THE PHENOMENON OF DIVORCE IN THE SOCIETY...
CAUSES AND SOCIAL IMPACT

2009
Executive Summary:

Divorce is one of the social phenomena that no human society is devoid of, because of its close association and intricate ties with social relations between individuals and groups. Such relations are governed by various internal and external influential factors and determinants.

The society may accept divorce when all the endeavors and efforts fail to overcome causal factors. The high divorce rates, simply turned divorce from a social phenomenon to a social problem, which does not only cast shadows on the social reality, but affects the cohesion of individuals and groups and overshadows the economic-political system as they affect the social order.

Several studies have shown that the escalations in divorce rates were taken of concern to decision makers. There is a need for more in-depth studies to determine risk factors for divorce, in order to analyze and find solutions, and help reduce the rate of divorce.

This study lays emphasis on the phenomenon of divorce in the society, and the focuses on the factors viewed by many as causes of divorce in UAE in general, and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi particular. The study concluded with findings and recommendations.

Findings:

1. Lack of accurate and updated data concerning divorce, as well as the variation sources and difference in data, which makes it difficult to arrive at valid indicators and results in the statistical analysis of these data. The establishment of the Statistics Center – Abu Dhabi may help to improve this situation. In fact this
study does not depend totally on that and data, however, it is used as supplements to the study.

2. The decline in the percentage of married male and female citizens declined, especially among the active age groups (15-39 years old), while the percentage of married female citizens in the same age group had significantly increased compared male citizens. This was due to the ease of marriage of citizens to foreign women for many reasons. This applies to urban and rural areas as well in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

3. The percentage of spinster female and single male citizens increased over the past decades, especially among the age groups (15/49). This applies to all areas of the emirate with the note the high rates of spinsterhood and bachelorhood on the percentage of citizens in all active age groups.

4. The number of unmarried citizens of marriageable age (15 years and over), is about twice the number of citizens who are elder by one category of age, that is, (22 years and over).

5. The number educated unmarried female citizens with college or higher degrees, who constitute part of the working force markedly increased from 8.8% in 1995 to reach annual rates of over 13.2%.

6. Statistics indicate that the number of unmarried female citizens are expected to arrive in 2010 at 76,630 spinsters, and that the number of citizens who are one age category older, that is the age group (20/49), is expected reach 54,830 bachelors, rising in males and females.

**Recommendations:**

1. Take advantage of the final results of the population census (2008/2009) to conduct a comprehensive analytical (field study) on the phenomenon of divorce in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, in cooperation with the UAE University or a scientific research center to help stop the of high drain of divorce in the Emirate.
2. Coordination with the Marriage Fund, to determine the factors of low marriage rate and high rate of spinsterhood and celibacy among male and female citizens in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and the Fund's role in maintaining family stability.

3. Whereas, the high divorce rates affect the demographic structure, it may be useful to coordinate with the "Permanent National Committee for Demographic Structure" to take necessary measures to ensure the stability of the family and society.

4. In the light of the inconsistency in data and statistics pertaining to the phenomenon of divorce, the study recommends that information and data sources should be unified and identified as references. The Statistics Centre- Abu Dhabi may take a leading role in dealing with this issue.

5. It is important that all parties concerned shall intensify awareness-raising programs and family counseling; and make the most benefit out of mosques and mass media to contribute to these programs, especially in social occasions, such as Mother's Day or Gulf Family Day, and other national events.

6. The need to conduct an in-depth field study on the phenomenon of divorce in the community of Abu Dhabi, in cooperation with the Family Development Foundation, or the General Women's Union.

7. Stressing the role of the community to contain the phenomenon of divorce through public awareness of the importance of cohesion and family stability, and the role of marriage in the family-building and community cohesion.

8. Strengthening partnership between concerned government agencies, and the associations UAE NGOs to carry out campaigns to raise awareness of families, using media, radio, and television to serve these goals.

9. Establishment of a center to "build capacity" of divorced women and encourage them to work productively to overcome dependence on the social assistance.

10. Organizing workshops in cooperation with the “Marriage Fund” to discuss the economic and social impacts of the phenomenon of divorce on the community of Abu Dhabi.