

The Social Reality of Divorce for Women in India

Authors Details

Shriya Awasthi^{1*}

Himachal Pradesh National Law University
BA.LLB 2nd Semester

ABSTRACT: In spite of laws for divorce provided for through the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Special Marriage Act, 1954, divorced women in India face an unjust social burden owing to deep-rooted patriarchal traditions and caste structures along with a lack of adequate institutions. In this regard, the present study attempts at analysing the social stigma faced by divorced women in India from a multidisciplinary sociological perspective, focusing on its history, theoretical background, and current status. With the help of Erving Goffman's theory of 'Spoiled Identity', Amartya Sen's active and passive forms of social exclusion, feminist sociology of patriarchy, and Brahmanical patriarchy proposed by Uma Chakravarti, the author will attempt to prove that the stigma faced by divorced women in India is not a cultural leftover. The paper outlines the ideological sources of stigma against divorced women from the classical Indian texts to colonial Indian personal laws to postcolonial reforms. Further, the paper discusses the manner in which caste and class overlap to highlight the experience of stigma, ways in which it is perpetuated through multiple arenas including those of morality, religion, family, and the legal system, and the way in which stigma is further strengthened psychologically by way of representation in popular culture. The paper also highlights the extent to which divorced women have access to various institutions established for their assistance, such as non-government organizations, One Stop Centres, and shelters homes, as well as the deficiencies of these facilities.

Keywords: *Divorce stigma, Brahmanical hegemony, social exclusion, Goffman, tarnished identity, Hindu Marriage Act, legal and social rehabilitation, caste and gender.*

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is often viewed as a pious social tie between two individuals aiming to create a lifelong institution in Indian society that symbolizes family honour, social stability, and cultural continuity. Yet, responsibility to carry out the marriage falls disproportionately on women, who face intense stigma and social exclusion with the expectation to silently endure marital injustice in the name of family honour and social stability. Despite the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, granting women the right to divorce, India's divorce rate, which stands around 0.01–1 per 1,000 people or roughly 13 divorces per 1,000 marriages, one of the lowest in the world does not aptly reflect the social realities behind divorce in India. Low divorce rate doesn't always mean that marital happiness and devoid of any problems and especially in a country like India, where divorce is such a stigmatized social reality, where most of the times women have to bear the social cost of divorce. This topic becomes relevant to study from a sociological angle. To understand the stigma attached to divorce we need to first delve into the concept of "Stigma". As Erving Goffman theorized, stigma functions as a "spoiled identity" and for divorced women in India, this spoiled identity triggers exclusion across familial, economic, and communal domains, sustained by what Uma Chakravarti calls Brahmanical patriarchy. This paper examines the sociological dimensions of this stigma and its consequences for women's lives.^{[3][2]}

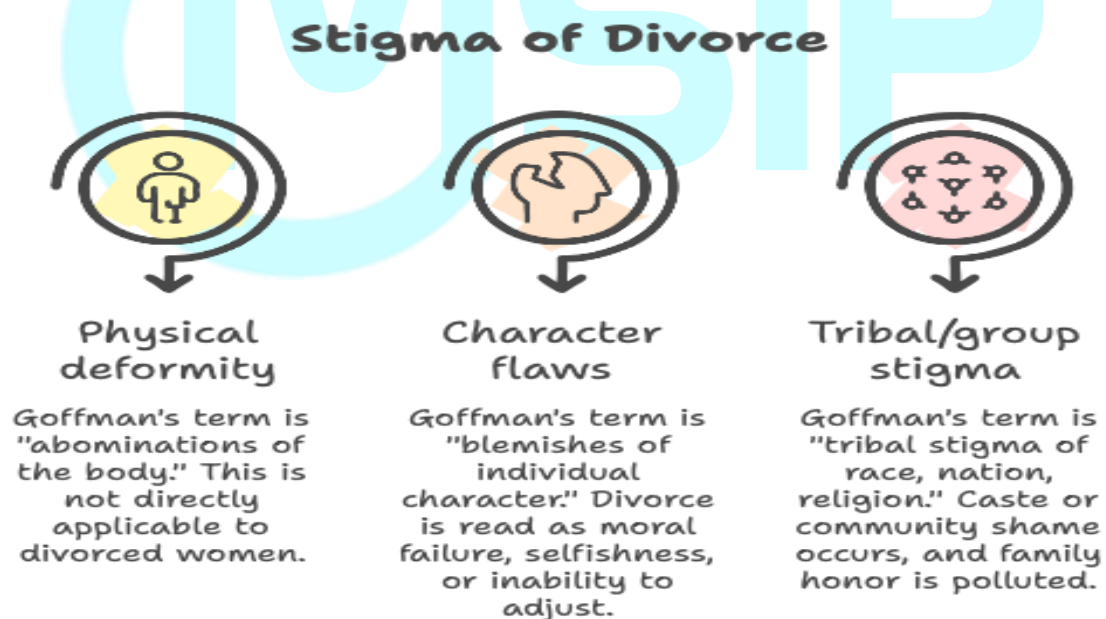
In spite of laws for divorce provided for through the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Special Marriage Act, 1954, divorced women in India face an unjust social burden owing to deep-rooted patriarchal traditions and caste structures along with a lack of adequate institutions. In this regard, the present study attempts at analysing the social stigma faced by divorced women in India from a multidisciplinary sociological perspective, focusing on its history, theoretical background, and current status. With the help of Erving Goffman's theory of 'Spoiled Identity', Amartya Sen's active and passive forms of social exclusion, feminist sociology of patriarchy, and Brahmanical patriarchy proposed by Uma Chakravarti, the author will attempt to prove that the stigma faced by divorced women in India is not a cultural leftover. The paper outlines the ideological sources of stigma against divorced women from the classical Indian texts to colonial Indian personal laws to

postcolonial reforms. Further, the paper discusses the manner in which caste and class overlap to highlight the experience of stigma, ways in which it is perpetuated through multiple arenas including those of morality, religion, family, and the legal system, and the way in which stigma is further strengthened psychologically by way of representation in popular culture. The paper also highlights the extent to which divorced women have access to various institutions established for their assistance, such as non-government organizations, One Stop Centres, and shelters homes, as well as the deficiencies of these facilities.

Goffman's Theory of Stigma -

Erving Goffman in the *Management of Spoiled Identity* ^[1] (1963) defines “stigma” as an attribute that is "deeply discrediting", it reduces someone from a whole person to a "tainted, discounted one."

He postulated three types of stigma:



Made with  Napkin

In India for divorced women, the second and third types overlap powerfully; she can be seen as personally flawed and as bringing shame to her family/caste group. Goffman critically distinguishes between *the discredited* (whose stigma is already visible) and the *discreditable* (who may conceal their stigma). A divorced woman in urban India may

manage a discreditable identity through concealment, omitting her marital history in professional or social arena whereas in rural or small-community settings, the stigma runs deeply in public settings thus discrediting.

Theory of Social Exclusion by Amartya Sen

Amartya Sen contributed to the understanding of social exclusion by theorising the idea of Active Exclusion and Passive Exclusion, wherein active exclusion involves a conscious act to exclude a person from a public setting, it occurs when someone deliberately decides to exclude that person. In context of divorced women, the examples include: ^[4]

1. **Ritual and ceremonies:** In many orthodox societies, a divorced woman is explicitly told that she cannot sit with married women during haldi or puja because she is considered as ashubh (unholy). The elders or the priest deliberately exclude her.
2. **Family gatherings:** When a divorced women returns to her parental home, she may feel unwelcomed by her own family members as they might associate her with shame and an abomination to the family's reputation and she gets excluded from family functions.
3. **Caste Panchayats sanctions:** In several areas, the Khap or caste panchayats actively oppose divorce and hold an orthodox mindset against divorced women often sanctioning social boycotts, excluding them from community spaces sometimes going to extremes ordering to leave village.
4. **Employer discrimination:** A divorced women applying for job especially in domestic help or a conservative working environment she is often viewed as a woman of loose character since she doesn't have a husband delineating her with a wanton behaviour, a typical stereotype associated with such women.

Passive exclusion is less conspicuous and more insidious as no single person needs to intend it. It arises from social institutions, norms and structures that are built around certain assumptions which includes that a women must be a part of male- headed household and when a woman deviates from these assumptions, she often faces exclusion because system decides to exclude her.

Examples of such exclusion:

1. **The housing market:** There is no law in India that says a landlord must rent to a divorced woman and the stereotype is to such extent that many divorced and single women have consistently reported of their inability to find housing in cities due to their marital status. It's not always that the landlords reasoning is hostile sometimes it may be genuine discomfort, worry about "what neighbours will say" as the structure of the rental market is informal and mostly dependent on social trust strengthened by community relationships. Society often charter assassinate a woman so no one explicitly discriminates but the system produces exclusion.
2. **The remarriage market:** Matrimonial system in India is already filled with orthodox thoughts facilitated by family networks, community matchmakers and when it comes to divorces, woman it gets more intense as the groom's family often prefer unmarried women as they see divorced women as a risky or lowered status match, so the collective institution excludes her.
3. **Social networks and informal economies:** India's economic life, including jobs, contracts, land transactions, and dispute resolution often run through informal social networks that are maintained through regular participation in social and community life. Since divorced women are deliberately excluded from such settings, she loses the chance of building that network.

Patriarchy and the Institution of Marriage

From a feminist sociological perspective specifically, focusing on the thoughts given by Sylvia Walby, marriage act as a primary institution which is controlled by the patriarchal will of the society. Women drive social identity, economic security and community involvement through their marital status as all these factors are directly or indirectly dependent on a very significant unit called family, therefore when a relationship ends because of divorce it also strips of women of the social legitimacy that is sanctioned to her in the form of marriage. So the stigma around divorce and divorced women strategically reinforces female dependence on the marital institution.^[5]

Historical and Legal context

The classical Hindu social order gives marriage the sacrament status that was also highlighted in Manu Smriti, which denied women the right to remarry after the death of Oregon separation from their husband. Marriage was considered as one of the sixteen samskars (sacred rites of passage) and was considered irrevocable which clearly showcases how the Hindu social order was against the idea of divorce though there are some regional and caste specific variations. Overall, divorce was either non-existent in formal religious law or only available to men through practices like desertion and nata recognised in some lower caste communities. The concept of irrevocability of marriage was reinforced by the Pativrata Doctrine which believes that the identity of an ideal woman should entirely be dependent on her devotion to her husband. The Manu Smriti (V.154) explicitly states that a woman must worship her husband as a God regardless of his character and by showcasing such devotion she can attend heaven this thinking made husbands as a means of the women's religious salvation and therefore divorce were seen as socially inconvenient and spiritually catastrophic for the women, undermining their religious and social merit. Similarly, the famous verse on female dependence- ^[6] (na stri savtantryam arhati) stipulates that a woman must be under the protection of her father in childhood then her husband in youth and her sons in her old age implying that she can never remain independent.

With the emergence of the reformed legal system came the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, which gave Hindu women the legal right under Section 13 to divorce listing the grounds for such including cruelty, desertion conversion, insanity, leprosy and adultery. However, with the aim to eliminate discrimination and stigma against persons affected by leprosy this ground was removed by the Personal Laws (amendment) Act 2019. The legal right to divorce was extended to all citizens with the advent of the Special Marriage Act 1954. These legislative reforms showcase a significant departure from the customary laws that stigmatised divorce yet these laws have failed to bring a societal transformation with regard to divorce. Irrespective of women having right to divorce she still has to face multiple barriers at distinct levels which includes economic incapacity to access law, lack of awareness about rights also highlighted by the studies done by organizations like ICRW (International Centre for Research on Women) and Majlis Manch that a significant portion of women in rural and urban areas are unaware of their legal rights regarding divorce,

maintainance, dowery recovery and domestic violence. It's the women who have to bear the social cost of divorce in the most ruthless form, including family pressure against divorce as seeking divorce is seen as tarnishing the reputation (izzat) of the family. "Log Kya Kahenge" kind of mentality still persists in many households.^{[9][8][7]}

One critical gap which The Hindu Marriage Act fails to address is that it does not provide any mechanism for the actual social rehabilitation of women even if the legal degree is granted the question remains what happens to a women's social life, community membership, economic standing and psychological wellbeing as the Hindu Marriage Act is a procedural instrument so it only provides mechanism for dissolving a marriage but it stays silent on housing rights of divorced women, employment protections against discrimination based on marital status, psychological support for women going through divorce and children's schooling or social treatment in the aftermath of parental divorce. Though there is a provision under Section 125 of CrPC which provides for legal maintenance to divorced women who are unable to maintain themselves but this provision does not provide a comprehensive social rehabilitation framework and the effectiveness of Section 125 is heavily hampered by low enforcement rates, inadequate quantum of maintenance the conditionality that marriage or improved income terminates maintenance, so it is true that Section 125 addresses the immediate post-divorce crisis of subsistence but it does not provide support for education, re-entry into employment, housing, child care or social integration and such concerns demand a comprehensive welfare programme to ensure genuine rehabilitation of divorced women in Indian society.^[10]

The Historical idea of concentration of divorce power in male hands also gets reflected in Muslim personal law, under codified Muslim personal law the husband retains the unilateral power of talaq though women possess the right to divorce through Khul but it requires husband's consent or judicial intervention through faskh which shows the ostensible nature of women's divorce rights however an indiscriminate provision of triple talaq was declared unconstitutional in the landmark judgment of Sharaya Bano V. Union of India , criminalizing triple talaq under Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019.^{[12][11]}

Different forms of Stigma

- 1. Moral and Sexual Stigma:** The society character assassinate a divorced women often creating a narrative that divorced women are sexually available or considered promiscuous and are blamed for breaking the marriage. The Hindi idiom of “tooti hui aurat” (a broken woman) shows the mentality of society against such divorced women. This moral-sexual stigma materially translates into grave consequences like divorced women facing harassment at public places, unwanted ill intention of male relatives and neighbours along with exclusion from public spaces as such women are seen as a threat to other marriages because of the taboo that such women are impure or may try to lure husbands of others.
- 2. Religious and Ritual Exclusion:** In many Hindi communities, divorced women are proscribed from participating in auspicious ceremonies like weddings, pujas and thread ceremonies, considering such women to be inauspicious (ashubh). This stigma is supported by the concept of stridharma (a woman’s religious duty) which is fulfilled only when she marries. Such a religious system systematically excludes women from social occasions stripping them of the opportunity to gain and maintain social capital which is required to thrive in society.
- 3. Familial and Community Ostracism:** In India women are considered as “Praya Dhan” (something that needs to be get rid of) and when women return to their natal home after divorce some families don’t accept them often rejecting them let alone support their decision of divorce and sometimes also pressurising the women to make a compromise, show tolerance which reduces the status of women to mere object with no dignity of her own. In- laws, in most cases sever all ties and the husband’s family spreads false narratives about the culpability of women to protect their own reputation. Even at panchayat levels women face sanctions and shame leading to allegations of infidelity.
- 4. Stigma of Childlessness versus Custody:** Women who leave without their child often are considered selfish and unfit mothers or called out for abandoning their family duty. One such example is from my recent experience in Punjab and Haryana High Court where during the proceeding of a family matter, the judge was showing biasness

towards male and forcing the mother to keep the child with her by giving the rationale that a husband along with her mother-in-law cannot care for the child implying that she must conform to her marital duties and not be a selfish mother, so even this choice is not devoid of any such stereotypes. In cases where women leave with the child she faces a different set of challenges wherein such women are stigmatized as struggling “single mothers” who need a male figure in her life to provide stability as if she is incapable of nurturing a child alone. The internalized stigma within the judiciary is pretty evident when courts award custody to the father in cases where women are deemed to be economically or socially unsuitable.

How Caste and Class Accentuate the Stigma

Since most of the stigma arises from the ancient texts like Manu Smriti etc. which were primarily composed by upper caste brahmins, so historically by virtue of that upper caste (Brahmin, Rajput, Kayastha, Bania) women had to face more acute stigma as their sexual and marital purity was tied to family honour and the onus fell upon such women to protect the sanctity of marriage. The concept of “izzat” (honour) which ideally should be a collective responsibility of family members irrespective of gender but rather women’s marital behaviour decided the fate of family honour. Upper caste always tried to control the sexual behaviour of women to maintain their own hegemony in society, this idea clearly resonates with sociologists and scholars like Ambedkar, Uma Chakravarti and Gopal Guru who says “ the upper caste women’s body is the site of caste reproduction” as they believed that caste system cannot survive without controlling who women marry, who she have children with and what happens when her husband dies , her sexuality, her marital status is the mechanism through which caste purity is maintained across generations.

Hence, there were different mechanisms through which upper caste Brahmins assured the purity of their lineage which turned into societal stigma and ostracism that women have to overcome even today. Such mechanism included Endogamy- marrying within the caste(jati) , the key insight from Ambedkar’s work “Caste in India: their Mechanism, Genesis and Development” (1916) ^[13] framed endogamy as essence of caste which clearly showcased how women’s body was a mere tool to maintain the purity in lineage for upper caste and to ensure this upper caste girls were married off before puberty before they could explore their sexual attachments and sexuality or choose a lower caste partner , this

was pre-emptive control mechanism used to kill the desire of women just to keep up the caste purity and social order intact. This conservative opinion of the upper caste lucidly gets reflected in the debate over Bal Gangadhar Tilak vs. the reformers^[14] which proposed to raise the age of consent for girls from 10 to 12 years which was heavily resisted by upper caste section of society. But this struggle was not just limited to upper caste women even lower caste Dalit women has to face them to some extent which can be better understood along with the concept of Sanskritization propounded by M.N Srinivas^[15] who defined it as the process by which lower caste group over a period of time adopts the rituals, beliefs, ideologies and lifestyle of upper caste to claim higher ritual status and social mobility. So historically many Dalit and lower caste communities had more gender equal practices, communities like Dalit and Shudras traditionally allowed divorce in the form of community sanctioned separation and “nata” system among Rajasthani communities, “karewa” among Jats all permitted remarriage along with many Dalit women used to work in fields as agricultural labours, artisans which meant more degree of economic freedom that lead to more leverage in family decisions including decisions about marriage and separation but due to percolation of Sanskritization in lower caste communities, Dalit women had to face all the stereotypical practices that upper caste women were subjected to, moreover Dalit women faced more severe impacts of orthodox thinking as their struggles we're not just social but also mingled with caste based socio-economic inequalities. More control over women was exercised by prohibiting widow remarriage, when an upper caste woman's husband died she was forced to choose either permanent widowhood or Sati, a practice of self- immolation on the husband's funeral pyre eliminating the widow's sexuality entirely just to ensure the purity of the lineage. Though in 1850's a significant Bengali social reformer, scholar and humanist – Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) tried to change the picture through several intellectual and political campaigns for widow remarriage, he carefully studied Sanskrit scriptural texts particularly the Parasara smriti and found textual authority for widow remarriage, contradicting the orthodox position on widow remarriage arguing that prohibition was a divine mandate but a later Brahminical imposition and eventually his efforts lead to imposition of the Hindu Widow's remarriage Act, 1856.^[16]

And today the stigma attached with divorce due to caste is accompanied by class differences as the experience of stigma also depends on class of women wherein a woman

belonging to upper class or urban elite possess greater economic independence, more anonymity, has access to therapy and legal support so the stigma exists but it's more manageable for such women whereas a woman who belongs to lower middle class or rural poor is more economically vulnerable making her dependent on extended family and gets mostly exposed to community level stigma enforced through panchayats getting access to very little legal or institutional protection.

What's the Psychological Impact of Divorce on Women?

It is somewhat true that media reflects our society and the media itself is inspired by societal norms so are the Bollywood movies that appeal to the masses. However, there are instances where media propagated the idea of women being weak and vulnerable if she is a single woman or divorced needing a male figure in her life to protect her. The mass Bollywood movies like *Arth* (1982) which carries story of women abandoned by her husband for another woman and the female character experiences emotional suffering, loneliness and social insecurity after suffering but even after that the society expects her to reconcile clearly showing how patriarchal society expects a woman to tolerate unhappy marriages as she can't live independently on her own, portraying her as weak, lonely, socially rejected in another movie named *Pati Patni Aur Woh* (1978) reflects how a patriarchal society expects wife to remain loyal and emotionally independent to her husband while his extra marital behaviour is treated humorously implying that women should adjust and preserve the marriage at all costs indirectly discarding the idea of divorce. However not all movies showcased such kind of stigma but there are movies that gave positive and empowered representation challenging the entrenched stigma in society, movies like *Thappad* where female protagonist chooses divorce after emotional and physical disrespect the film sensitively questions the societal pressure to "adjust" in marriage supporting the idea that women should not be afraid to choose her dignity and individual rights over societal pressure that tells her that tolerance is her duty in marriage.

Institutional Supports That women can Access

NGOs like SEWA, Majlis, iCall and iCare support women by providing legal aid, counselling and economic rehabilitation to divorced women. Data shows that SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) holds membership of about 3.78 million poor women

workers across 20 states in India empowering them through training and skilling. Majlis Legal centre, Mumbai established in 1991 provided legal services to more than 50, 000 women. The Stop centre (Sakhi Centres) run under the Ministry of Women and Child Development approved 733 centres across 35 states and Union Territories, 704 are operational and about 6, 99, 405 women received assistance up to March 31, 2023. OSC scheme is a sub theme of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women and supports all women including girls below 18 years affected by violence, irrespective of caste , class, religion, sexual orientation or marital status, which is a very progressive step towards women's protection, Other such support system provided by Nan Adalat's (woman's courts) in some states provide community based dispute resolution and according to Research on Nari Adalat's it was found that it handles over 6, 000 cases in Gujrat alone in 2009-10, Achieving increased community awareness and documented decreases in domestic violence instances, The Nari Adalat programme was formally introduced in 2023 as a subtheme of Sambhal under mission Shakti by the Ministry of Women and Child Development with the aim to provide alternative dispute resolution mechanism at gram panchayat level and according to current reporting's 50 gram panchayat are running this scheme in Assam and Jammu Kashmir, Divorced women sometimes face loss of accommodation due to her Economic dependence on her husband leaving her vulnerable to exploitation and this gap is addressed by shelter homes such as Swadhar Grih\Shakti Sadan (DV Act), The Swadhar Griha scheme and Ujwala scheme were merged into Shakti Sadan that provided integrated relief and rehabilitation home as of 2021-2022 the occupancy of Swadhar Grihs stands at 76.2% at all India level that shows the gravity of rehabilitation problems that divorced women grapple with But there lies a devastating gap as reported by a study carried by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) which estimated that 1,667 more Swadhar Griha with 30- bed capacity each are required to accommodate the real demand that reveals how the current system is not suffice to provide shelter for women, also s critical lacune was reported by the study that the states like Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradosh, Maharashtra and Odisha were underutilising the funds under this scheme.^{[22][21][20][19][18][17]}

CONCLUSION

The problem of stigma associated with divorced women in India should not be seen as something outdated which will be corrected by modernization. According to the findings of this study, relying on Goffman, Sen, Walby, Chakravarti, Ambedkar, and Srinivas, the system is architecturally ingrained – part of religious belief, caste regeneration, law, and judicial processes. It is no coincidence that India continues to have one of the lowest rates of divorces in the world; the structure of society ensures that leaving one's marriage is prohibitively expensive, especially for women.

Legislation, starting from the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 until the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019, officially recognizes the issue of marital injustice as a social evil. However, legislation alone cannot remove the stigma because it operates in an informal market of social relationships, communal reputation, and caste purity. The lack of provisions in the Hindu Marriage Act concerning housing, job security, and psychological counselling should not be seen as an oversight on the part of lawmakers; the Indian state is ready to terminate marriages but is not interested in undoing their social repercussions. A woman who can exist but does not have shelter, work, or contact with her children without bearing the stain of judicial scrutiny is certainly not one who has been successfully rehabilitated – she simply exists on the fringes of society.

It is clear that the caste-class framework shows how universal solutions to stigmatization fail. As Ambedkar recognized when referring to endogamy as the “essence” of caste relations, women's bodies represent a key element of perpetuating caste identity. Women who break off marital ties disrupt the caste system of lineage – a disruption for which they will surely be punished. The process of Sanskritization that Srinivas describes, by which lower castes take up the upper caste patriarchy, means that historically egalitarian institutions like the nata system decline. However, the institutional infrastructure, such as One Stop Centres, Swadhar Griha, Nari Adalats, etc., is indeed an attempt at providing support, but it is clearly inadequate. The fact that there is still a need for another 1,667 Swadhar Griha establishments just to provide for the existing demand, along with underspending in major states, shows that the gap between what has been envisaged and the ground realities of the situation is much larger than we have been willing to believe.

Underspensing on initiatives aimed at helping vulnerable sections can only serve to perpetuate the dependency, which makes marriage even more damaging than divorce.

However, the ultimate solution lies in treating divorce itself as an act of personal freedom that is guaranteed under Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Constitution of India. The right to dignity, as interpreted in *Francis Coralie Mullin v. Union Territory of Delhi*, does not end at the matrimonial house but extends to the society that a divorced woman has left behind. Until and unless divorce is viewed in this light, as something that needs to be supported, the legal right to divorce remains just a right in paper.[24][23] The change that is needed is not only legal but also epistemological, necessitating an entirely different arrangement of assigning dignity and social belonging to women irrespective of their marital state.

REFERENCES

1. Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Prentice-Hall, 1963)
2. ORF, 'India's Low Divorce Rate and What It Hides' (Observer Research Foundation)
3. Uma Chakravarti, 'Conceptualising Brahmanical Patriarchy in Early India' (1993) 28(14) *Economic and Political Weekly* 579
4. Amartya Sen, *Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny* (Asian Development Bank, 2000)
5. Sylvia Walby, *Theorising Patriarchy* (Blackwell, 1990)
6. Manu Smriti (trans. G. Buhler), *The Laws of Manu* (Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 25, 1886)
7. Hindu Marriage Act 1955, s 13 (India Code)
8. Personal Laws (Amendment) Act 2019 (Act 6 of 2019)
9. International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), *Property Ownership and Inheritance Rights of Women for Social Protection* (ICRW, 2006)
10. Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, s 125 (Indian Kanoon)

11. Shayara Bano v Union of India (2017) 9 SCC 1
12. Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019 (Act 20 of 2019)
13. BR Ambedkar, 'Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development' (1916) (Columbia University)
14. Meera Kosambi, 'Girl-Brides and Socio-Legal Change: Age of Consent Bill Controversy' (1991) 26(31/32) Economic and Political Weekly 1857
15. MN Srinivas, 'A Note on Sanskritization and Westernization' (1956) 15(4) Far Eastern Quarterly 481
16. Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act 1856 (Indian Kanoun)
17. Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), About Us (sewa.org)
18. Majlis Law, About Majlis (majlislaw.com)
19. Ministry of Women and Child Development, One Stop Centre Scheme (wcd.nic.in)
20. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Mission Shakti (wcd.nic.in)
21. Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), Budget Analysis of Welfare Schemes for Women 2021-22 (cbgaindia.org)
22. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Swadhar Greh Scheme (wcd.nic.in)
23. Francis Coralie Mullin v Administrator, Union Territory of Delhi (1981) 1 SCC 608
24. Constitution of India 1950, Arts 14, 15, 21 (India Code)