13 means severe and above 14 represents the extremely severe state of depression. Similarly, 0-3 score represents normal anxiety, 4-5 indicates mild, 6-7 is for moderate, 8-9 for severe and above 10 scores represents it is in extremely severe conditions respectively. Meanwhile, 0-7 represents normal stress, 8-9 indicates a mild state, 10-12 means moderate state, 13-16 indicates the severe level and above 17 scores implies that person is in extremely severe conditions.

**B. In-depth interview:** The mental health issues among cross-cultural divorcee and their consequences were collected through the help of in-depth interview. Through the help of a checklist, different questionnaires were asked and their experience was written in a narrative form. This tool generated data required to meet the objective of cross-cultural difference status of stress, depression and anxiety among the divorcee. In depth-interview also explored contexts of marriage and divorces of culturally different couples.

**C. Case study:** The researcher has collected 16 cases studies for the detailed exploration of cross-cultural issues and the psychological impact of cross-cultural issues. From the very beginning of their marriage to divorce, how they were engaged into a rope of marriage and what made them oblige to divorce. It helped to understand in detail the subject in order to know about their psychological impact and cultural issues.

#### **2.4 Data collection procedure**

An instrument that is often used to assess subjective depression, stress and anxiety among patients is the Depression Anxiety Stress-Scale DASS developed by Lovibond & Lovibond, (1995). DASS-21 tool for psychological issues including stress, anxiety and depression and checklist was made for cultural aspects respectively. After finalizing the checklist and survey tool the researcher had gone to collect the data. From February 16 to March 10, 2021, the researcher had worked in the field in order to collect the data. The researcher found out the first case of divorce on the basis of reference, one of the family members provided information about the divorcee and went there to collect data. The researcher made a good rapport with the informants and requested related information with verbal consent. Similarly, the researcher had collected all data from inside Kathmandu valley by using purposive and snowball sampling methods. One researcher had made a good rapport with the divorcee individuals and had a frequent meeting with the informants in order to collect detailed information.

#### **2.5 Data analysis techniques**

The psychological impact of divorce is analyzed on the basis of a valid tool and its scoring key of DASS from normal to extremely severe state whereas the qualitative data interpretation is on the basis of thematic analysis of the content. By calculating the score they obtained through the help of the DASS scale score manual and with the help of excel, the score is tabulated into the data presentation. After the tabulating scores, it has been written into a paragraph to explain and evaluate what fraction of the informants is in which condition. Similarly, the qualitative data are presented in a different way; initially, the researcher has recognized and organized the data while doing fieldwork and immediately those data are gathered and made a note. After the documentation, those data were reviewed and explored in detail about the given information. Later, the researcher has given the code to them and reviewed those codes and combines them into themes. Combined themes are written in a cohesive manner or into a paragraph in order to narrate their stories and experiences. Divorcee couples are unique in nature and face indifferent experience after the divorce which didn't match with anyone else: it was given priority rather than searching for unnecessary similar traits and qualities. Each sample unit has considered as equally valued informants for the research.

#### **2.6 Ethical consideration**

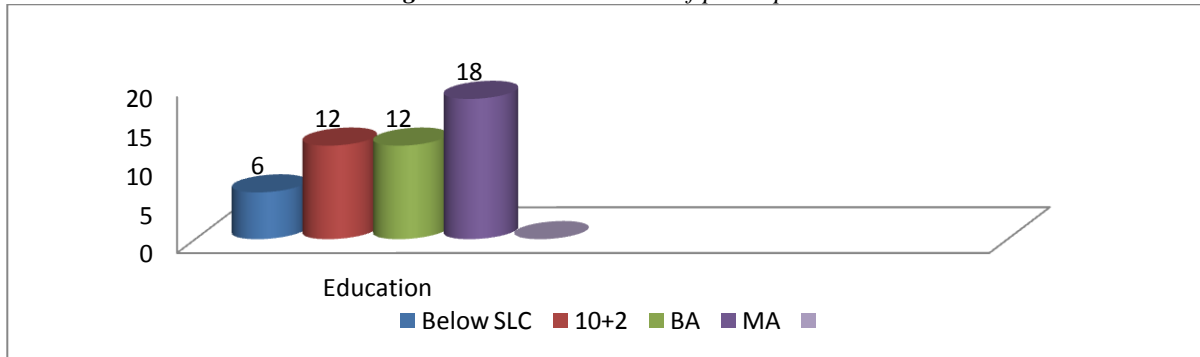
Ethical issues are a major considered element in the research. Each and every informant has the right to reject the data collection process at any time they feel so. Without consent taking from them, the collected data are not legal that is why it is important to take a consent form which is already done. During the consent taking, they are being described the ethical issues and their information. In the consent form, it has clearly mentioned that we don't disclose their name. To save informants, pseudo-names are used. The last thing is researcher had not given any advice to the participants on the same topic because divorce and mental health was a quite personal matter for them.

### III. ANALYSIS OF RESULT

#### 3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

In this research, total numbers of participants are 48; including 24 male and 24 female respectively; have an age range from 27 to 55. Talking about their caste/ethnicity, age, region, they are heterogeneous. Similarly, different participants have, unique interest and their profession belongs to different social classes. It was difficult to indicate their class based on limited information here but their actual class reflected when they told the story of the families.

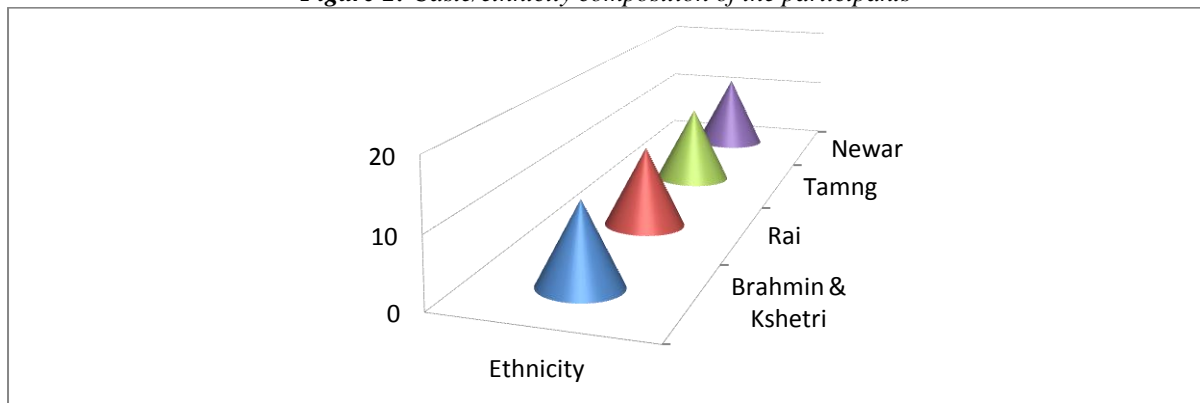
Figure 1: Education status of participants



Data source: Field work (2021)

The education level of the divorcees can be clearly seen from the above graph: 18 of them have pursued M.A and above, 12 of them have pursued B.A, and 12 have also completed plus two and the remaining 6 of them are under S.L.C. Majority of the sample unit have a higher qualification. Based on this graph, depicts that divorce cases are increased among more educated couples. Education is one of the indicators of gender and social empowerment. When people were empowered, they want to enjoy more freedom and more option for livelihood. This could cause of increment of divorce cases among the educated couples.

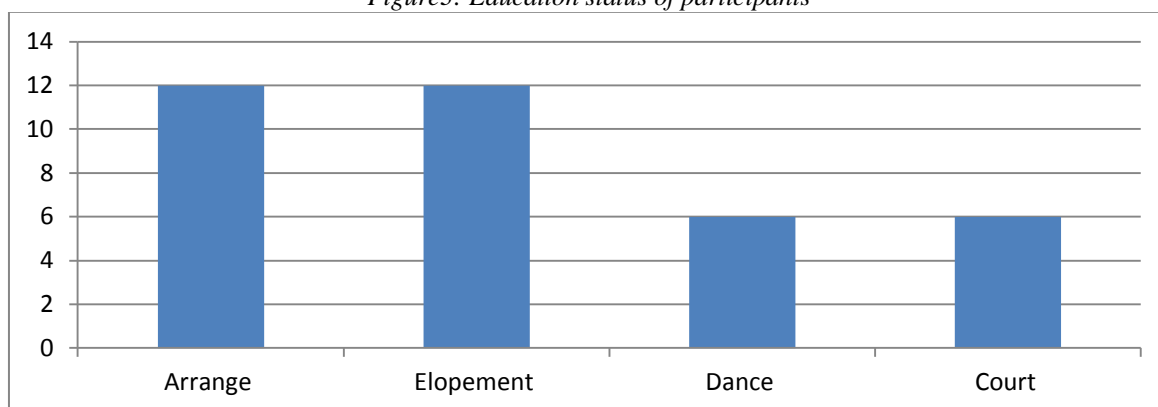
Figure 2: Caste/ethnicity composition of the participants



Data source: Field work (2021)

The figure above shows that divorcee from different caste/ ethnicities. Among the total participants, there were 5 ethnic groups; Brahmin & Kshetri, Newar, Rai and Tamang. Altogether there are 12 Brahmin & Kshetri, 12 Rai, 12 Newar and 12 Tamang respectively.

Figure3: Education status of participants



Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 2 depicts those selected participants in this research on the basis of their marriage type. The number of love, arrange, elopement marriage are similar; 12 and the dance marriage, and Court marriage has equally 6 informants in this research.

### 3.2 Mental health status

The mental health status of divorcee was measured through the DASS scale where the total population was 48 which include 24 male and 24 female from 4 different castes. The tool only measures the depression, anxiety and stress level on the given point values. In total the 21 numbers of questions are being asked in order to find out their psychological status. Those 21 questions are deliberated in the score of 0 to 4 respectively. In this given table from the left, we can see the values- status of stress, anxiety and depression and continuing to the right the measurements that individual scored the point from zero to 4. If they got score of Zero, it presents they have a normal state, 1 represents the mild level, 2 is for moderate, 3 represents that they have the severe condition and 4 means they are in extremely severe conditions respectively.

Table 3: Overall mental health status of participants

Level	Participants in number		
	Anxiety	Stress	Depression
Normal	9	12	9
Mild	6	9	0
Moderate	15	18	24
Severe	18	6	15
Extremely severe	0	3	0
Total number	48	48	48

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 3: shows that in general, after the divorce more than one-third of them have a severe level of anxiety. Nearly one-third of them have normal to a mild level of anxiety. Similarly, the level of stress among divorcee is found normal among one-fourth of the total respondents. More than half of the participants have mild to moderate level and few (6) have a severe level of stress after divorce and only 3 have extremely severe stress. The level of depression among divorcee due to separation situation is half (24 participants of total sample unit) has a moderate level of depression. 9 of them have normal to a mild level of depression but 15 have severe level respectively.

From the table, it can be inferred that the most of participants are having a mild level of psychological stress, anxiety and depression due to divorce in their life. One-third of total divorcee individuals have a severe level of anxiety and depression. However, 3 participants among the total population are under extremely severe stress and almost one-fourth of them are stress-free.

**Table 4: Anxiety level and Caste/ Ethnicity**

Caste/ Ethnicity	Level of anxiety				
	normal level	mild level	moderate level	severe level	extremely severe level
Brahmin& Kshetri	3	0	2	7	0
Rai	4	1	2	5	0
Newar	2		8	2	0
Tamang	0	5	3	4	0
Total	9	6	15	18	

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 4: presents the anxiety level among different caste/ ethnicity. Three divorcee participants Brahmin & Kshetri caste has a normal level of anxiety, whereas, 7 of them have a severe level of anxiety. Similarly, 5 of the Rai participants have a severe level of anxiety and 4 among total have a normal level. In addition, the Tamang also has a severe level of anxiety among one-third of the total participants. However, the Newar caste represents that prevalence of moderate level of anxiety is higher which 8 among 12 is and only two of them have a severe level.

From the above data, it can be inferred that in terms of caste/ ethnicity the level of anxiety is highest among the Brahmin and Kshetri which is 7 participants among 12 of total Brahmin & Kshetri caste. It is more than half of the total Brahmin & Kshetri, but the anxiety level found normal and moderate among the Newar divorcee individual, which is 2 from total (12) participants.

**Table 5: Stress level and Caste/ Ethnicity**

Caste/ Ethnicity	Level of stress				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Brahmin& Kshetri	2	3	2	3	2
Rai	4	1	5	1	1
Newar	4	2	6	0	0
Tamang	2	3	5	2	0
Total	12	9	18	6	3

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 5: presents the stress level among different caste/ ethnicity. Five participants Brahmin & Kshetri caste has severe & extremely severe level of stress. Five of them have normal to a mild level of stress. Similarly, two divorced individuals from Rai and Tamang have a severe level of anxiety, but more than half of them have normal to a mild level of stress. However, none of the Newar has found a severe level of stress.

From the above data, it can be inferred that nearly half of the divorcee individual from Brahmin and Kshetri have severe to extremely severe level of stress, whereas the Newari has again found no severe and extremely severe level of stress.

**Table 6: Depression level and Caste/ Ethnicity**

Caste/ Ethnicity	Level of depression				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Brahmin& Kshetri	1	0	5	7	0
Rai	2	0	5	4	0
Newar	4	0	8	0	0
Tamang	2	0	6	4	0
Total	9	0	24	15	0

Data source: Field work (2021)



Table 6: presents the depression level among different caste/ ethnicity. Seven participants Brahmin & Kshetri caste has a severe level of depression. Similarly, 4 divorcee individual from Rai and Tamang have a severe level of depression, but more than half of them have normal to moderate level of stress. However, none of the Newar has found a severe level of stress.

From the above data, it can be assumed that more than half of the divorcee individual from Brahmin and Kshetri has a severe level of depression, whereas the Rai and Tamang Equally (4/4) found the severe level of depression among total divorcee individual.

**Table 7: Anxiety level and marriage type**

Marriage types	Level of anxiety				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Love	2	0	3	7	
Arrange	3	1	4	4	
Eloped	2	3	4	3	
Dance	1	1	2	2	
Court	1	1	2	2	0
Total	9	6	15	18	0

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 7: represents the anxiety level among the marriage type. On the basis of marriage type, this research has collected data from five different marriage types. Among Love marriage, it has found that seven of them have a severe level of anxiety and 2 are at a normal level. Similarly, among arrange marriage, it has found that 4 of them have a severe level of anxiety and four are in normal to a mild level of anxiety. Among the Eloped marriage, 3 of them have a severe level of anxiety whereas half of them are in normal to a mild level of anxiety. In addition, dance and performance have an equal number of divorcee individual in this research two-third of they are found a severe level of anxiety; 2/ 2 from six sample unit.

From the above data, it can be concluded that level of anxiety is higher in love marriage. Dance and court marriage also found severe among two-third of divorcee individual.

**Table 8: Stress and marriage type**

Marriage types	Level of stress				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Love	3	2	4	2	1
Arrange	3	1	6	2	0
Eloped	4	1	5	1	1
Dance	1	2	3		0
Court	1	3	0	1	1
Total	12	9	18	6	3

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 8: represents that the stress among the marriage types on divorcee individuals. Three among love marriage have a severe and extremely severe level of stress and four of them have a moderate level of stress, whereas, 5 are in normal to mild level. Among arrange marriage divorcee individuals, two of them having a severe level of stress and half of them have a moderate level of stress. Similarly, between the eloped marriage divorcee individuals, only one and one has a severe and extremely severe level of stress, but almost half of them have no stress or they have a normal level. The dance marriage divorcee individuals have found a moderate level of stress among 3 of them and they have not a severe level of stress. However, two-third of the court marriage divorcee individuals has a severe and extremely severe level of stress.

From the above data, it can be inferred that among the dance marriage divorcee individual the stress is at a moderate level, whereas among the love marriage two-third of love marriage individuals have a severe level

of stress, and court marriage also has a greater number of participants who has a severe level of stress respectively.

**Table 9: Depression and marriage type**

Marriage types	Level of depression				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Love	2	0	7	3	0
Arrange	1		4	7	0
Eloped	3		6	3	0
Dance	1		3	2	0
Court	2	0	4	0	
Total	9	0	24	15	0

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 9: represents that the depression among the marriage types on divorcee individuals. Three among love marriage have a severe level of depression and seven of them have a moderate level of depression, whereas, only two have normal to mild level. Among arrange marriage divorcee individuals, 7 of them having a severe level of depression, and one-third of them have a moderate level of depression. Similarly, between the eloped marriages divorcee individuals, one-fourth of them have a severe level of depression, and the rests of them have normal to moderate level of depression. The dance marriage divorcee individuals have found a moderate level of depression among 3 of them and two of them have a severe level of depression. Four among the court marriage divorcee individuals have a moderate level of depression and the rest of two has a normal level of depression.

From the above data, it can be inferred that among the dance marriage divorcee individual the depression level among arranging a marriage is higher than other types of marriage. Meanwhile, a court marriage divorcee has no presence of severe level of depression.

**Table 10: Anxiety and gender**

Gender types	Level of anxiety				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Male	5	4	7	8	0
Female	4	2	8	10	0
Total	9	6	15	18	0

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 10: depicts that the anxiety among male and female. Both male and female participation is an equal number. Among the all-male divorcee individual, one third (8) of them have severe levels of anxiety and 7 of them have a moderate level of anxiety and the rest of them have normal to a mild level of anxiety respectively. Among the female divorcee individuals, the number of participants having severe anxiety is 10. Eight of them are having moderate level and one-fourth (6) of them having normal to a mild level of anxiety. From the data, it can be inferred that females are having somewhat more severe anxiety among the total divorcee individual in this research.

**Table 11: Stress and gender**

Gender types	Level of stress				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Male	5	4	11	3	1
Female	7	5	7	3	2
Total	12	9	18	6	3

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 11: depicts that the stress among male and female. Both male and female participation is an equal number. Among the all-male divorcee individual, 4 of them have severe levels of stress and 11 of them have a moderate level of stress and the rest of them have normal to a mild level of stress respectively. Among the female divorcee individuals, the number of participants having severe stress is 5. Seven of them are having moderate level, but half of them having normal to a mild level of stress.

From the data, it can be inferred that both, male and female are having a somewhat similar level of severe stress among the total divorcee individual in this research.

*Table 12: Depression and gender*

Gender types	Level of depression				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Male	3	0	15	6	0
Female	6	0	9	9	0
Total	9	0	24	15	0

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 12: depicts that the depression among male and female. Both male and female participation is an equal number. Among the all-male divorcee individual, 6 of them have severe levels of depression and 15 of them have a moderate level of depression and the remaining 3 of them have a normal level of depression respectively. Among the female divorcee individuals, the number of participants having severe stress is 9 and again nine of them are having moderate level, but one-fourth of them having normal to a mild level of depression.

From the data, it can be inferred that both, male and female are having a somewhat similar level of severe stress among the total divorcee individual in this research.

*Table 13: Anxiety and education*

Education	Level of anxiety				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Master & above	4	2	8	4	0
Bachelor	2	1	5	4	0
High school (+2)	2	1	2	7	0
SLC and below	1	2		3	
Total	9	6	15	18	0

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 13: depicts that the anxiety among different educational background. The number of master degree holder divorcee individuals having severe anxiety is 4. Among the total participants, nearly half of them are in a moderate level of anxiety and one-third of them having normal to a mild level of anxiety. Similarly, four of 12 participants among bachelor degree have a severe level of anxiety and five of them have a moderate level of anxiety. The rest of them; one-fourth from bachelor degree; have normal to a mild level of anxiety. More than half of the high school divorcee individuals have a severe level of anxiety and one-fourth of them have a normal to a mild level of anxiety respectively. Among the school leaving certificate (SLC) and below education level divorcee individual, half of them having a severe level of anxiety.

From the above data, it can be inferred that the lower the education the severity of the anxiety is higher. The number of participants having a severe level of anxiety is found among the high school level and SLC respectively.

*Table 14: Stress and education*

Education	Level of stress				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Master & above	7	4	6	1	0

Bachelor	3	2	7	0	0
High school (+2)	2	3	4	3	0
SLC and below	0		1	2	3
Total	12	9	18	6	3

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 14: depicts that the stress among different educational background. The number of master degree holder divorcee individuals having severe stress is only one. Among the total participants, more than half of them are in normal to a mild level of stress and one-third of them having a moderate level of stress. Similarly, seven of 12 participants among bachelor degree have a moderate level of stress and five of them have normal to a mild level of stress. One-fourth of the high school divorcee individuals have a severe level of stress. Among the school leaving certificate (SLC) and below education level, divorcee individual, almost all (5) from six of them having a severe and extremely severe level of stress and only one have a moderate level of stress.

From the above data, it can be inferred that the lower the education the severity of the stress is higher. The number of participants having a severe level of stress is found among the high school level and SLC respectively.

**Table 15: Depression and education**

Education	Level of depression				
	Normal level	Mild level	Moderate level	Severe level	Extremely severe level
Master & above	4	0	12	2	0
Bachelor	3	0	7	2	0
High school (+2)	2	0	4	6	0
SLC and below	0	0	1	5	
Total	9	0	24	15	0

Data source: Field work (2021)

Table 15: depicts that the stress among different educational background. The number of master degree holder divorcee individuals having severe depression is just 2. Among the total participants, more than half (12) of them are in a moderate level of depression. Similarly, two of 12 participants among bachelor degree have a severe level of depression and seven of them have a moderate level of depression. Half of the high school divorcee individuals have a severe level of depression. Among the school leaving certificate (SLC) and below education level, divorcee individual, almost all (5) from six of them having a severe level of depression and only one have a moderate level of depression.

From the above data, it can be inferred that the lower the education the severity of the depression is higher. The number of participants having a severe level of depression is found among the high school level and SLC respectively.

### 3.3 Cultural factors in divorce

The data which are personally experienced by the participants of this research is unique in nature. Detail story of the informants is written in narrative form. To explore specific form and varieties of mental health, in-depth cases have been analyzed through the case studies. Personal experiences are vital to understanding the cross-cultural effect of divorce and mental health status among cross-culture divorcee individuals. Divorcee individual who had eloped marriage had a similar impact on their mental health. Eloped marriage is a type of marriage in which a couple get marriages without the consent of their family members. Almost all eloped married couple had not extremely severe mental health issues regarding stress, anxiety and depression but all of them had mild to moderate level of stress, anxiety and depression respectively. Regarding informants personal experiences or cross-cultural practices that they have similarities on family perception while a couple married through eloped; family reject their relationship or unwilling to accept it-Samjhana Paudel. She added that she can live alone without any support from family members because she overcomes the pain of not talking to family members for more than 5 years. Esha Adhikari also had similar experiences regarding the family perception; she added that none of the family members was ready for accepting our (me and my husband) relationship initially and it happened similar at last. Not only these issues were similar to eloped marriage but their family status was also similar; middle class. All of the eloped marriage had the power of

conflict and the money they had was different. The lower class in terms of money had their per-annual income is below 5 lakhs but the higher one had more than 15 lakhs.

It has been found that there is commonness among the male and female participants of the research. Male had a major cause of divorce is joblessness and lack of property. According to the Rizma Khatri Krishna Mohan and David Rai, if they could afford enough money for their wife for household work they don't think that divorce can be their part of life. Similarly in female, all of their voices are similar that if they had enough freedom and no extramarital affairs of their husbands. They argued that they were ready to do everything except extramarital affairs, informants they added; Samjhana Paudel, Mina Rai, Jyoti Shrestha and Esha Adhikari respectively. In addition, there are similarities in education status. The finding is indicating that higher education has higher divorce cases. It can be connected to the study of (Bhusal, 2012) when awareness increased the divorce rate becomes double in Nepal. Education and independence lead the person towards freedom. It made them confident and enhances their abilities to achieve personal goals independently.

## **IV. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **4.1 Summary**

This study is about social and cultural dimensions of divorce and mental health status among cross-cultural communities. This research explores that different socio-cultural background impacts the different degree of psychological impacts among the divorce. The social and cultural values of divorce differ in community and cultural contexts. People who get married may travel in the way of divorce once the wife and husband had repeated misunderstanding and desire to stay separate from each other. They may have issues of self-respect, freedom, class, cultural practices, perception and many more which lead them towards divorce. After having divorce it may not be easy to live because of the emotional attachment they had and many other psychological issues or they may start a new life without any psychological problems. Main research question of the research are: what are the mental health status among cross-cultural group of divorcees? How their culture has been played roles on mental health status? What are the cultural aspects of the divorce that plays an important role in the dissolution of the marriage life, this research has been designed. Divorce may cause psychological problems to some divorcees while others may get relief after it.

To learn about the psychological status of divorcee among cross-culture, the researcher used qualitative dominant mixed methods; qual-quant method. For this research total number of participants is 16. The sample unit is collected through the purposive sampling techniques followed by the snowball sampling method. Depression, anxiety and stress score DASS tool is been used to calculate the psychological status of participant whereas different checklist are used to understand the cross-cultural aspect of the divorce. Simple statistics method is being used to calculate the quantitative data but descriptive and narratives techniques are been used to analyze the subjective experience of participants. This research has analyzed that how divorcee people had been affected and what is the cultural aspect.

One-third of individuals feel bad after divorce while the rest of others seems to be happy after divorce. Research has found out that one-third of the informants have a severe level of anxiety and depression respectively after they had divorced but nearly fifty per cent are in mild to moderate level of psychological issues including anxiety, stress and depression. The cultural aspects such as language, ritual, food habit and festivals are the components which have directly contributed in divorce.

### **4.2 Discussion**

In this research, the researcher's focus is to find out the mental health status among divorcee individual and their cross-cultural practices which contributed them to divorce. This research has discovered that lower economic, jobless and non-professionals are having more psychological issues than the people who are job holder and earning high. A similar study conducted by Booth and his team in 2021 found that below medium family income, no post-high school experience, and wife not in the labour force put divorcing individuals at a disadvantage. Individuals reporting few premarital troubles and beliefs in the immorality of divorce also appear to experience higher stress level after divorce. Rizma Khatri and Mina Rai who are from the lower-class family had experienced extreme stress and severe anxiety respectively.

While examining the mental health status of divorcee individual on the reference of the family type; whether they live in a nuclear family or in joint? It is found that individuals who live in a joint family have more psychological issues than those who are in a nuclear family. A similar study (Toth & Kimmelmeier, 2009) on the cultural impact of divorce on psychology indicates that divorce highlighted that individualistic society prefers to do more divorce and has less impact on the psychology of divorce. The study emphasizes that divorcee individual thinks that it is just a part of their life but people who live in collectivist society have been taken divorce as major challenges which bring people in some sort of psychosocial issues.

Similarly, education and their psychological status are closely connected to each other. As of the total participants in this research, most of them are educated. Most of the informants have a college degree. Only two

of the total participants had School Leaving Certificate (SLC). This research shows that the higher the education level, the higher the chances of divorce. But this finding is contradicted with the study (Boertien & Harkonen, 2014) on education and divorce. It concluded that currently, women from high education have more stable marriage relationship than the less educated person in several societies. Social educational differences in marital satisfaction and barriers to divorce can explain the inverse educational gradient of divorce.

Love, arranged, eloped and dance marriage highly practiced in Nepalese society and their impact after divorce according to its type was measured. Among the 4 major marriage types that are included in this research, the prevalence of love marriage is high. On the basis of their marriage types their psychological status after divorce been measured. It is found that love and arranged marriage has nearly half of the total population. Among them, half of them have the presence of severe level of psychological issues including anxiety, stress and depression which is high in comparison with other marriage types. However, one-third of the love and arranged marriage divorcee individual have a moderate level of such issues.

While examining the psychological status of divorcee among the arranged marriage type, it is found that half of the arranged marriage divorcees are in severe anxiety and one-fourth of them are in severe depression. On the other hand, rest of half of the participants is in mild to moderate level of psychological stress, anxiety and depression respectively. The presence of psychological issues after their divorce among eloped marriage was that 75% are in mild to moderate level of stress, anxiety and depression. 50% of the male participants in this research have normal psychological issues who got divorced from female of different Caste. It means they did not have psychological issues after divorce. Among the total divorcee, half of them are female and while understanding their psychological status; more than fifty per cent of female divorcees are in severe anxiety and depression. Almost all of them have some sort of psychological issues after their divorce.

The data indicates that none from the Brahmin community is in an extremely severe state of anxiety, stress and depression but 50% of them are in severe depression, and one third are in a severe anxiety state respectively. Nearly all of them have some sort of psychological issues and it may increase in the near future if they cannot manage it immediately. Data represents that among the Kshetri divorcee more than one-third of the population is in severe anxiety and one fifth is in severe depression, and extremely severe stress. Half of the male participants in this research have normal psychological issues; it means they are free from psychological issues after divorce. Among the total divorcee individual half of them are female and while understanding their psychological status, more than fifty per cent of female divorcee are in severe anxiety and depression. Rest of female participants has mild to moderate level of psychological issues after their divorce.

Looking into their cultural aspect of divorce is surprising. This study has examined a different aspect of the cultural practices in their home before and after they married each other. They experienced language as a hindrance to communicating with family members due to different mother tongue and in some of the cases, not every member understands the Nepali language well and they only communicate in the mother tongue. So, they failed to express their right emotion in the family.

Social class and food are closely associated with each other. One of the participants Kalpa Nidhi Khadka from Kaski, Pokhara belongs to an upper-class family is an army officer married to a middle-class girl after he was in love with her for 2 years. Finally, they got married. After 3 years of marriage, he divorced her due to various factors including, social, personal and family. He said that during the time of social gathering, most of his relatives and friends asked about her family background which is never matched. Not only outer pressure, but they also had differences inside his family too. He was fond of non-veg food but she was from a pure vegetarian family. She also refused to prepare non-veg food for them and they separated due to difference in food habit.

One of the female informants Ramila Basnet married to the same caste has higher education who was a principal in a school that has different stories than others. According to her, she deserved some respect and freedom from a family which was never taken into consideration. Also, she had a joint family. She decided to file a divorce herself, her cognition determines to live separate from that family where she was married. Now she is living a graceful life.

#### **4.3 Conclusions**

The study explores that the presence of mental health issues among the Brahmin and Chhetri culture is higher prevalent than in other ethnic groups due to their cultural practices. Divorce is not considered a solution for a married couple in Brahmin culture. Especially, Brahmin and Chhetri females who are divorced also get fear not getting a man again to marry. While going through this process, the trauma of the past and uncertainty of the future, they face various mental health issues. But in some other ethnicity, divorce is quite easy and not the subject of big worry, because they feel like they have already married to Bel and Surya and they are forever with them. The mental health issues among the male and female measured through the DASS tool revealed that females are having more than male. It has been found that the difference in cultural practices including,

language, food, festivals, dresses and family role may lead to divorce quickly. The cross-cultural married participants faced issues regarding language, other cultural practices and their belief.

This research indicates that females with higher education are likely to take divorce as a solution and they can manage the psychological issues. Unlike, females from lower education are rarely ready for divorce and they are suffering more from psychological issues too. This shows that divorce may not be similar for everyone. The thoughts, beliefs, socio-economic factor, cultural background and many other multi factors determine the mental health state of divorcees. It can be concluded that cultural issues are dominant factors of divorce. After having divorce, they face psychological issues due to their cultural practices and the severity of psychological problems depends upon ethnicity as well. Once people get married to a different culture or in another castes, they have to counter with cultural conflict which later converts to divorce.

## APPENDICES

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## CASE STUDIES

**1. Rakesh Karki** (Name changed) originally from Dhading lives in a joint family. He is 33 years old. Rakesh had a bachelor's degree in humanities. He got married to a Brahmin girl from a priest family from a neighboring village. It was a quite extravagant marriage with a good number of attendees with a total of 20 lakh expenditure. The girl's family had given some furniture and about 5/6 tola of gold as dowry. He said my wife's family status was well and mine as well. Both families belong to the middle class and follow Hindu culture. My family was happy with our marriage but after 1-year (he remembered the date) family member had a little bit of tussle regarding the way of celebrating festivals. My wife is from Brahmin culture, very traditional and strict rules in the family. We (Rakesh's family) are Kshetri, even though the culture and festivals were similar. But the way of celebration was different. For example, she wanted to perform Puja every morning and evening, taking bath twice a day before puja which my mother found extremely unnecessary and time-consuming. Sometimes she also did not allow my mother to perform Puja because she said that my mother did not follow proper rituals of the puja. and gradually small differences unresolved issues become greater like they started quarrelling and started using different kitchen and Puja room and my family member always complained me about her who created a huge pressure to me to choose her or family. Finally, I decided to live with my family. I asked her to compromise on small things and apologize to my parents, but she did not due to which I did not see us living together happily. I asked her (my wife) about the possible solution, she said to leave my parents and live separately. This statement of her made me think about separating from her and I asked about legal separation. She said it was fine if she gets the amount of money and property she demands. She asked for some 10 Ropani of land near the highway and 15 lakhs cash. When I shared this with my parents, and they said that was fine with them. I convinced her to take initiation as it would be easy to settle the case if it is filed by the wife. It took almost a year to be divorced. I was not happy about this. I also had sleep disorder and anxiety for almost a year after divorce but slowly I am getting better".



2. **Mina Rai** (name changed) from Ramechhap belongs to the Rai community. She is currently working in a department store as a helper. She eloped with her husband in 2073 after 3 years of relationship after they failed to convince their parents as they were from different caste (Rai and Newar). She said, "My family background was poor but my husband had good financial status. My family owned about 4/5 lakhs including the houses, ornaments and other assets; however, in his (my husband) house it was almost 10 million. He was local typical Newars from Manthli, headquarters of Ramechhap district having a lot of lands and big grocery shop. His family was not satisfied with our relationship because they thought that I didn't belong to their caste. Even though my husband's family member was not satisfied he did care and love for years as same as he used to before marriage. After a year of marriage my husband started to drink and started scolding me by telling me my family was poor and my caste was lower, he also said that he regretted marrying me as I don't match his family even after he had known about my family background and economic status of my family before marriage. Before marriage, he (my husband) always used to ask me about my desires and interest which he did not after we married. I and husband had language problem sometimes as his family usually spoke the Newari language. Mostly, his parents used to speak and understand Nepali very rarely and I was not able to communicate in Newari. Menstruation was considered normal; no restriction at all; in my family but in his family it was the strict rule for 3 days as I was not permitted to enter inside kitchen and temple and was not allowed to sleep with my husband for 4 days. Due to these types of differences, I found it very difficult to adjust to that family. After 2 years of marriage, I also found my husband disinterested in me; his behaviour was also different than before. I tolerated it for several months, but he started ignoring me more. He did not communicate properly. I even asked him to point my mistake so I could improve it. He then started saying to me that we were very different people and it was impossible to stay together and pressurized me to divorce. My parents came to his home and negotiate, but they were stuck with their decision to divorce. They verbally and physically abused me, mostly my husband and mother-in-law. After almost 1 and half years of all these problems, I found myself very miserable and helpless and I felt that I did not belong to that house anymore. I thought a lot and consulted with my family. After their full support, I said them I was ready to get divorced. It took almost 6 months to complete the case. I did not want to take any of his property, but my relatives and parents forced me to take it as it was my legal right to do so. I asked for cash instead of land. I got 15 lakh cash and left his house. I suffered from severe anxiety and started medication also. I was afraid to face society because I married against the will of my family and divorced in 2 years. I thought I was worthless, I had no courage to go outside the house but after the continuous support of my mother, I am able to work and I am independent now. My health is also getting better and I have no plans yet to re-marry. I am happy living single."

Based on mentioned stories cultural issues are important factors of pushing the couple to divorce. There were different mental health impact of divorce between male and female. Rakesh was not severely impacted by the divorce but Mina was seriously suffered and became helpless after the divorce.

3. **Ranjita Bhandari** (name changed) aged 34 lives with her daughter in Kathmandu. She said she had 2 Ana land in Kathmandu. She is a Hindu and now teaches in a private school. Regarding her bitter experience about divorce, she said that "we (me and my husband) had a love marriage in 2073 after 5 years of a love affair. We did love marriage because my husband's family was not ready to accept me as I was Jaisi Brahmin. We thought they will be convinced in a short time. As we thought they were convinced and initially everything was going good. Both of our families were happy. My husband was a government teacher of higher secondary level. I also used to teach in a private school before marriage. But as per the decision of my family, I left my job immediately after my marriage. My husband and his father were the head of the family. We (I and husband's family) both families had similar wish regarding the food. One of my elder sisters had a divorce earlier. Both of our family belongs to upper-middle class. The most significant difference between our families was that they were a pure vegetarian family but ours was non-vegetarian. Their family never allowed me to cook meat at home. My mother-in-law often suggested I not eat meat even outside the home. During the time of my pregnancy and even after my delivery I had wanted to eat meat desperately, but his family did not allow it. One day, I called my sister and asked her to bring meat. I was eating chicken in my room locking the door. My mother-in-law somehow knew it and made a huge issue out of it. She told my husband that I was not trustworthy, and she could not accept me as a daughter-in-law anymore. I tried to convince my husband about this, but he did not listen to me. Between these circumstances, I went to my mother's home as a ritual that daughters go to their mother's house after they deliver the baby. I stayed for 2 months. In this period of time, my husband rarely called me. When I returned to my house, I found a very different atmosphere. Nobody ever cared about my coming; I learnt that my husband stayed outside the house mostly during the time I was not there. My mother-in-law said me that he will return home only if I am ready to divorce him. It was very painful and unbelievable. The next day I called my father and went back to my mother's home and talked about everything that happened. They said it would be better to live separate than to live in such an environment. I agreed to divorce. Immediately, my husband filed a divorce and it took almost 5/6 months to settle out the things. I got

almost 25 lakhs cash. I did not feel so bad about my divorce, but I regretted that I got married to such an irresponsible person. I am now happily living with my daughter.

**4. Jyoti Shrestha** (name changed) age 27 belongs to Newar culture. She had a bachelor's degree and works in a school as a counselor. She lives in a nuclear family in Bhaktapur. She has personal assets as a scooter and 1 Tola Gold. She stated that "I had arranged marriage with a guy from Newar. I am Shrestha Newar and he was Maharjan Newar. My married life was going well for the first two years. The entire family member was happy in the first two years of marriage. The festivals were almost similar, and we celebrated in similar ways. I had a minor role in the family because all the family kinds of stuff were ruled by his mother and father. Sometimes we had few misunderstandings and we used to sit together to resolve it but few issues left sometimes unresolved". I think it is due to the immaturity of my husband (she imagined). He (my husband) was not matured enough to think and behave because of our age differences. We (I and my husband) both had similar cultural practices and rituals, both have the same language. Similar practices in menstruation, 4 days of restriction into kitchen and temples in both families. He (my husband) never shared his thought to me regarding different issues and misunderstanding begins when I noticed him into extra affairs with a teenage girl. In a relationship, love and care should be in first priority and if it does not happen then I think the relationship is no more relation". And time has gone, and his feeling was not changed though we tried to establish the connection, it was just impossible to stay in that environments. She said, "My family told me to do divorce and I filed a case for divorce, it took almost a year for that divorce paper to come. I did not claim any of his property because I did not feel it right to take it. I felt depressed and sad for a long time but now I'm living single and happy".

**5. Sarita Tamang** (name changed) aged 29 lives in Lalitpur. She shared that 'She got married at the age of 25 with a similar caste guy without consent of the family. She had cleared plus two-level. She now lives in Lalitpur, she had a property of 6 Ana which almost cost crore and she has a scooter for personal use and 5 Tola Gold. She said that their relationship was satisfactory at the beginning. Her husband was in a leading role in her family they loved to eat simple Nepalese food. She further said, "Regarding family, my family is non-alcoholic and vegetarian but in the boy's family alcohol and the meat was a part of the culture. Everything was going well for the year (she imagined the time)". I tried to convince my family not to buy and drink alcohol because a lot of money was spent on alcohol. Even though we had a property that cost more than a crore, but our income was on the basis of the local grocery. We both had an equal role in the house, but I worked all the time at the grocery he randomly used to go with friends and drink alcohol. Initially, I tried to stop him from going outside and spending money but my all efforts went in vain as he started dishonest to me by saying he had to go out to buy grocery items but it was not true. I thought that he was being irresponsible and untrustworthy. His family was ignorant which was never accepted by me. Slowly I got pissed up by the family behaviour. Our expense was increasing day by day due to the overspending habit of my husband and his family. At the same time, I was pregnant and unable to work hard. As a result, we were not able to run the grocery anymore and the family blamed me for that. They said that I was very unlucky for their family and they started to fall down after my presence in the family. I was shocked to hear this. I tried to control myself and adjust even for my baby. But the family insulted me frequently by using abusive languages. So, I left the family and went to my mother's house and gave birth to the baby. I messaged my husband after filing for divorce. Initially, he said not to do so but slowly he agreed, and we got divorced after 8 months. I did not take any of his property because he was in crisis at that time. I was very unhappy and suffered from anxiety also. But now, I look at my daughter that makes me happy.

**6. Shyam Neupane** (name changed) aged 40 is originally from Dailekh and had a master's level of education. He is a police officer (ASI) who currently works in police headquarters. He got married to a girl from the Tamang community while he was deputed in the Sindhupalchowk district. They (Shyam and his wife) thought it was not possible for them to take permission from their family for marriage because the girl was Tamang and she was Buddhist and the boy was from a typical Brahmin family. So, they got (Shyam and his wife) married without the permission of their parent. After some years, both the families accepted them; he said. Further, he said "Our relation was going smooth for 4 years and we had a child. Due to my profession, I used to be outside the home almost all the time. My family member and wife were not compatible with each other. On different rituals and occasions, my wife did not know how to perform them, her mother-in-law and she used to have fights often verbally. The neighbors also knew about the fight due to which the family was very embarrassed. More than that, my family was vegetarian whereas my wife loved to eat non-veg items. I saw her many times she brought cooked meat in her room and ate but my parents came to know about this too. Because of these types of several incidents, my parents stopped talking to my wife. My wife did not let her baby go nearby to the grandparents and she also accused that of not taking care of her child. Also, she left home without telling anybody and started living in her mother's home. Due to my time and duties, I couldn't handle my family issues and she said she wanted divorce time and again. So, finally, we decided to get separated legally and divorced. I gave her 2/4th of my property as she had taken my daughter too. I felt severe anxiety during the

process and after the divorce too. I visited a psychiatrist in a police hospital and took medicine for 6 months. Now I am quite better, but life is the same as before.

**7. Ramila Basnet** (name changed) aged 37 belongs to the Chhetri community and lives in a single-family in Kathmandu. She has property including land 4 Ana, a car and 4 Tola Gold. She said 'I did arrange marriage 8 years before with a guy of similar caste and had faced divorce 2 years ago. By the time of my marriage, it was a good time, everyone loved me because the boy's family members had gone to my family for a marriage proposal and they were happy initially. We (me and my husband) both families had similar food habit and almost similar eating culture. I had a minor role in the family just like cooking and cleaning. Their (my husband's) family used to believe that they are from rich status and they belonged to the high-class family, but their ideas and the thought were never matched. They pressurized me to be like a high-class family daughter-in-law by wearing proper dress and jewelers even by bringing money from my mother's house. Many times, they pointed out to me about my dress the way I eat and everything which was very disrespectful. They (my husband's family member) had thought that as being a daughter-in-law it was my responsibility to serve and make happy all of my family members. I had got anxiety due to this all. After a year of marriage, I started to work in a school as a teacher which was never accepted by his family. My husband was a government job holder and he also took favour of his parents. Anyway, I continued my job, I did well in my work that is got promoted as a principal which was a very exciting moment. I was more responsible being a principal and I was more engaged in school activities. One day, my husband openly asked me to leave my job. They stopped talking to me. But I was not ready to quit my job. So, I talked to my parents about family problems in detail. They said that it was unbelievable to learn that people treat daughter-in-law in such a way in this generation. They asked me to be cool and decide and they would accept any decision I made. I had no choice; I had to choose between my family and job. I thought I would just be a maid if I quit my job. So, I decided to give up on my family. I started living with my parents and filed for a divorce. They happily accepted the decision. I did not take their property. I was very worried and emotional after the divorce. I was not able to concentrate on anything. I joined yoga and meditation that really helped me to get through stress and anxiety.

**8. Samjhana Paudel** (name changed) aged 27 lives in Kathmandu originally belongs to Dhading. She completed her bachelor's degree and she has a beauty parlor. She has a scooter and one Tola Gold in the name of the property. As an informant, she said "I was studying at bachelor level and was in love with a Khadka boy. We married each other without taking the consent of our family as my family wanted me to get married to a government worker and also, he was Chhetri. My family was not happy because it was against their will and the caste issue. Both of us had a similar interest in having food and travelling out at a weekend not only similarities between our interests but also the rituals and festivals were also similar, and we practised it commonly. My role was minor in the family. I was raised in a good family though I married him by leaving all the aspect of happiness and he never tried to understand it even after I tried to convince him about it. Gradually, we faced an economic crisis and talked to his family about financial problem. Also, their way of talking and behaving with me was unkind and rude. I did not talk to anybody about the family issues I was facing. I stayed 3 years without telling anyone, but I felt that I must share it with someone who could understand me. Gradually I started to contact my family member to talk about the issues that I have been facing. My family responded positively. They repeatedly called me to return home by giving him a divorce. This process went almost a year. I filed a divorce; it took almost a year to complete the process. Finally, we got separated legally. I did not take any of his property and also, I felt a kind of relief from an unhappy marriage regardless of what society said to me.

**9. David Rai** (name changed) age 36 from Kathmandu belongs to a high-class family. He did his MBA from Pokhara University and started a business. He currently lives in a joint family and he did arrange marriage. He shared his experience about his marriage and divorce. He said that 'I got arranged married in 2075. My family was happy with my marriage in the beginning. Elder brother and father had the main role and we (I and wife) used to support them. My family loved to eat Korean food, non-vegetarian and especially pork. Unlike us, she was a pure vegetarian. Not only she did not eat non-vegetarian but also, she never cooked non-vegetarian. We (our family) said her that to cook for us because every day there used to be meat in our kitchen. She started staying outside the kitchen by saying that she won't enter the kitchen if there is non-vegetarian food. She also belonged to a middle-class family while we are elite; we have different cars and houses in Kathmandu worth more than 20 crores, but her family have a maximum of 40 lakhs. After a year of marriage, she started to question us about the practices of our family. We did not have such practice of questioning the head of the family even if they made mistakes. Not only this, she had a problem with my female friends too. She started taking control over me by restricting me to do many things that I loved to do. She neither had an idea about business nor did she help in the kitchen. I was busy with the business all the time. My parents also started complaining about her irresponsibility. All these kinds of stuff contributed to divorce. I talked to her. When did I ask her how it would be possible to live together if she would not enter the kitchen? She simply said that to get divorced and marry the girl that my family wished to have. I talked to my family and they agreed on a divorce. She asked for 1 crore cash instead of cash we gave her a house in Bhaktapur worth the amount she asked for. It

took an almost 6-month process to get divorced. I did not feel bad or upset because we were not emotionally attached.

**10. Kalpa Nidhi Khadka** (name changed) aged 31 is an army officer. He lives in Pokhara. He shared his experience about divorce stating that “I did arrange marriage with the girl of similar caste and family was very happy in the beginning. In my house, we loved to eat Thakali khana set with mutton or any non-veg items. My father is the head of my family. We were living a very happy life for a year. With time, she (my wife) started taking control over me and not respecting me in front of family members. She often asked to live separately which was not possible for me because I was the only son and it was my sole responsibility to take care of them. Being an army officer, I used to get transferred to different parts of the country. She used to ask me to take her wherever I got transferred. It was not possible as there was nobody to look after my parents and my mother was a heart patient as well. Time and again, she threatened me that she would give me a divorce if I did not take her with me. I took her with me to different places. But all the time it was not possible. Once, when I was posted in the far western region, my mother got ill, and I did not get leave. So, I requested her to go home, but she refused to go. Since that date, I felt that she was just a burden to me, not my wife anymore. I talked to my family and her family as well about the problems we were having. She agreed to divorce if I gave her the money she demanded. We did agree on 20 lakh cash. It took almost 6 months for the process. I was very upset and had anxiety too for the first 6 months after divorce but now I feel relief from an unhappy marriage.

**11. Rizma Khatri** (name changed) aged 35 currently lives single. He studied class 9 and he faced 2 divorces. He said ‘I was married at the age of 21 to a Gurung lady after 5 months of the relationship. I used to work as a maid in a house. We were happy at the beginning but the family member where I used to work was not happy because they thought my wife was attentive in work as I was. My wife also started to work at a different place. She used to go to work in the daytime and return back in the afternoon but one day she said me that she had to start the night shift as well. I trusted her and allowed her to go but a few months later while checking her mobile I came to know that she was in love with one of her co-workers. When I asked her about the fact, she said it was true and she needed a divorce. I tried to convince her to stay together and not to divorce. She did not listen to me and she went to court by herself and filed for divorce. I got a call from the court to attend. I had no choice. So, I signed those divorce papers. I was extremely unhappy and, I had anxiety and stress for almost a year after the divorce. I joined yoga and meditation which helped me to get through this pain. After a year and a half of my divorce, I re-married a Magar girl. Everything was fine and this time I had a good job and I was paid well by the company. As my parents were expired when I was young, there was no one in my family. I and my wife were the only members of our family. We enjoyed ourselves together, sometimes by drinking alcohol too. My wife was a housewife, so she used to be at home all day, but still, I used to help her in the kitchen after returning back from work. There were no issues regarding any mistrust. After 3 years of marriage, I thought that going abroad could help us financially so I could make my family happy. I went to Saudi Arabia. We used to talk and chat on Facebook regularly in the first 3 months. But slowly she stopped picking my phone saying that she was busy with some other works. After six months, I heard from my friend that she got married to some other guy and also, I saw her pictures on Facebook. Immediately I came back to Nepal and met her, but she refused to talk to me. She also threatened me to call the police if I follow her. So, I returned helplessly. I was not able to think anything, I was so depressed. Again, some lawyer called me to sign the divorce paper, I went and signed. I decided not to get married again. I am trying to get better but unable to feel completely well.

**12. Esha Adhikari** (name changed) aged 29, has completed grade 12. She is originally from Gorkha. She has eloped with a boy from her class when she was in class 12. She eloped because of their caste difference, she was a Brahmin girl and the boy was Chhetri. She further stated “I did elopement marriage. Both the families were not happy in the beginning but slowly they were convinced. Both of our family (birth and in-laws) belongs to the middle class. Our culture and tradition were almost similar but some of the ways of celebration were different. We had some specific ways of offering god during Dashain, but I found it different in my husband’s house. In the family, I had a minor role in household works. With time, I frequently caught him talking to other girls, many times I ignored but he frequently did it. We started to argue regarding the issues, and he apologized and promised me not to repeat the mistakes again. It happened many times and our relationship was a little bit disturbed due to that issues. Slowly he started to ignore me and said me that his family wanted a Chhetri daughter-in-law. So, he was dating a Chhetri girl with the consent of his family. It was very painful. I was very upset. I even had stress and severe anxiety after I learnt about it. Their family pressurized me to file a divorce otherwise I had to tolerate them for whatever they did. I said them I was ready to face everything but was not ready to divorce. My husband filed a divorce in district court, and I was called from the court for the necessary procedure. Finally, I thought that I would not be treated well and loved in that family even if I stayed. So, I talked to my parents they said it would be okay for them. So, after a year of the process, we legally separated. I did not take any of his property. it took almost a year after divorce to completely heal.

**13. Krishna Mohan Kshetri** (name changed) aged 40 is from Nuwakot. He currently lives in Lalitpur. He studied up to class 8 and works as a security guard in Butwal. He belongs to lower-class family background. About his divorce, he stated that ‘I had a love marriage with a Newar girl from the same community. In the beginning, our relationship was very fantastic everyone was happy with it. We both had similar practices of food culture. Similarly, our family practice of monthly period and the god we worship were similar after few years I lost my job and had lack of money. During this hard time, my wife did not support me. She blamed me that I was incapable of earning money and a very useless person. A few months later I found a job, but her behaviours were not changed. She started to scold me when I came home late due to work and she started to create issues each day about money. She said that she regretted very much marrying me. People In the village also said me that they saw her with a Newar guy in many places. When I asked her about this, she admitted that she was in an affair with that Newar guy. She also apologized. But I could not forgive her. When I consulted with my friends, they said me even males can file for divorce. The very next day after I learnt about this, I went to court and filed for divorce. She was also ready to get divorced. So, after 6 months of process, we legally separated. She got married to that same Newar guy after a month of divorce, but I could not re-marry. I had anxiety and stress for a long time after the divorce, but slowly I am feeling well. She did not take any property with her.

**14. Balchandra Khanal** (name changed) aged 53 is originally from Rupandehi. He is an engineer and currently lives in Kathmandu. He belongs to upper-middle-class family background who has almost 1 crore of property. He had faced a divorce case and while talking to him, he had a different experience regarding divorce; he said ‘I had an arranged marriage; my family member did my marriage with a Newar family background in a different culture. We both families had lots of cultural differences. Our eating practice and the choices of food were different. We got married because of one of our common relatives who suggested that she was a very good girl and I should marry her despite caste differences. Not only these things but also other family practices were different. My family especially my mother chose her first and at the very beginning of my marriage everything was fine, all were happy and satisfied with our relationship. I had a leading role in my family; we both families had a different language, but she used to speak Nepali well. Slowly the issues began. She valued money very much, but I didn’t. so, I started drinking a lot of alcohol to get rid of family problems and enjoyed myself a lot by spending money on all that I earned. She spent a lot of money on clothes and other personal items. I taught her from 12 classes to a master’s degree and every demand was fulfilled. Gradually our relationship was degrading day by day and she was not happy with me. Finally, after many years of marriage, we didn’t have children. She completed her master’s degree. One day, I found a letter she wrote that she was not happy with me and she wanted to divorce. After returning from the office, I tried to convince her she was stuck with her decision. I tried to convince her for months, but I was not able to. So, I thought that it was my fault as well so I should respect her. Finally, we together filed for a divorce. It was finally after 6 months of process. She took a house in Maitidevi with cost approximately 1 crore. I was very depressed at first because I was scared of society. I was also scared about the rejection of certain cultural practices like Guthi and Sharadhya because, in our caste, it is prohibited for the divorcee to participate. He further said that I was also afraid that society would rank me lower in caste if I divorce but slowly I am getting better.

**15. Chakra Rai** (name changed) aged 32 is a head constable in Nepal police. He belongs to a middle-class family. He is from a Christian family. He is originally from Jhapa and currently lives in Kathmandu. He had experienced divorce and while being asked by the researcher, he answered “I had married to a girl belonging to the middle-class family background from the same culture but different religion. Initially, all of the family members were happy. I was fully responsible in my family because of all the responsibilities I bear in the family. Our family was a liberal one and there was no unusual restriction even to daughter-in-law. Due to my workload as a police officer, I was not able to give her (my wife) enough time. She (my wife) repeatedly begged for the time but I never compromised on it and after two years she slowly ignored it. She (my wife) used to say that it’s okay you are working for the country and that is why you don’t have family time she could understand it. After few months what happened to her I don’t know I suddenly heard that she was not at home. She went with someone else even though all demands were fulfilled. And later she called me to attend court for divorce and I did that. She did not ask for any property or cash. I think she got divorced due to different religion we follow. While we were together, she always wanted to celebrate Dashain and Tihar which was not possible in a Christian family. I had stress and anxiety after divorce, but slowly, with work pressure, I forgot about it and started feeling well.

**16. Rima Acharya** (name changed) aged 29 is studying master’s degree. She is currently working as a trainer and she belongs to a middle-class family. She had loved marriage and experienced a divorce which she shared with the researcher. She said “I had a love marriage and at first family member were not satisfied with it gradually they considered it. I’m a Brahmin and he was from the Newar community but we both used to follow the same religion. Both families had similar practices of eating food though the food was not similar. They used to eat buff more which was not okay for me. Everything was fine till our first marriage anniversary but later some issues started due to different thought and ideas about cultural practices. We had some issues regarding the

thoughts and ideas before marriage, but I thought that we can resolve it after the marriage which is almost next to impossible. He always spoke half, never talked about the topic in detail even if talking in phone his communication was unfinished always and never shared thought in detail which I always requested him for sharing. I had just one demand that is to share and speak about the situation. He went outside the valley and stayed contactless. He never shared anything with me; I considered such a thing initially just for giving him the opportunity to communicate. His parents also started commenting on every small thing. it was very difficult for me to learn their culture and follow them. I tried to adjust for 2 years but they did not see it. I talked to my mother and with their suggestion, I filed for divorce. After 9 months of process, we came to an agreement that he would provide me 30 lakhs cash. I was suffering from severe trauma and anxiety almost throughout my marriage life. I visited counselor and psychiatrist too. I am still taking medicine for depression. But I am far better than before.

Nabin Prasad Joshi, et. al. "Mental Health Status of Divorcees from Different Cultural Backgrounds in Kathmandu." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 26(07), 2021, pp. 10-31.