Running Head: PARENTAL NEGLECT AND CHILDREN'S WELLBEING

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

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DIVORCE, PARENTAL NEGLECT AND CHILDREN'S WELLBEING: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ABCX FAMILY STRESS ADAPTATION MODEL, THE EXPERIENCE OF CUSTODIAL FAMILY IN ADDIS ABABA

BY

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A Thesis Submitted to School of Graduate Studies, School of social science and humanities, St. Mary's University for Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of Master of Art in Social Work

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ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

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St Mary's University, Addis Ababa

DECLARATION

I, the under signed, declare that this thesis is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Habtamu Mekonnen (PHD), my thesis advisor. All sources of materials used for the thesis have been properly acknowledged, I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

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Meselu Mulugeta   Signature & Date
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Abstract

Family functioning is affected and caused by the stress and the resulting crisis from divorce. The phenomenon of divorce is increasing in Ethiopia yet little is known about how divorce and the subsequent parental child neglect affect children's wellbeing. This study aimed to explore the experiences of divorce, appraisal, resources to adjust the crisis and children's wellbeing. To achieve this objective a qualitative design was followed with the lens of phenomenological approach. The Double ABCX Family Stress adaptation model employed to guide the study. Seven families as participants were purposefully selected. Interview and documents were the main sources of data collection. Data were analyzed from pre-crisis to post-crisis level of family functioning through Thematic Analysis.

Findings at a pre-crisis level revealed: Religious orientation, sex orientation, violence, difficult personality and infidelity, conflict over inheritance, low commitment were found factors of pre-crisis family disfunctioning. Post-crisis level of data analysis also showed that religion and support from extended families as resources while they had negative feeling, avoidance, hope and optimism, positive regret, self-reliance among experiences reflected by families. There were also manifestations of maladaptation and bon adaptation to divorce by families and to protect the wellbeing of children families hide information and were overprotective. Hence, wider community awareness and family education programs at the all levels of social work intervention could promote reduction of divorce, which indirectly contribute to the minimization of the impact on children.

Overall, families in this study employed various coping and problem-solving strategies to overcome the adversity of divorce and adapt to the changes in their family structure and relationships.

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Divorce literally is dissolution of marriage. It is the process of terminating a marriage or marital union. It entails the canceling or reorganizing of the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage, thus dissolving the bonds of matrimony between a married couple under the rule of law of the particular country or state (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018).

Divorce has become a frequent phenomenon in today's community and it represents a major life stressor for the individuals involved, with potentially strong negative consequences for the mental and physical health of all the members of the family. Divorce and life in a one-parent family are becoming increasingly common experiences in the lives of parents and children. It can be difficult to cope with the breakdown of a family, through separation or divorce. How people deal with a separation or divorce is different for each person, and there is no right or wrong way of dealing with it. However, it is helpful to understand how divorce can affect the people within a family (Jacobson, 1978).

The effects associated with divorce affect the couple's and their children in both short and long term. The parental divorce brings with it many changes often experience effects including, decreased levels of happiness, change in economic status, and emotional problems. The effects on children include academic, behavioral, and psychological problems. Studies suggest that children from divorced families are more likely to exhibit such behavioral issues than those from non-divorced families. The impact of divorce on child wellbeing particularly has been the subject of research for several decades, and has long been viewed as the cause of a range of serious and enduring behavioral and emotional problems in children (Kelly and Emery, 2003). Parents used to stay longer in marriage for the interest of their children's welfare even if they faced marital problems. Yet so many couples decided to end up their marriage and become single parents (Gardner 2008). Divorce affects everyone in the family but the consequence is much more severe to children as they have low mental and physical maturity. Parental neglect is one of the several consequences of divorce (Amato, 2001).

Parental Neglect –as described in English Law Dictionary (2020) is a crime consisting of acts or omissions of a parent (including a stepparent, adoptive parent, or someone who, in practical terms, serves in a parent's role) which endangers the welfare of a child or fails to take steps necessary to the proper raising of a child. The neglect can include leaving a child alone when he or she needs protection, failure to provide food, clothing, medical attention, or education to a child, or placing the child in dangerous or harmful circumstances, including exposing the child to a violent, abusive, or sexually predatory person. Parental neglect happens when parents are not paying a lot of attention or care to their children for some reason. Maybe they are just busy with work or parents and their children aren't particularly emotionally close, or perhaps they are just obsessed with their own daily routines and hence, their children are not the highest priority to them (The Legal dictionary, 2020).

The Federal Supreme Court of Ethiopia shared on its Facebook page state that in Addis Ababa and in the country as well, divorce rate has shown a significant jump over the past few years. A data from Lideta Federal First Instance Court revealed that between 7 September 2012 - 8 June 2014 alone 16,035 pairs had ended up in divorce. Likewise, Addis Ababa City Vital Events Registration Office showed that out of the 51,721 officially registered marriages 3,550 of them had ended up in divorce, not to mention the unregistered divorces happening at every corner of the Capital. That is a staggering divorce rate for a country, where traditional mediation rather than family courts matter most to help disgruntled spouses to keep their marriage alive, no matter what goes inside their homes (Lideta Federal First Instance Court, 2014).

As is common in Ethiopia, beyond the lavish wedding ceremony the initiative to provide pre and post marital consultancy, including finance and property management to help the wedded couple stay wedded. "Hence, there is no joint ownership or management of finances as such. The men tend to conceal finances and property, and as long as they cover the expenses of groceries the rest is the attitude of men on the women side is very much embedded," says Fekadu Bekele, Legal advisor and attorney. "There is also the case of concealing children born before marriage or of extramarital affairs on both sides." In general, divorce is higher among the Christians than among the Muslims. If there is to be divorce among the Muslim, they tend to prefer the 'Sharia Law' to settle it, according to him, "even though once in marriage they are committed, it is usually the women, who are forced to initiate the divorce" (Afome, 2015).

Children's wellbeing can be broadly categorized as having two main aspects. The subjective aspects include things such as how the children are feeling about their life and how happy and emotionally stable they are. The objective aspects include factors that affect for example, health, housing, poverty, social capital and education (Amato & Keith, 1991). Despite the existence of an extensive literature in the developed nation, finding research on children's subjective and objective wellbeing because of parental neglect resulted from divorce to the knowledge of the researcher is very little in the Ethiopian context. This study therefore focused on children's wellbeing as to how children cope and adjust life stressors from parental neglect and how divorce related consequences affect children's wellbeing. The study looked at custodial parent and children's lived experiences from phenomenological perspectives using the family stress adaptation framework (Amato & Keith, 1991).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Each family member is connected shaped and affected by the family system. Family members need the fulfillment of basic needs such as acceptance, achievement, and affection. The lack of the fulfillment of these needs might endanger the family members over all functioning. Fulfilling family's basic needs can be affected in different ways, for instance, by the occurrence of stressor event like divorce. This is because individuals are part of the family system and a stressor that affects an individual would affect the family system. Family's response to the stressor events is also different from family to family. Some families transform the stressor of divorce easily and able to maintain family equilibrium, while others experience a lack of understanding to the stressor event and face major crisis, which in turn, disrupts the family equilibrium. Parental neglect and Children's wellbeing are at the center of every crisis upon divorce (Sun & Li, 2002).

Different researchers have found that family structure is strongly associated with children's well-being, (Björklund et al. 2007; Breivik & Olweus 2006; Jonsson & Gähler 1997; and Steele et al. 2009). According to Låftman it was found children living with single mothers had fewer material resources, less parental support, and poorer health than those living with two parents which implies that children whose parents experienced divorce could have strong negative consequences in their wellbeing concluded that children's well-being is more elastic and responsive to parents' marital disruption (Låftman, 2010).

Hence, one can say children's wellbeing is a substantial part of family's responsibility. In Ethiopia irrespective of the nature of the family unit, women dominantly have been taken much of responsibilities to take care of their children, though in recent years fathers have started to share the responsibility in taking care of their children. This study has taken into account the impact of divorce and the consequences of parental neglect and loss of emotional and physical attachments of parents (Afome, 2015).

A recent report from The Federal Vital Events Registration Agency has reported (2019), in the last ten months in the capital city of Addis Ababa among 13,419 marriages, 1,020 has ended up in divorce, which is from 150% marriages to 96.6% divorces when estimated in percent. Even though divorce is not a new phenomenon in developed countries, it is becoming a trend in developing countries like Ethiopia, which needs concerted effort and attention. Some of the factors for divorce to happen are economic problems, childbearing issues, pressure or intervention from friends and family members and differences in ethnic and religious background of the couples among others. "The fact that the absence of well skilled marriage counseling services in the country has made the situation worse," says Sister Hannan Jafar a psychologist and a relationship and marriage counselor (The Federal Vital Events Registration Agency, 2019).

There are many studies about divorce in Ethiopia but to the knowledge of the researcher much studies were exploring and applying the Family Stress adaptation model for the phenomena of divorce. This study is different from researches done so far because it doesn't focus on study of magnitude, prevalence, cause and effect of divorce which are dominant focus of the previous studies. Therefore, this study was aimed to carry out an in-depth study in identifying factors contributing to the successful adaptation of families and children. As a result, children's wellbeing is an important concern of family's responsibility in the society.

There are many different approaches to family adaptation. Some studies seem to have merely described functional characteristics of children who demonstrate pliability (Sprenkle & Cyrus, 1983). Other studies have looked to the temperament of the child and characteristics of the environment to find predictors of later flexibility. In both cases, the variables identified as associated with resilience have not converged to form a parsimonious and powerful prediction. Perhaps it is possible that temperament, development, situation, and the nature of the stressors

must be accounted for in an effective model of family adaptation (Buehler, Hogan, Robinson & Levy, 1985).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to explore Family Stress Adaptation Model on divorce, parental neglect and children wellbeing.

In line with this general objective, the following specific objectives were formulated:

1. To analyze family appraisal of the stressors and mediating resources upon divorce at pre-crisis level.
2. To investigate how families cope with and adapt the stressors and demands upon divorce at post-crisis level
3. To explore the extent of parental neglect and its effect on children's wellbeing and how children adjust to the crisis.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the aforementioned facts and to the awareness of some of the gaps in family divorce studies, this study will provide an opportunity for the voices of families that have experienced divorce to be heard and heeded. To this end, the following main research questions were formulated in line with McCubbin and Patterson (1983) Family Stress Adaptation Model.

The research questions are:

1. How do families appraise the stressors and mediating resources upon divorce at pre-crisis level?
2. How do families cope with and adapt the stressors and demands upon divorce at Post-crisis level?
3. To what extent parental neglect affects children's wellbeing and how does children adjust to the crisis?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Family researchers are calling more research to develop theoretical frameworks to provide supporting evidences to understand the multifaceted nature of divorce and the consequences of parental neglect. This study is one of those attempts. The research explored the pileup of stressors because of divorce and parental neglect that affects the child wellbeing, a topic that has not been explored that much in the Ethiopian context. The significance of the findings would be specific to divorced participants and their children. However, lessons from this study can be implied to provide an insight to people who experienced divorce, parental neglect and children wellbeing. Thus, the current study may have significance that would give an insight for divorced families to make thoughtful decisions about their lives, which eventually may increase the chances of reducing the impact of parental neglect on children. It may also facilitate knowledge-based treatment of the neglected children, which eventually would decrease maladaptation. Moreover creating greater awareness within the society about the effect of divorce on all the family members may influence researchers/institutions in order to integrate family research with social work research and practice. Furthermore, it will give an insight for similar researchers, contributing in sorting out gaps in research and practice regarding family functioning. All in all lessons gained from this study can be used by counseling professionals to facilitate family adaptation and children wellbeing.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Although divorce has many dimensions, this study mainly focused on divorce and the subsequent effect of parental neglect on children's wellbeing. There are many theories that could be used to study divorce, this study however employed Family stress adaptation model mainly because its focus is dealing on family crisis, which is more relevant to the current study. The researcher assumed divorce does not only affect a family but it is also a societal crisis. Particularly divorce affects the emotional connection between family members, their mood, wellbeing, as well as the maintenance of the family relationship between parents and their children. In fact, it was initially a mixed research design, which was later, changed into qualitative with the consultation of the advisor due to the existing world problem.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess the factors contributing to the successful adaptation of families and the wellbeing of children. There were limitations while doing this study. Due to the world health crisis because of COVID-19, it was very difficult to access recorded documents at woreda level. Interviewing custodial parents was difficult as the issue of divorce is sensitive and a private and personal issue. Moreover, the availability of scientific journals at the local context was problematic. In addition, the other major limitation is the methodical limitation as this study was proposed to be mixed methods research; however, it was changed into qualitative research with the consultation of the university and researcher advisor, which has its own implication on the outcome of the study. It would have been much more rigorous had I been able to collect data through survey.

1.8 Operational Definition of key Terms

Divorce: The ending of marriage by a legal process/ the action or instance of legally dissolving a marriage (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018).

Parental Neglect: Mistreatment or abuse by parents (physical, psychological, emotional and economical)

Children's Well-being: Children's health, happiness, safety and comfort

Phenomenological Analysis: A reflections of direct sense perception and experiences of the researched phenomenon, which is divorce.

Family Stress Adaptation: Family adjustment, in which the family has renegotiated family roles, managed intra family and maintains continuity or enhances family transitions.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This research was organized into six main basic chapters. The first chapter of this study provides a brief background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope & limitation, operational definition and organizational framework of the study. The second chapter intended to provide the reader with review of related

literatures that are relevant to the study with the main theoretical models. The third chapter comprises the components of the research method that was employed; these are research design, research methods, sampling procedures, sample frame, sample size and data analysis and ethical consideration. The fourth chapter consists on data analysis and interpretation of findings. The fifth chapter deals with the discussion of the study in line with the literature presented and the last chapter deals with the conclusion of the study and its implicatio

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter examines a review of the literature. The initial section consists of the Double ABCX Model, next deals with previous research done using the family stress theory. Then followed by a section that explores the theoretical framework on the Family System theory and the different component of the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress theory at pre and post-crisis of divorce and at the end highlighting the effects/impact of divorce on children wellbeing.

In Ethiopia, there are three forms of marriage. These are civil, customary and religious marriages. Nevertheless, the effect of dissolution of all forms of marriage is the same. The Ethiopian family law says that marriage can be dissolve by divorce in two conditions; the first one is the spouses have agreed to divorce and submitted in writing to the court for approval. However, the spouses whose marriage lasted for less than six months shall not be permitted to divorce by mutual consent. In their petition, the spouses are not obliged to state the reason of the divorce. The court may not necessarily approve divorce immediately and such agreement is accepted by the court. The second one is when the spouses or one of them made a petition, for divorce, to the court. In this case, they can include the reasons for divorce in the petition. The court shall speak to the spouses separately or co jointly with a view of persuading them renounces the petition for divorce and tries to solve their dispute amicably. If this attempt fails, the court may direct the spouses to settle their dispute through arbitrators of their own choice. When this did not work, the court may dismiss the spouses by giving them a cooling period of up to three months. Where all the efforts made before, have failed, the court shall pronounce divorce within one month from the receipt of the reports of arbitrators or the end of the cooling period, as the case maybe (The Revised Family Code Proclamation No. 213/2000, Article 77 & 81).

Divorce. Signifies the loss of intimate relationship for the divorcees that may bring a sense of security and independence or a feeling of loss of dreams and failure in life. However, divorce is not a social problem that only affects those who are intimately involved (the husband and the wife) but also all the people around them (Bramlett & Mosher, 2001). This is because, through

marriage, the structure of family is formed and through divorce the structure of family is shattered. That is, during the marriage, children, the in-laws, extended families are involved and the impact could also extend for generations. According to Wijckmans and Bavel (2010), have found that, divorce weakens the tie between the adult and the child generation and notably the exchange of support (emotional or physical) in both directions.

Parental neglect. Different studies show, the magnitude and the effect of divorce differs in relation to multiple factors such as, duration of the marriage, number of children, social status, age at the time of divorce, gender, religion, and others (Carlson, 2009). How a person adjusts to the impact of divorce also depends on the way the divorcees handle the pre and post-divorce events. Different researchers have found that, mainly women and children are highly influenced by the negative impact of divorce (Carlson, 2009; Landucci, 2008 & Reilly, 2009).

Children wellbeing. According to Amato (2003), the child's age and gender as well as the child's history of stress and coping capacity largely determines how the divorce was perceived. Even if the child is strong, if the stressful situations outweigh the protective factors, the child may develop a problem. Fitzpatrick-Strand described that mostly mothers get the custody so boys are more at risk because they will grow up without having a male role model which will have a negative influence in their self-concept later in life. Most of the time, fathers will not visit their children often which will negatively affect the quality of attachment with their children later in life. Mostly it is assumed that, the younger the child is, he/she will experience short-term effects such like anger, sadness, non-compliance, lower academic achievement, increased dependency, lower parental supervision, and less consistent discipline. Fitzpatrick-Strand further described that if the child is in the adolescence stage, the risk will most likely be long-term such as experiencing a fear of betrayal and rejection, low life satisfaction, reduction in psychological wellbeing, fear of commitment and intimacy (Fitzpatrick-Strand, 2002).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In social work different theories exists which tries to explain about family and their complications from diverse perspectives. For this specific study, two major theories were used; family systems theory and family stress theory in order to well recognize the impact of divorce on parents and children.

2.2.1 Family Systems Theory

The basic assumption of family systems theory is the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008). A family is not just a collection of individuals who live together; the individuals are related to each other and as a natural social system, it possesses its own characteristics, rules, roles, communication patterns, and power structure. If a problem occurs within a family, one person will not be blamed but all family members as a whole because no behavior can be understood in isolation and all behaviors are considered as part of ongoing, interactive, and recurring events (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009). A family system delineates its boundaries from other family systems by having its own covert and overt rules; members enact certain gender roles, and maintain a certain standard of job performance. When a person deviates from these rules, in order to keep the homeostasis, the family will either use negative feedback to that behavior or will use positive feedback for important adjustments if the individual's deviation is caused by dysfunctional family rules. Family's adaptability to new things or to stressful situations is essential. Unless a family is flexible in terms of changing the rules, roles, and patterns of communication, being rigid will create conflict and misunderstanding among the members (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009).

2.2.2 Family Stress Theory

The foundation for family stress theory can be traced back to Hill's (1949) classic research on war-induced separation and reunion (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). He expanded on the evidence amassed by family sociologists, who were examining crisis proneness in families, and by social workers, who were studying the experience of multi-problem families. Hill focused on the factors associated with family adaptation and coping in response to stressful or crisis events.

The Double ABCX Model of Family Stress (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) provides a framework for examining both the pre-crisis and post-crisis family dynamic in relation to both the stressor and the initial and longer-term impact on the family. A stressor is defined as an internal or external event "which produces, or has the potential of producing, change in the family social system" (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983, p. 7). When a specific stressor event such as parental separation occurs, the initial amount of family disruption is contingent upon the interaction of the specific stressor event (the a factor), the family's crisis-meeting resources (the b

factor), and the family definition of the situation (the c factor). According to McCubbin and Patterson (1983) not only does the initial stressor occur, but also after the family has experienced the initial level of "crisis" (the x factor) during the pre-crisis stage, they move into the post-crisis stage, which typically includes a pile-up of stressor events. Hill (1949) recognized three theoretical constructs that potentially transform a given event into a family pre-crisis level.

Analyzing family appraisal of the stressors and mediating resources upon divorce at pre-crisis level. The first is the hardship of the event itself also referred to as the stressor (a) which is the initial stressor and associated hardships. A stressor is defined as an event for which the family has had little or no prior preparation and that has the potential for producing change. The second construct that Hill (1949) uses targets the resources of the family (b) which is the pre-existing resources: its role structure, flexibility, and previous history with crisis. The last construct is the definition the family makes of the event, which is its perception of the event (c) which is the perception of the stressor (divorce) by the family. If the household does not perceive the event to be a stressor, then there will be no perception of a crisis. Hill (1958) referred to the meaning of the event as an intervening variable.

As a summary, in this study these three variables mentioned above formed the basis of Hill's conceptualization of the ABCX family crisis model. The "a" factor refers to divorce event and its related hardships. Factor "b" refers to the family's crisis-meeting resources (existing one) and the "c" factor refers to the family's definition or perception of the crisis, which could be positive or negative. The dynamic interplay and interaction of factors a, b and c determines the existence and intensity of the "x" factor, which is the crisis - parental neglect (Hill, 1958).

Hill (1958) divided crises into three classifications. The first classification is by source of trouble, some are extra-familial and some are intra-familial in origin. There is further classification by source of trouble: (1) extra-family events that bring the family together, (2) intra-family events that are more disorganizing, such as divorce, and (3) extra-family events that are not perceived as stressful because other families or individuals are going through the event (e.g., economic downturn).

The second classification scheme of intra-family events is of interest for this research. It involves dismemberment (loss of family member), accession (addition of an unprepared member), and

demoralization (loss of morale and family unity) (Hill, 1958). When a family member is lost, the role that the individual was occupying must be filled. During the time that it takes to fill this role, a period of disorganization may initially take place. If the addition of a new member occurs when the family's resources are not adequate, it puts greater strain on the family. Demoralization is the by-product that may result after dismemberment or accession has occurred.

Hill's (1958) initial areas of interest related to the proneness of families to crisis. Hill (1958) emphasized the "b" and "c" factors of the pre-crisis of the ABCX Model in his conceptualization of crisis-proneness. With limited resources and the perception that an event is a hardship, the family begins to feel the stress of the event. When an event happens that, the family perceives as a crisis, a roller coaster of adjustment arises. The crisis promotes a change in the patterns of the roles of the family members. Hill (1958) stated, " The component parts to the roller-coaster profile of adjustment to crisis are crisis> disorganization> recovery> reorganization" (p. 41).

Investigating how families cope with and adapt the stressors and demands upon divorce at post-crisis level. Twenty-five years after Hill's initial publication of the ABCX Model, McCubbin and Patterson (1983) examined the impact of the Vietnam War-induced family crisis, and enlarged the concept of the ABCX model to include post-crisis variables. What emerged was the Double ABCX Model that clarified and broadened the essential conceptual factors formulated by Hill. The reformulated conceptual framework provided a means of including two areas not previously addressed by Hill. First, it viewed family efforts over time to adapt to multiple stressors through the utilization of family resources and perceptual factors. Second, the model suggested that coping is the central process in the family's efforts to adapt and seek balance (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). This enlarged model contains at least four additional variables that appear to influence the family's adaptation over time (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983): (a) pile-up of additional stressors and strains; (b) the efforts of the family to acquire, activate and utilize new resources; (c) modifications of the family's meaning of the situation; (d) coping strategies to positive adaptation.

Pile-up (aA Factor). Families deal with crises over time and space. This pile-up occurs after the initial event and then continues. There are five types of stressors that McCubbin and Patterson (1983) see as piling-up on the family system: Stressors and its hardships that increase and possibly magnify the difficulties for the family; Normative transitions that occur at the same time

that the initial stressor is occurring; Prior strains (e.g., families carry the past strains from an event; Consequences of family efforts to cope, which emerge from specific coping behaviors; and Intra-family and social ambiguity (changes produce uncertainty about the future).

Parental divorce can lead to a pile-up of stressors due to normative transitions and stressors associated with the parental divorce. For example, the change in a family's structure associated with a divorce can be a stressor as the family may move from being composed of one household to a "binuclear" family system where children serve as a connecting point between two households (Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987). Within binuclear families, however, the degree of contact between children and noncustodial parents and the degree of cooperation between parents varies considerably. The changed family structure often results in transitions and challenges that can contribute to the pile-up.

Existing & New Resources (bB Factor). The resources that the family needs and that meet its demands are the capabilities of the family that are drawn from inside and outside the family. Resources include characteristics: (a) of the individual, (b) the family unit, and (c) the community. Over time, these resources can be seen as existing or expanding. Existing resources are those that the individual, family or communities have, whereas expanding resources are those that are developed after using existing resources (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

The family's resources and each individual's personal resources for meeting the initial stressor event and the pile-up of stressors become part of the family's capabilities for adapting to the crisis. Insufficient appropriate resources are available, the family and its members are less likely to view the crisis as problematic (McCubbin & Figley, 1983). Brown (1991) provided empirical support for three types of resources. They concluded that child coping skills (personal resources), family functioning and stability (family system's resources), and external support systems (social support) discriminated between poorly adjusted and well-adjusted children.

Adaptation (xX). In family adaptation there are three units of analysis: (a) individual family members, (b) the family system, and (c) the community that the individual and family are a part of McCubbin and Patterson (1983) state "family adaptation is achieved through the reciprocal relationships where the demands of one of these units are met by the capabilities at another so as to achieve a balance simultaneously at two primary levels of interaction" (p. 11). The first level

is the balance that is sought between individual family members and the family system. The second level is trying to find a balance between the family and the community that it is a part of It is a crucial factor in the coping process that the two levels remain balanced.

There are two possible adaptation outcomes for a family after the interaction of resources, perceptions, and behaviors. The positive outcome, called bonadaptation, is characterized with both levels being balanced. The integrity of the family becomes stronger, development of individual and family continues, and family independence is maintained. The negative adaptation is maladaptation, an imbalance in family functioning. This maladaption can be identified as a deterioration of family integrity, a curtailment of individual and family development, and loss of autonomy and family independence.

Using the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, it cannot be assumed that parental divorce will inevitably result in reduced adjustment or adaptation for children. Although research clearly supports the idea that parental divorce typically encompasses a variety of stressor, professionals who use the Double ABCX Model to examine how divorce may affect a particular child will recognize that parental divorce occurs in a variety of ways and is accompanied by great variation in the pile-up of stressors. Further, the vast array of variation in the personal, internal family, and extra-familial resources available to children who experience parental divorce alters the experience for each child. The unique circumstances within a particular family experiencing divorce and with individual children within a family make parental divorce a unique experience for each child. Thus, concluding that parental divorce relates to child maladaptation is a perspective that fails to consider the unique experience of each child.

2.3 Empirical Literature

Over the past five years, there has been a great deal of research devoted to identifying the effects of divorce on children (Aro & Palosaari, 1992; Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994; Garber, 1991). There is a growing consensus among researchers that the effects of divorce on children will last many years past the initial crisis (Wallerstein, 1991). These effects include but are not limited to increases in depression, low self-esteem, behavior problems, and lower social competencies (Aro & Palosaari, 1992; Garber, 1991).

Exploring the extent of parental neglect and its effect on children's wellbeing and how children adjust to the crisis. Marital dissolution has been associated with school problems, grade failures, higher dropout rates, lower rates of college attendance and lower rates of college completion (Furstenberg, 1990; Mednick et al, 1990). Mednick et al. (1990) found that there was a significant correlation between divorce and academic performance. Garber (1991) looked at the long-term effects on children from divorced families. He found that there was a correlation between inter-parental conflict and the social self-esteem of adolescents, but cautioned that longitudinal studies on self-esteem are needed. Aro and Palosaari (1992) and Buchanan, MacCoby and Dombusch (1991) found that the stressful event of divorce contributed to higher depression in children. Other recent studies have emphasized the importance of stressful chain reactions in mediating or explaining the possible negative impact of divorce (Mednick, Baker & Carothers, 1990; Rutter, 1985; Wadsworth & Maclean, 1986).

Children who experience divorce have been found to exhibit a range of adjustment problems, particularly in the first two years after the divorce (Grych & Finchan, 1992). The research is extensive on the short-term effects following divorce (Kogos & Snarey, 1995; Kurtz & Dervensky, 1993). Many of the studies though, are plagued by serious methodological problems, including the use of small samples, non-representative samples, the lack of appropriate comparison groups, inadequate measures of central constructs, and the use of a single source in the family to provide data on multiple variables (Grych & Finchan, 1992).

Children who experience a divorce show lower levels of cognitive self-efficacy, greater possessiveness of both parents, lower self-concept, and higher levels of aggression (Kurtz & Derevensk, 1993; Phillips & Asbury, 1990). Kogos and Snarey (1995) were concerned with the effects of divorce on moral development. Unlike the many studies showing the deficits, an interesting result from this research was that there was a marked increase in moral development attributed to the dissolution of the parental relationship. This increase was attributed to the notion that the adolescent subjects may have been stimulated to parental role taking, in turn promoting ethical sensitivity and moral autonomy. Those studies that have previously been mentioned all had small subject populations, except Phillips and Asbury (1990) who interviewed 900 African-American university freshman. The results of these studies were mixed but a resounding theme

throughout these studies and those noted previously was that the effects of divorce on children were highly correlated with the parental relationship after the divorce (Shaw, 1991).

Children of parents who are divorcing or have divorced often experience a pileup of parents who are divorcing or have divorced often experience a pile-up of stressors associated with the divorce. Stressors of divorce are unique to each family; nonetheless, based on the scholarly research, there are commonalities.

However, understanding adaptation to stressor events using the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983) also requires consideration of the family adaptive resources (bB factor) as the family's capabilities continue to develop to fulfill the emerging demands of the crisis. These resources include both the initial family crisis meeting resources (the b factor) and the additional resources the family accesses as they progress through the post-crisis period. Three types of resources are available to families: (a) family members' personal resources; (b) the family system's internal resources; and (c) social support. Collectively these resources play an integral role in the family's ability to adjust to the crisis. When families have sufficient resources, they are less likely to perceive a crisis as problematic (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

Another key element of the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) is the children's and family's definition of the crisis (cC factor) which is derived from the pile-up of stressors, resources, and the perception of crisis. In the midst of crisis, the family is challenged to give new meaning to their situation. When a family is able to redefine a situation and see that making changes will benefit everyone, they are more likely to be able to experience bonadaptation (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

Families experiencing crisis enter the Double ABCX Model in the pre-crisis stage and exit the Model at post-crisis adaptation (xX factor). Family adaptation (the xX factor), or the outcome of families in their attempts to achieve a balance after a crisis, serves as the focal concept in the Double ABCX Model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). Outcomes for families range on a continuum from maladaptation to bonadaptation. Family maladaptation refers to deterioration in family integrity, curtailed individual and family unit development, and loss of family independence and autonomy. In contrast, bonadaptation describes families, which have strong

family integrity, enhanced member and family unit development, and family independence and control of environmental influence.

The level of post-crisis adaptation is directly determined by the combination of factors in the Double ABCX Model. Thus, children's adaptation after parental divorce can be understood by examining the interaction of the pile-up of stressors, existing and new resources, and family definition and meaning of the divorce. Since there is an increasing awareness that divorce is a process, as opposed to a single life event, the Double ABCX Model is an appropriate framework within which to examine the issue (Pledge, 1992), Hence, this model provides a framework to understanding the process that children and families experience in their efforts to achieve adaptation after a crisis.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

In order to better, understand the study the Family Adaptation of Double ABCX Model of (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) was used to provide a robust framework for conceptualizing and organizing variables related to the main stressor, which is divorce. This model regards an individual family's experience of crisis, stress, and subsequent adaptation as a dynamic and ongoing process (Redington, Kysela, & McDonald, 1995). As presented in Figure 1 below, the adaptation process is affected by the initial stressor (a) and the pile-up of additional demands or stressors (aA), and is affected by the family and individual's internal (b) and external (bB) resources, their response to the stressor(c), and availability of effective coping strategies (cC). Adaptation and outcomes occur at a range of levels (X) including individual, relationship, and family.

This study uses the model as a framework to guide the study. Accordingly, divorce was the stressor event (a factor), family existing resources (b factor) and family members perception of divorce (c factor) were taken as pre-crisis level of family functioning. While the coming of crisis (x factor), the pileup of stressors (aA), the divorced families new and existing resources (bB), families initial and later, and societal perception to divorce (cC) that contributed to coping and adaption of the broken families were taken as post-crisis level of divorce. Figure one depicts the framework.

2.4.1 The Double ABCX Model of Family Stress Adaptation

The original ABCX Model, developed by Reuben Hill (1958) proposed that variation in the extent to which families and their members experience "crisis" (the X factor) resulting from family stress depends upon a combination of the particular details of the stressor event (the A factor); the social, psychological, and financial resources of the family (the B factor); and the definition attributed to the situation by the family (the C factor). According to Peterson, Leigh, and Day (1984) utilized the ABCX Model to examine the impact of divorce on children. Expanding upon this model, McCubbin and Patterson (1981, 1983) noted that Hill's (1958) model addressed only the degree of short-term disruption a family experiences based upon the stressor event and that the level of family adaptation could be more adequately understood by following the family processes after the initial family response to stressor events. Thus, the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) was developed to add a post-crisis phase to the original ABCX Model.
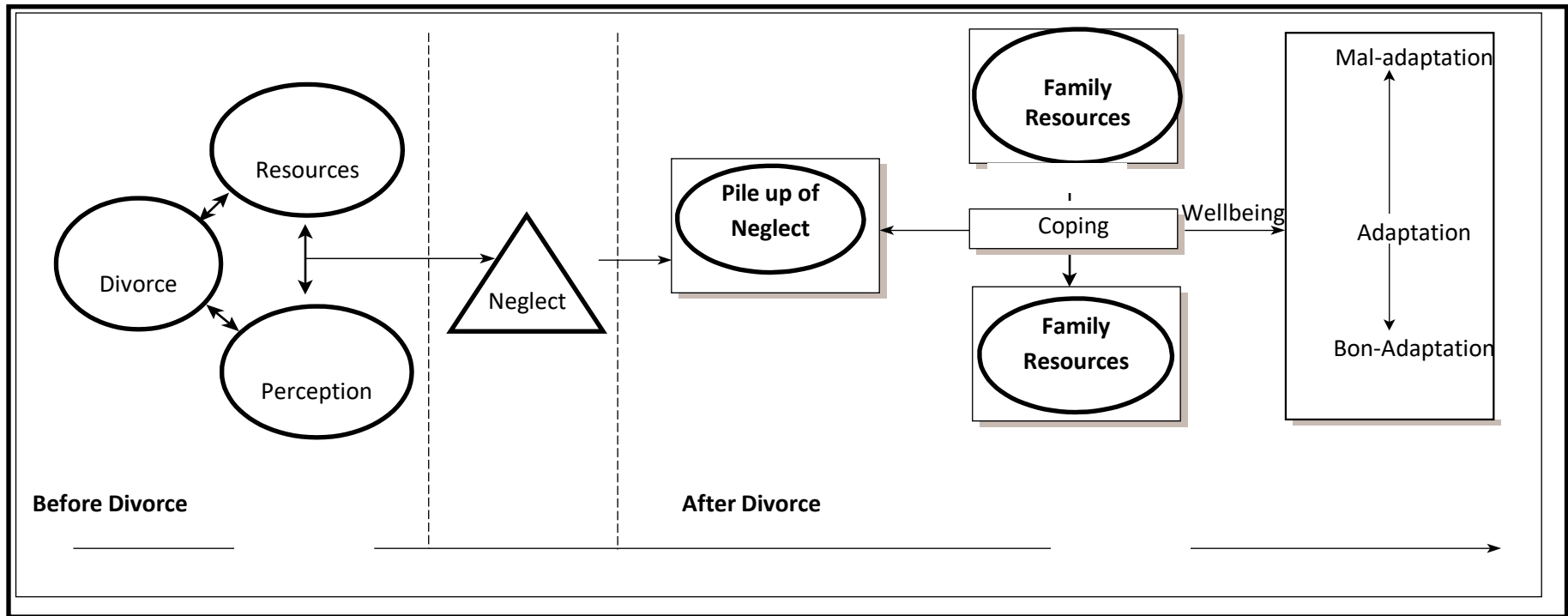
Figure 1- The Double ABCX Family stress Adaptation Model (adapted from McCubbin & Patterson 1983

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the different topics related to how the research has been carried out with respect to the research design and methodology used. Then followed by selection process of the families who participated in this study. In addition, the demographic data of the research participants presented was presented. The research design, the sampling procedure and analyses were also presented in this chapter.

3.2 Philosophical Stance

This study is intended to follow a qualitative research design that reflects the subjective aspects of parental neglect and children's wellbeing through a specific approach such as phenomenology. Interpretivism is a research philosophy based on the critique of positivism in social sciences. Accordingly, this philosophy emphasizes qualitative analysis over quantitative analysis (Saunders, et al. 2012; Collis, et al 2014 and Wilson, 2010). Through these, I hope to gain a better understanding of the manifestation of divorce from the family members' perspectives using the family stress adaptation model framework.

Interpretivism is "associated with the philosophical position of idealism, and is used to group together diverse approaches, including social constructivism, phenomenology and hermeneutics; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness". According to interpretivist approach, it is important for the researcher as a social actor to appreciate differences between people. Moreover, interpretivism studies usually focus on meaning and may employ multiple methods in order to reflect different aspects of the issue (Pizam and Mansfeld, 2009).

With regard to this study, Interpretivist involves interpreting the original thoughts and ideas from study participants based on their own lived experiences on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective, but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts.

3.3 Research Design

This study employed a semi-structured qualitative interview that was administered to all participants. A qualitative approach promotes the collection of data in its natural setting and allows the researcher to capture the richness and depths of participants' experiences, which is especially appropriate when research in a particular topic is lacking (Creswell, 2013).

A qualitative research approach was preferred to answer the research questions of the inquiry going directly to the social phenomenon under this study. Thus, qualitative methods allow gathering evidences for contingent facts that participants narrate empirically their lived experiences in their own ways. Yin (2003), has confirmed that qualitative method is very helpful to understand complex sets of social phenomena and allows retaining the whole data of meaningful societal life. One of the strengths of the qualitative study is the comprehensiveness of perspectives it gives to the researcher (Rubin & Babbie, 1993). In concurring with these views, Seidman (2006) argues that qualitative method is quite appropriate to study social behaviors and analyze contextually people's behaviors in relation to actual process of life. Nevertheless, in this study phenomenology approach of qualitative method has been employed to dig out as much qualitative data as possible.

The researcher was reflexive throughout the research process, monitoring emotional responses to participants' stories, especially if interviews became emotionally intense. Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher bracketed all biases and experiences that could influence data collection and analysis. The researcher ensured that the environment remained safe and did not go beyond the participant's comfort level by allowing participants to know that they did not need to disclose any information they did not wish to disclose.

Phenomenology Approach. Among the different approaches in qualitative research, this study has used the phenomenological approach in its nature whereby participants' experiences has been presented as they made meaning out of it. Phenomenology accepts experiences, as it exists in the individual's consciousness. It did not aim to generate theories or develop general explanations. Rather it focuses on understanding the participants' world through their perceptions, meanings, intentions, and experiences (Grinnell & Unrau, 2005). In addition, Phenomenology is the study of lived experiences resting on the assumption that there is an essence to shared experiences that can be narrated (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). "The purpose of

this type of interviewing is to describe the meaning of a concept or phenomenon that several individuals share" (p. 104). According to Moustakas1994) relates that it is the development of descriptions of the essences of experiences, not explanations or analyses that is important. Phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon rather than a report of a single individual (Creswell, 2007) parents and their families render their experiences through data collection tools. Therefore, this research approach has been very beneficial as divorced custodial parents and their children.

3.4 Description of the Study Area

The study area is located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. There are ten sub cities in Addis Ababa. Within these ten sub cities, the study area specifically has chosen to work in Nifas Silk Lafto sub city.

Addis Ababa is the capital city of Ethiopia. It is also the largest city in the country by population, with a total population of 3,384,569 according to the 2007 census. However, it is believed that this number was inaccurate when recorded and underestimated the city's population. The city has through recent years seen a robust annual growth rate, and population counts as of 2017 are growing closer to 4 million. The most recent census was scheduled for the 2018 to 2019 fiscal year, as security concerns between 2017 and 2018 delayed it. Addis Ababa is a chartered city and as such, is considered both a city and a state. It is the largest city in the world located in a landlocked country (United Nations, 2017).

3.5 Research Population

The study area was in Addis Ababa and was selected purposively as Addis Ababa represents a mixed population in many social characteristics. The study included divorced custodial parents and their children. Addis Ababa is the capital city of Ethiopia established in 1886. It is geographically located at the center of the country. It accommodates about 30% of the total urban population in Ethiopia. Its population amounted to 3.384 million in the 2007 population census. Currently it is estimated over 4 million people live in the 10 sub-cities (United Nations, 2017). Therefore, this study has been conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia within the 10 sub cities.

According to sampling guidelines (Babbie and Mouton, 2001) target population refers to a population as that aggregation of elements from which the sample was actually selected. The target population of this study has been seven custodial parents, which consisted of divorced parents and their children that has comprised all dimension of age and sex.

3.6 Sample and Sampling procedure

In the selection of sampling site and targeting population; purposive and snowball sampling methods were employed. Purposive sampling has been used to select sampling sub-city and woredas because all sub-cities and woredas were assumed having similar attribute in the case of divorce experience. In this process, target population of a sample has been chosen from the general site of the Addis Ababa city purposively. The targeted populations were divorced custodial parent and their children; while they were selected purposively and snowballing based on their experience on divorce, which has been two years and more.

This study has employed purposive, non-probability sampling methods. Nifas Silk Lafto sub city, where the study sample size has been selected using purposive sampling Method.

3.7 Sample Size

For this study, seven families'; custodial parents with their children were selected as participants. The sample size for this study included seven children aging between 12-16 years. In total 7 families as participants were selected for this study which were seven custodial parents and seven children. While selecting the subjects, it has been perceived that the children did not have any history of emotional or psychological problems. Participants were recruited using word of mouth, as the situation of the pandemic did not allow me to get access of participants as initially intended from the family court at sub city level. In order to be eligible for the study, custodial parents needed to be divorced at least between two years and above , allowing the experience to be recent but not immediate.

3.8 Data Collection Tools / Instruments

In order to conduct the research both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data for gathering instruments were in-depth interview and case study. Primary sources of data have

been used. Primary data are those collected afresh and for the first time and original in character from the participants. It is indispensably important to know the understanding, feeling, and lived experience of the research participants by their own words. While the secondary data were collected from related study and published papers, books, written materials and journals.

The demographic questionnaire (Appendix A) contained items about the participant's age, country of origin, educational level, income and occupation. Participants were asked the date of divorce with partner as well as how much time passed in marriage. In addition, participants were asked about their income and occupation at the time they divorce with their partner or husband.

An in-depth interview was used to gather data on the experiences of divorced custodial parents, and the ways in which the participants coped following the divorce with their husbands. Participants were asked to describe the stages leading up to the divorce and the cause of divorce, and were also asked to describe their experiences during this process at pre & post crisis level. In addition, participants were asked to describe the ways in which they coped with these experiences and the resources utilized during this period. Finally, participants were asked to describe the process of adjusting to the new family system and structure. The semi-structured interview served as a guideline for the researcher in the data-collection process; however, actual items that were asked varied slightly according to participant. In addition, items were asked in Amharic; local language of the study area with their children also. For those who did not provide sufficient information in response to an item, probes were used to facilitate more elaborated responses.

At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher debriefed with each participant regarding any uncomfortable or painful emotions that arose throughout the interview process especially with the children. In addition, the researcher monitored participant's emotional responses throughout the interview and stopped interviews as needed, to ensure participant comfort and safety.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

Due to the sensitive nature of the study and challenges involved with identifying members of the target population, this study utilized a snowball sampling method. Custodial parents expressing interest in the study were screened to determine eligibility based on pre-established criteria (Appendix C). During the screening, the researcher provided a brief overview of the study and

asked participants to respond to screening questions based on eligibility criteria. Participants were asked their age, the date of divorce from their partner or husband, and the length of their marriage prior to the divorce. Participants were also asked whether they have children and lived in the same home, and if so, the number of children and their ages. Those found ineligible were asked when could be the best time for them to make an interview. In addition, participants were informed about their ability to withdraw from the study at any time, which was made explicit when communicated verbally to each participant, and at the end, allowing time for questions and clarification has been done. The researcher answered all questions regarding the study prior to obtaining participant wills to participate in this study. Subsequently, all participants were asked to respond to a Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix A) part I.

Comprehensive interview guides have been developed in order to have effective and well-organized interviews and discussions with participants (custodial parents & children). Data collection instruments were prepared in English (Appendix B, C), which has been translated into the local language of the study area, in Amharic.

The researcher has used written interview guide for data collection. The proposed guideline has been critically important to ensure the degree of standardization in the data collection process. Questions have been carefully selected to gear towards stimulating discussion so that could be discussed thoroughly. Special consideration has been given to participants to express their ideas and views about divorce as well as its effect upon themselves and their children.

The in depth interview started by briefing the objective of the study to participants and signing informed consent prepared. The researcher in this case has used audio records upon the permission obtained from participants. Information collected from participants has been transcribed successfully to prevent the risks of losing collected data.

All interviews were electronically recorded for review, transcription, and analysis. All participants were interviewed at a location that was convenient for them, either in their home or a comparable setting where privacy and safety could be ensured for both researcher and participant. Due to the sensitive nature of the interview process, interview questions seemed to elicit intense emotional responses from some participants. As a result, the researcher stopped the

interview and debriefed with any participants that became visibly upset, or reported painful or difficult feelings during the interviews.

Given the sensitive nature of the study, participants were each assigned a different name/abbreviation to preserve anonymity and increase trust in the researcher and research process.

3.10 Data Analysis

After a successful completion of data collection, the next and more serious task was been analyzing the collected data. The data has been analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques to identify the theme and sub themes of the study. The collected data was systematically organized and thematically analyzed. According to Braun and Clarke, Thematic Analysis (TA) allows the researcher to identify, organize and shed light on patterns of meaning across a set of data (2012). While many patterns of meaning, or themes, emerged, the analysis served to identify those themes that were relevant to answering the specific research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

The main theme of the analysis has been parental neglect and children wellbeing. It had three sub-themes, exploring divorce as stressor, the mediating resources and family functioning at Pre and Post-crisis levels, and third sub-theme was how children adjust to crisis. Before analyzing the field results, the in-depth interview has been transcribed thoroughly. The data analysis has been done manually. For that, reason codes have been given to participants as divorced custodial parent P, children of divorce CP.

3.11 Reliability and Validity

The evaluation of validity-legitimation or quality criteria-is the most important step in all research studies according to Benge, Onwuegbuzie, and Robbins (2012). It is more important than determining the value of the research question(s), the sample size or sampling format, the appropriateness of the research design, the data collection, or the data analysis. If the findings or explanation of the findings lack validity then the study itself is useless. Hence, research is limited by the validity of the study and therefore it is recommended that researchers conducting

qualitative research evaluate the findings from the individual qualitative research steps as well as from the overall perspective.

Qualitative researchers use different criteria to measure trustworthiness of the data. For the purpose of this study, Lincoln and Guba's model of establishing trustworthiness of qualitative research was used because it is well developed conceptually and has been extensively used by qualitative researchers for a number of years. These criteria are: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

 This study was within the frame work of qualitative research and I paid attention to trustworthiness. Following my contact with the divorced parents; I explained the purpose of the study with clear and simple language. I told them what I wanted and planned to do with them. After I managed to family members understood the purpose of the research, I asked them their voluntariness to participate in the study. I also asked parents to allow their children to be part of my research. I told all family members that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time and place. I explained their benefits and risks of their participation and the things I expected from them to do it if they agreed to participate.

I tried to achieve the credibility of this study by means of prolonged engagement in the research sites and peer debriefing during data collection and analysis. Though I have prior experiences of observing the life of divorced people, I spent enough time to become more acquainted to the situation. I involved with sites long enough to detect and take in to account distortions about the life experience of divorced people. I was part of and was not divorced from the phenomena under study. I tried to explore personal feelings and experiences that might influence the study and integrate this understanding in to the study to promote credibility of the findings. Peer debriefing increased the credibility this work. Peer debriefing exposed me to the searching of others who were experienced in the methods of enquiry and the phenomenon. In this study, the researcher gave the research work to colleagues for constructive criticism. Besides, I provided a dense description of the participants' experiences and sufficient descriptive data that the reader can assess and evaluate the applicability or transferability of the data to another context. The findings of the study were checked and audited by supervisor of this study. He was responsible for examining the data, findings, interpretations and implications in order to attest that claims were supported by data.

3.12 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of qualitative research generally is often questioned by positivists, perhaps because their concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in naturalistic work. Nevertheless, several writers on research methods, notably Silverman (1995), have demonstrated how qualitative researchers can incorporate measures that deal with these issues, and investigators such as Pitts have attempted to respond directly to the issues of validity and reliability in their own qualitative studies. Many naturalistic investigators have, however, preferred to use different terminology to distance themselves from the positivist paradigm. Guba, proposes four criteria that he believes should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study.

By addressing similar issues, Guba's constructs correspond to the criteria employed by the positivist investigator: a) credibility (in preference to internal validity);b) transferability (in preference to external validity/generalizability);c) dependability (in preference to reliability);d) confirmability (in preference to objectivity).Although as recently as the mid 1990s Lincoln wrote that the whole area of qualitative inquiry was "still emerging and being defined", Guba's constructs have been accepted by many.

Therefore, concerning this study credibility focuses on data collection procedures that were consistent. Transferability concerning external validity is that this study can be transferred to other family institution, which will help them in using this model as an assessment/therapeutic tool to decrease the number of divorces. For dependability, I had collected original data and organized participants to get information based on a questionnaire prepared for an in-depth interview guide, which has been checked by my advisor before interviewing study participants. Regarding confirmability given the limitation that this study is done using qualitative method this research will bring the same result with regard to achieving its objectivity concerning the same model. This model has been done in different study concerning disability crisis but this time I have used it for family crisis using the different variables of the family stress model. Therefore, we can ensure the confirmability based on the different variables/components tested on this study.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations that pertain to the qualitative method design and also for the purpose of this study has been communicated by the researcher in detail about the purpose of the study. The confidentiality and dignity of every individual involved in the research is shielded. The participants had the assurance of their data that it would be confidential and anonymous as the identification codes and reports were made to collect data. The participants got all the information related to the aims of the study, which methods was used in the study, the results of the study, its good and bad consequences, etc. The researcher has used pseudonyms for all study participants to ensure after data collection no one would be able to recognize who the participants were.

At the beginning before involving the participants into the study process, they were informed about the overall objective of the research study. Then followed by explaining to participants that all information that will be gained from their experience will be kept as confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study. Moreover, all participants on this study were given an informed consent form (Appendix D) to know if they are willing to share their experience. In addition, all participants end up signing the consent form showing they were volunteer to share their lived experience on this study. As a result when conducting the interview with the case of the first and the last participants they were emotional when sharing their experience, and due to this the researcher was obliged to stop the conversation for a while until in both case participants were at ease to continue the interview where we have stopped.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The main purpose of the study was to explore child wellbeing because of divorce and the subsequent parental neglect. The Family Stress adaptation model (ABCX) guided the study. Phenomenological analysis of the Double ABCX model was conducted. Data presented with time sequences from pre- crisis level to Post- Crisis levels. At the beginning of the data presentation, a summary story of each family is given to help create a mental map for readers. The second part of the data presentation focuses on answering the research question on how do families appraise the stressors and mediating resources upon divorce at pre-crisis level? How do families cope with and adapt the stressors and demands upon divorce at Post-crisis level? To what extent parental neglect affects children's wellbeing and how does children adjust to the crisis?

4.2 Description of Study Participants

Seven families with varied number of children were included as participants of the study from Addis Ababa, Nifas Silk Lafto Sub city. In-depth interviews with custodial parents all women was held. Participants were followers of Islamic and Christianity religions; one Muslim and six orthodox Christians. Every woman involved in this study had at least two children, four of them having two children while three of them have three children at the time of data collection. Following their divorce only one woman had the history of re-marriage. The remaining participants remained divorced.

It is understood from participants' narrations and despite six of them were leading a single life, they are financially stable. All of the participants have at least reached high school level educational status with some completed their master's degree. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1 - Sociodemographic profile of divorced participants

Profile	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Age	42	46	40	44	38	42	35
Place of birth	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA
Residence	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA
Educational background	BA/BSC	12 Grade	MA	12 grade	12 grade	MA	BA
Religion	Muslim	Orthodox	Orthodox	Orthodox	Orthodox	Orthodox	Orthodox
Occupation	Nurse	House wife	Business women	House wife	House wife	Works in INGO	Secretary
Income	Average	Average	High	Average	Average	High	Average
Number of children	2	3	2	2	3	2	3
Duration of marriage	6 years	20 years	10 years	22 years	18 years	10 years	13 years
Time since divorce	7 years	6 years	4 years	2 years	2 years	5 years	3 years
Current relationship status	Remarried	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single

Source: Gathered from study participants May, 2020

Story of key participants. Since the study followed qualitative design with phenomenological approach, narrating the lived experiences of participants would help readers understand and interpret the holistic pictures of participants' experiences.

The first Participant (P1) had two children and both parents are working as Physician and Nurse. They are devoted Islamic religion followers with decent personality. The husband was a cult leader visitor, which was the beginning and cause of family dissolution. The wife did not agree on her husband's visit to the cult leader rather she wanted him focus on the wellbeing on the family. Extended families intervened to mediate but was not a success. The disagreement escalated that caused the husband to develop symptoms of depression and workplace absentee. All the efforts made by wife and extended families failed to materialize. The husband preferred visiting the cult leader than setting family disputes that led them to separation after 6 years of marriage.

Participant 2 (P2) had long years of marriage engagement, they have been together for 20 years and has three children. Husband was the breadwinner of the family. The husband, according to wife, had abusive, condescending and "arrogant" personality. He had multiple sexual partners including their housemaid. The wife had submissive behavior as a way of maintaining the family. Later in life, her husband's abusive behavior made her fear for her life and decided for separation after 20 years of marriage.

Participant 3 (P3) were from well to do family. They had two children. The sudden recognition of Infidelity of the part of the thousand has turned well-functioning family into crisis. The wife didn't expect her husband to engage in sexual relations with a white man and she was totally devastated. In fact, she is ready to accept and continue with her husband but the social pressures put on her made her to dissolve the marriage four years later.

Participant 4 (P4) has been married for 22 years but known each other since childhood. They have two children. Husband is sole provider of the household. They had decent family life until the wife came to know her thousand had another child from another woman. Initially reconciliation was reached as the husband accepted the wrong act of his infidelity while the wife didn't want to lose him. Yet the issue of property ownership caused them to separate.

Participant 5 (P5) has been married for 18 years having three children. The husband is the breadwinner working as Bank manager. The wife is the only child for her mother and she had to take care of her. When her mother's health begun to worsen, the wife brought her mother into her own family that dissatisfies the husband. One day the husband had proposed the idea of selling the house of his mother in-law as she started to live together with them, which was not accepted by his wife. The issue escalated and ended up with divorce.

Participant 6 (P6) has been together for more than ten years having two children. The Wife works in a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and often has business travels as part of her work that made them financially secure. The husband usually travels in a business trip, which was found later to be a lie. He had infidelity with the pretext of the business trip. The wife ones she realized attempted to solve the problem but was not successful and she filed for divorce.

Participant 7 (P7) has been together for more than thirteen years having three children. The Husband, according to his wife, has been jealous, nagging, with insecure personality. The husband usually gets home drunk and abuses the wife. Despite her thousand's abusive behavior, she managed to stay for about 13 years because of her true love. She experienced miscarriage due to physical abuse. Within all the physical and verbal abuses, the wife characterized having natural love, which was manifested in her love of makeup sex after fight.

4.2.1 Analyzing Family Appraisal of the Stressors and Mediating Resources upon Divorce at Pre-Crisis Level.

The family stress of the ABCX model is stated as follows: a (the provoking or stressor event of sufficient magnitude to result in change in a family) interacting with b (the family's resources or strengths) interacting with c (the definition or meaning attached to the event by the family) produces x (stressor crisis). The main idea is that the x factor is influenced by several other moderating phenomena (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982).

Participants reported different reasons for the divorce with their partners. Following the divorce, family compositions changed for participant 1 as well as the frequency of contact between participant and partner.

4.2.2 a- Stressor Event- Divorce

This study examined parental divorce as the "initial stressor" in the Double ABCX Model, which had the potential to cause strain in the family. The participants reported that the cause of their divorce was ignited with multiple reasons followed by multiple stressors as seen on table 2.

Table 2 - Sociodemographic profile of divorced participants

Participants	Reasons for divorce: Different forms of stress
P 1	Religion Impact, Isolation
P 2	Violence by partner, Partners Infidelity
P 3	Partner falling in love with same gender
P 4	Conflict because of family inheritance, Low commitment, Child from another

	partner
P 5	Conflict because of family inheritance, Low commitment, difficult personality
P 6	Partners Infidelity, communication
P 7	Partners difficult personality, physical & verbal abuse

Source: Gathered from study participants May, 2020

For instance participants 4 & 5 has same reason which is conflict because of family inheritance, low commitment, difficult personality. While participant 4 in addition to all mentioned reason, her husband has a son from another woman, which shows his disloyalty. Whereas the other 5 participants reasons for divorce is religion impact, infidelity and physical and verbal abuse. For example, a participant described as

> *I was pregnant with our first child and had a miscarriage due to husband beating and physical abuse. I give birth to three children. He also broke my arm, fingers, and even asphyxiates me with a pillow. I tried to hide the abuse from my children to protect them from the emotional impact. I empathize when he had a temper because he had no control over his rage. Moreover, I enjoy loving him and the make-up sex after the fights (Participant 6).*

4.2.3 b - Family's Existing Resources or Strengths

The Double ABCX Model states that the perception of the initial stressor (i.e. parental divorce) should interact with both the initial stressor itself and the family's existing resources. Before the dissolution, all participants used existing resources they have acquired with their partner. In addition, they reported that they didn't have financial problem. Participants used different managing system to protect their marriage.

Regarding financial status, all research participants reported that their husbands and some of the wives were employed and they were financially secured.

For example one participant stated that the family is financially secure mainly because they were both employed in the medical sector and *they are getting well paid (Participant 1)*

Another participant narrated: *My husband has been a reliable provider for the family and I being a housewife never had financial issues (Participant 2)*

The data has also shown most participants were well aware of the consequences of divorce prior to their family breakup. They have the understanding and knowledge as to how divorce could affect their family members particularly children. But factors beyond their control had contributed to the family crisis.

4.2.4 c - Definition or Meaning of Divorce by the Family

The third pre-crisis variable in the Double ABCX Model was the family's perception of the initial stressor (i.e., divorce), which should interact with both the initial stressor and the family's initial resources ("Perception of divorce"). In this study, research participants mentioned how they personally perceived about divorce. The two most common concepts related to perceptions of divorce were the result of the partner's difficult personality and infidelity and the other major cause/reason was conflict on family inheritance.

Partner's difficult personality and infidelity. Six participants out of the seven reported that difficult personality and infidelity was the major impact in their life together that made them think of divorce, as they cannot tolerate any more to live under such condition with their partner. One participant described admitting that her husband had a temper issue even before getting married and that he is easily triggered. She also mentioned; after getting married, my husband started getting physically and verbally abusive. He would sometimes drink to fuel his anger and let it out on his wife (Participant7).

Conflict on family inheritance. The other major issues, which made the perception of divorce by the family, were property inheritance of the other partner with a reason of thinking if we are providing all necessity to the other family then all the property belongs to both of us. A participant narrated that:

My husband was not receptive of any other discussion regarding the family aside
from selling the house. Moreover, he was having an affair on the side and that he
wanted to take his share of the inheritance. (Participant 5).

4.3 Investigating how Families Cope with and Adapt the Stressors and Demands upon Divorce at Post-Crisis Level

Numerous themes emerged in the analysis of the data on this study that is presented within the framework of the Double ABCX Model. Themes emerged that reflect the post-crisis of the divorce components of the Double ABCX Model, including the pile-up of stressor events (aA factor), new and existing resources (bB), perception and definition of the crisis (cC), and finally participants post-crisis adaptation (xX). Divorced custodial parents coping strategies for managing the divorce process were also presented below.

4.3.1 Pile-up of Stressor Events (aA) - Perception (cC), Resources (bB) and Crisis (xX)

Participants reported a variety of stressors throughout the pre-crisis of the divorce process. Some of the stressors included prior strains in the relationship with their partner such as conflict and violence by partners. Other reported Infidelity, conflict over inheritance that destroys family relationships. Two of the participants reported intimate violence in their relationships was common that has contributed to divorce. They stated:

Our relationship wasn't the best. I mean there were many times when he was
violent (Participant 2). I was pregnant with our first child and had a miscarriage
due to his beating and physical abuse (Participant 7).

4.3.2 Existing and new Resources (bB) - Resources Needed after Divorce

Participants reported they were relying on various types of resources since their divorce. Religion has always been their source of strength, morality and hope for participants. Extended family and friends have provided the attachments and the emotional support needed to families under crisis because of divorce.

Religion as a resource. All participants reported deep understanding of the ethics and practice of religion have helped them to come out of crisis. Prayer and faith in God have minimized the burden of the crisis of divorce. Total emersion into the religion has been the choice of most of the participants to avoid the pain of divorce. Prayer and faith primarily seemed to provide emotional and spiritual support for participants who utilized this resource. For example, participants narrated as:

> *I always ask God to protect and take care of him… I ask God to help me and my children… It's God that strengthens me, and it gives me the courage to move forward. You always have to continue with his strength (participant 7).After all, I have been through a lot, it's with the support, and faith that I have in God that I am here today but without God things were difficult and complicated. My faith in God made me to be patient (Participant 2).*

It seems that participants have acknowledged a sense of acceptance that their religious beliefs provided them an added source of comfort and sense of security.

Extended Family and Friends as resources. All participants acknowledged that family and friends provided the valuable resource in various forms. From Financial and instrumental support in time of need to emotional attachments during difficult times have contributed to deal with crisis resulted from divorce.   Participants shared their experiences as:

> *I live with my parents), where I have fewer expenses than if I live on my own. They take good care of my children. They have been helping me in all the ways they can… if I were going through this period alone, it would have been worse (Participant 7). The one who has helped me a lot is my sister, because if it weren't for her, I wouldn't be the person I am today. I tell my children not to misbehave with her because if it were not for her, we wouldn't be here. It's difficult for someone to put up with three children (Participant 2).*

4.3.3 Societal Perception of the Crisis of Divorce (cC)

Mixed reactions and impressions/feelings by extended family and society was reported from participants. Six out seven participants seemed to report mostly negative definitions of the divorce process while some positive definitions of the crisis have also emerged. The themes emerged about perception are Negative feeling, Regret and Irrationality.

Negative Feeling. Participants reported numerous negative feeling of the divorce process that contributed to an overall negative definition of the divorce experience. Participants defined divorce as unfair and scary, and a type of emotion like anger and trouble with oneself that brought about the end of the family. The sense of negative feeling on the part of family, particularly children was noticed and reported by participants.

Regrets and Irrationality. Four of the participants expressed regrets about divorcing, and expressed desires to get back together with their partners. Prior to divorce positive experience has triggered regrets on the part of participants. From participants narration it seemed that they accepted their impulsive decision to dissolve the family that has costed them the crisis they have experienced. Participants claimed:

> *I regret going through with the divorce and wanted to reconcile. I was emotional about my reputation. Infidelity happens in any marriage and I could have tolerated than making sudden decisions (participant 3).*

Divorce could have been avoided. Participants expressed their feeling that the divorce in its entirety could have been prevented. Sometimes, participants blamed their partners for the divorce while others blamed themselves. Participant 6 seemed to place the blame on the entire family system when she says: *I felt anger, because there are things that can be stopped, that can be prevented, but because of our actions... It happened.* We are no longer a family.

The causes of family dissolution were divorce. Some attributed to intolerance, property inheritance and others claimed infidelity as causes of divorce. Two of the participants described their feeling that their family had divorced because of family inheritance. Narrated as below:

> *My family was broken because of issue of inheritance! It is no longer a family because it is only one head of the family, me, instead of two. From that moment*

on, I was left to do it alone, to struggle alone with my children. Now... now nothing is left (Participant 4).

Once the family dissolution has happened, some of the participants have regrets about their irrational decisions and the consequences of parental loss. Three of the participants expressed emotional pain and sorrow because their children couldn't see their father as much as before,

When I remember those moments, I simply feel sadness because we were no longer a family. Without him around, it wasn't the same anymore. As much as we tried to stay in contact, it's not the same when you have the person physically present and by your side (participant 5). Not having my husband by my side is hard, but what hurts more is that my kids cannot see their father. In addition, for me, that is what doesn't make sense (participant 6).

On the other hand, it was difficult to witness their children's pain while making sense of their fathers' absence. Participant 1 described:

I am sorry if I get emotional (crying). My thinking is, why him? My son doesn't deserve this! Every child needs its dad, to always be there with him. I know he sees his friends' father who pick them from school (participant 1).

The consequence of divorce doesn't necessarily bring negative feelings. Some of the participants have described positive reactions despite the crisis. It seems that some of the participants have developed the culture "Things Happen for a Reason."

Well there is reason things to happen, right? God will help us move forward. I believe that things always happen for a reason, or at least I try to think that way (Participant 7)

This rationality feeling could have possibly stemmed from religious beliefs for these two participants where faith and trust in a higher power can ignite resilience when confronted to adversity. While the irrationality feeling could have triggered from verbal and psychological abuse in their relationships. Participants have narrated the rational feeling as:

Since he is out of my life, well everything has been more peaceful for me. I have had a lot of support from the people here in the house, and well the truth is that I don't miss him in any way… I have had more opportunities to have my children's live well, to buy them everything they want, and to save a little bit of money which I couldn't do before because he would take all the money away from me (Participant2).

Despite all the abuses and physical assaults, I still love him (Participant 7)

4.3.4 Family Coping Strategies to the Pile up of Stressors

It is evident from participants' description that family members exhibited different ways of coping (problem focused and emotion focused) to divorce , including paying attention and being more sensitive to their children's emotional and physical needs in effort to protect them from the impact of the divorce, and continuing to maintain communication with their ex-partners/ co-parent. Participants demonstrated self-reliant problem solving and reaching out to families and friends to get help to manage the stressors and disruptions faced by their families. They were expressive about the resources they needed that have facilitated their ability to cope with the divorce.

Avoidance. Five participants discussed ways in which they protected their children throughout the divorce process. Some were withholding information or not telling their children the truth while others limited contact with their father during the divorce period. Participants felt that children might be disturbed hearing all information on what was going on in the family and they avoided telling them the truth. Children are not physically, emotionally and cogitatively matured and hence participants preferred to tell the story when children reach the appropriate age; my children have been heavily struggling to adapt to their new life with the absence of their father and feel abandoned and neglected (Participant 1).

Emotional attachment. Six of the participants, reported making an effort to help their children cope with the absence of their fathers by offering the necessary attachments and explanations that could help them to break down and understand the divorce. For instance, Participant 1 shared the ways in which she helped her son to make sense of his father's absence:

I show him his father's picture and tell him it's his daddy, that he loves him very much, that he will see him soon. He asks me questions about his father. He's still young, but I try to help him understand that mom and dad are not together but even though his dad is far away, he still loves him very much.

Hope and optimism. Despite the dissolution of marriage, some of the participants were hopeful to continue the relationship in a positive way. They believed to keep the moral and health life of children ongoing relationship is very important. Three participants (P1, P3 & P4) reported that they were able to maintain an ongoing relationship with their ex-partners throughout the divorce period as well as post-divorce. When describing their relationships prior to their divorce, these participants spoke affectionately and positively about their relationships. These women seemed to make an effort to maintain a close connection with their ex- partners for their children through visits and ongoing phone contact. For example, Participant 1 described: I speak to him once or twice a day regarding the kids. Which reflects there was optimism on the part of the parents to have a reunion.

Self-reliance. Participants have engaged in additional economic self-reliance activities so that their families will not be troubled with economic insecurity. On the other hand, their business in working additional economic activities made them not only fulfilling their basic needs but also free them from divorce stressors. For example, participants'1 & 2 remarked:

I was able to purchase a condominium for me and my children, a vehicle and a load truck that I rent and serves as an income that sustains the family (Participant 2). I started my own business, to be able to pay for my house and I was also to build my own house where I'm living now with my kids, and also to pay for my kids the food and clothes (Participants 1).

Positive regret. All participants commented about the importance to sharing their concern to people near to them. Four participants (P1, P3, P6& P7) specifically discussed their perception that therapy or counseling would have helped them cope with the pre divorce crisis or even prevent it in a more positive manner for themselves and their kids. Participant 1 illustrates:

I would love to go to counseling or therapy. I think it would have helped me but especially my son… I know I could have done counseling before, but I just didn't.

> *I didn't know where to go. I wasn't sure if I could trust someone to tell them my little secrets of my family and if they could understand and/or relate.*

Three participants also mentioned their desire for family counseling or group therapy in order to maintain their system, and felt that a better understanding may have helped them navigate the process more effectively and positively.

4.3.5 Adaptation (xX)

Participants reported both positive and negative outcomes because of their divorce experiences with their partners. Although there were more negative outcomes, all participants reported some positive and negative outcomes resulting from their lived experiences. Hence, a mixture of bon and mal adaptation was reported.

Manifestation of Mal-adaptation. Participants have narrated various malfunctioning behaviors resulted from divorce. Unable to see their biological fathers on the part of children, longevity of contact, feeling of fear, Sadness, feeling of loneliness, were among the issues reported by participants.

Feeling of Loneliness. Separation has brought in negative outcomes. It was observed that many of the families didn't have frequent contact with their divorced partners that brought in feeling of loneliness on the part of children and families. Five out of seven participants (P1, P2, P3, P6, and P7) reported that because of the divorce, their partner was no longer a part of the family system and contact was limited. Participant 6 discussed this outcome, attributing it to differences in gender saying: he's already made a life for himself over there! It's a lot easier for men, wherever they may be.

Impulsive behavior. Five of the participants reported negative changes in their children's lives after divorce, including changes in behavior, emotional waves, and decreased academic performance. Participant 1 reported significant emotional disturbances in her children, especially on her eldest son who began to manifest symptoms of depression, limited communication with siblings and others following his father's absence. She narrated:

> *My son, the one who is thirteen now, was very attached to his dad. He would always ask me when his father was coming, and that's when he began to have nightmares and to say that he is not happy at all (Participants 1)*

Manifestation of Bon Adaptation. For some participants, the divorce process seemed to result in some positive outcomes, including an increase in goal-directed behavior, self-reliance/ autonomy to achieve those goals, a focus on a better future, as well as the divorce serving as a promoter for developing a wider and more diverse support system (family, friends, religious leader…). Participants also demonstrated resilience by acknowledging the challenges presented by the divorce, yet feeling that it was an event they were able to overcome and bounce back on their feet.

Let the past be past attitude. Three participants (P1,P2& P6) mentioned a hope filled attitude, the desire to move forward and focus on the future, which seemed to be a positive means of adapting to the overall divorce experience. Participant 6 explained this; I am always thinking of the future that better things will come.

Making meaning out of crisis. These participants seemed to be optimistic, and demonstrated a growth mindset where each life experience including the divorce has been used to build oneself instead of hold them down and back. The mindset might have played an important role in processing the pre divorce experience and assigning a positive meaning out of what they have lived for so long. Participant described as below:

> *I was married for 20 years and now it's been 6 years and began to grow in ways that my ex just couldn't understand. I went through a very difficult divorce; my ex was very controlling and mentally abusive. I was scared to death to leave, but I began to get stronger. Since my divorce, I have been rebuilding my self-esteem and I am now a happy independent woman (Participant 2).*

4.3.6 Exploring the Extent of Parental Neglect and its Effect on Children's Wellbeing and how Children adjust to the Crisis.

Participants utilized various mechanism throughout the divorce process, including making efforts to protect their children from the impact of the divorce, and continuing to maintain

communication with their divorced partners for the well-being of their children. In addition, custodial parent had made a lot of effort in order to make the post-divorce situation more convenient to their children by protecting, withholding information and helping them to understand the situation of dissolution in a better and proper way that deals with their children age. More over children adaption because of change in the family system were dealt based on the children interpretation with regard to children functioning within the breakdown family at post-divorce level and children adapting to the changing family environment.

Protecting their Children. Five participants discussed ways in which they protected their children throughout the divorce process. Participants also protected their children by finding age appropriate ways to explain the reason of divorce to their children, helping them to make sense of these events. The two participants who did not report efforts to protect their children from the impact of the divorce reported age as a primary factor, with one participant's child being an infant and the other participant's youngest child being nearly eighteen and described as follows:

> *One day I was back from school and overheard my mom raising her voice at my dad. I was taken aback by their interaction because I always knew my parents to be gentle and mellow people. I got closer to their room and overheard my mother crying and saying where did I fail you for you to cheat and have a secret family with another woman? I was in disbelief that my father would betray the whole family like that. My father, whom I am always seen as my hero is now going to be the reason why the family is going to fall apart.*

> *I was ashamed to discuss any of this with my parents and they never brought it up to me and my two years younger sister. However, I could see the dynamics in the house was different. For months, they both pretended nothing had changed towards my sister and me but I knew that my mother was hurt.*

> *To my confusion, a few months later, my parents were acting more civilized and my mother started talking to my father. I felt like my mother was being a hypocrite for letting the person threatening their family's well-being get away with the damage he caused without any punishment (Child of Participant 4).*

Withholding information. Four participants protected their children by withholding information from their children, or providing children with limited explanations of their father's absence. For example, Participant 6 protected her son from information about the divorce by not telling the real situation to him about his father's absence, the child says:

> *My mother tells me that my daddy is on vacation! She would pass the phone to me and let me talk to him every time I miss him, as I couldn't see him often as I use to. (Child of Participant 6)*

Helping the Children to Understand. Six of the participants reported efforts to help their children cope with the absence of their fathers by offering explanations and helping them to understand the divorce. For instance, Participant 1 shares the ways in which she helps her son to make sense of his father's absence:

> *I show him the picture of his father and I tell him it's his daddy, that he loves him very much, that one day we'll see each other again. He asks me questions about his father, he's still young, but I try to help him understand the most I can, that his dad is far away but still loves him. (Child of Participant 1).*

Children functioning within the breakdown family. A broken family can negatively affect all aspects of child's growth. The effects of a broken family on a child's growth depend on numerous factors, including the age of the child at the time of parents' separation, and on the personality and family relationships. Children tend to have a hard time dealing with change. When a parent leaves the family, a stepparent joins the family, or the child doesn't feel like their emotional needs are being met by their mother, they may express feelings of anger, resentment, confusion and jealousy. This can bring on loneliness, isolation, depression and low self-esteem if children don't know how to express their feelings properly.

In this study, most of participants, children during the divorce time were younger to understand the situation and some were older and may experience some problems in their social, emotional and educational functioning.

Emotional. After divorce, children may experience deficits in emotional development. Children of all ages may seem depressed during this hard time, which maybe a state that can last for several years after a child's parents' have separated. Additionally, some older children may show very little emotional reaction to their parents' divorce which this means to have a negative feelings inside but cannot express it and may affect them because of the negative emotion created inside.

> *I once heard her sobbing in the bathroom but I felt paralyzed and overwhelmed by an array of emotions that I couldn't channel into words and console her. (Child of Participant 4)*

Social. Divorce affects children's social relationships in several ways. Some children act out their distress about their broken family by acting aggressive and by engaging in intimidation behavior, both of which can negatively affect peer relationships. Other children may experience anxiety, which can make it difficult for them to seek positive social interactions with friends and other people around them and will building feelings of mistrust toward their parents; for a long time, I hated going to school and didn't want to talk to anyone but my dad but he wasn't around (Child of Participant 1)

Educational. Slow academic achievement is another common way that divorce affects children. The emotional stress of a divorce alone can be enough to lower the child's academic progress, but the lifestyle changes and instability of a broken family can contribute to poor educational outcomes because of instability of the environment at home.

> *My world was turned upside down when my parents announced that they were getting a divorce, I was heartbroken. Even though the divorce wasn't a surprise to me as they had been separated a few months after my grandmother move in with us, I never thought that my happily ever after movie-like life would ever end in such a short period of time. I couldn't concentrate in my studies anymore I would rather not want to go to school (Child of Participant 5)*

Children adopting to the changed family environment. Divorce changes not only the structure of the family but also its dynamics. Even if both partners have an agreeable divorce, simply creating two new families permanently alters family interactions and roles. Children may need to perform more responsibilities and assume additional roles in the new way of functioning and new living arrangements. Additionally, in some divorced partners, older children may take on a parental-type role when interacting with younger siblings because of their parents' inability to be present in the way that the parents were before the separation.

> *When I reflect back on those tumultuous moments of my life, I realize how much they changed me and made me closed up. My confidence and self-esteem was low. When I was younger, I was an outgoing and a sociable person. I was able to make friends easily and could open up a conversation with anyone. However, as I went through that tough time in my life, I became more timid and reserved with people. I was afraid of my family being judged, looked down on and not understood if I opened up to people about what was happening in my life. I gradually started becoming self-conscious and sensitive to what people would say about me. I still finds it challenging to communicate to new people I never met before (Child of Participant 3).*

Low levels of parent-child interactions. In single family homes, children develop greater autonomy where they tend to spend more time alone or with peers.

> *This was not easy to really understand all the way my parents was going to divorce, it was 7 years back. Before the divorce, my parents use to always quarrel, argue and shout which I don't understand why. At that time, my sister was 3 years and I was 6. It was stressful for us to see them fighting. I would find refuge in the arms of my nanny who was kind and took great care of me. He recalls with a sad tone of voice (Child of Participant 1)*

In general, divorce and its other aspects can have a life changing impact on the wellbeing and subsequent development of children. The consequences of divorce affect almost all aspects of a child's life, including the parent-child relationship, emotions social and educational, psychological development, and coping skills.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The results of this study help provide a picture of the effectiveness of the double ABCX model of family stress theory in relation with the main cause, which is divorce. Here the findings are discussed in line with the major areas of participants lived experiences that include; pre-crisis aspects of the impact of divorce as discussed by the study participants as well as the coping mechanisms they applied and the post crisis of divorce and the impact of divorce on children wellbeing. It was essential to discuss the essence of the study "divorce" as perceived by research participants, the custodial parent and their children in relation to available knowledge and reviewed literature.

The research findings revealed that, the participants have experienced multiple stressful events during their marital relationships that resulted from; religion impact, alienation, violence by partner, partners infidelity, falling in love with same gender, conflict because of family inheritance, low commitment, child from another partner, conflict because of family inheritance, low commitment, difficult personality, partners Infidelity, communication, partners difficult personality, physical & verbal abuse and others. As a result, the participants stated that they have struggled to keep their family intact by attempting to overcome the stressors using family resource as well as the environments; their children, and friends. Unfortunately, the efforts was not enough to keep them exposed from the crisis; divorce. As stated in the literature adults' adjustment to divorce depends on several factors. Predictors of adjustment to divorce include access to social support, use of good coping strategies, financial security, and a positive relationship with one's ex-partner, and a meaningful work situation. For many individuals with access to sufficient social support, divorce can actually be a growth opportunity (Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2006).

After the divorce, some of the events occurred to the participants were; reduced social status and social participation, leaving work or changing the type of work, managing household and taking on different roles, and financial instability. The initial crisis have exposed the participants to the above mentioned additional crisis and attempting to cope with these crisis using internal or

external resources was not effective and in return exposed the participants to additional stressor events such as; solitude, anger, feeling of failure in life, depression, anxiety problem, and others. In addition to this, they have described how their children suffered not seeing their parents not living together anymore.

5.2 Pile-up of Stressor Events (aA)

Divorce has been the main stressor in this study, which made to understand the perception of research participants (custodial parent) and their children's. Even though the study is focused on divorce, I believe it is essential to mention how the research participants related divorce to what they perceived to be family in order to explain the impact the divorce it had on them.

This study revealed that many reasons pushed research participants to make the last decision about divorce. Like Religion Impact, Alienation, Violence by partner, Partners Infidelity, Falling in love with same gender, Conflict because of family inheritance, Low commitment, Child from another partner, difficult personality and physical & verbal abuse. As seen from this study all the research participants did not ask for divorce because of one reason but for multiple reasons which made these to be accumulated and drove them to take this decision of making apart all the family.. Moreover, this can witness that the reason for divorce during the pre-crisis event how much they have tolerated and later they couldn't manage to hold all this sorrow by themselves and made the decision to separate and see things by themselves. Except one participants who were remarried, all are still single after a minimum of two years of divorce.

Based on the seven participants lived experience shared story, almost all had lived together with their previous partner and children more than ten years with some had lived like more than 22 years except one participant who had lived for seven years with her previous partner. However, life was not as easy as we assumed it before being married and once lived, as family as most of the custodial parents says in marriage you need to be committed, be able to communicate, sacrifice for your kids. Nevertheless, all this can be done with the support and understanding of both partners but not only from one side; everything needs to be mutual and balanced. So all the relationship that was tried to be built for so long, the happy family that were together for many years will collapse because of different reasons. Moreover, when these reasons get accumulated

day by day then the accumulation will lead to explosion, which will force lots of emotions, anger, and will result to family instability which leads to family dissolution or what we call it divorce. Based on the literature parental divorce can lead to a pile-up of stressors due to normative transitions and stressors associated with the parental divorce. For example, the change in a family's structure associated with a divorce can be a stressor as the family may move from being composed of one household to a "binuclear" family system where children serve as a connecting point between two households (Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987). Within binuclear families, however, the degree of contact between children and noncustodial parents and the degree of cooperation between parents varies considerably. The changed family structure often results in transitions and challenges that can contribute to the pile-up.

5.3 Existing and new Resources (bB) - Resources Needed after Divorce

The findings show that, the participants have used their personal and social resources to cope with their stressor events. The personal resources include; believing in their capacity to change, forgiving and forgetting their past and working hard. While the social resources include; believing in prayer and spirituality, by taking their children as motivation, getting advice from friends and support from family members. The above coping techniques had helped the participants to hope for the future and become a better person for themselves and their children. In line with the literature used in this study the family's resources and each individual's personal resources for meeting the initial stressor event and the pile-up of stressors become part of the family's capabilities for adapting to the crisis. Insufficient appropriate resources are available, the family and its members are less likely to view the crisis as problematic (McCubbin & Figley, 1983). Brown (1991) provided empirical support for three types of resources. They concluded that child coping skills (personal resources), family functioning and stability (family system's resources), and external support systems (social support) discriminated between poorly adjusted and well-adjusted children.

5.4 Societal Perception of the Crisis of Divorce (cC)

Since the level of severity of the impact of divorce varies among participants, the perception the participants had towards their problems also differs and this has guided the participants to come

up with a coping mechanism that they believe they had helped them adjust to their problems in a healthy manner and passed it. Some participants thought it would take them time to revive and restart a new life while others thought they were not strong enough to get through their problems at all but through time, all participants have found a way to adjust with the problems and go passed it. Based on the literature review the families and child's definition of the divorce is derived from the perception of parental divorce, the pile-up, and the available resources. The child's reaction to the divorce of their parents is very important (Brown etal., 1991). The child may learn to distrust adults, feel abandoned and torn between both parents, and learn to manipulate the parents (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). To help alleviate the feelings of guilt, shame, rejection, isolation, and abandonment, it is important that the parents talk with the child to make sure they realize that it is not the child's fault (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Thompson & Rudolph, 1983).

5.5 Adaptation (xX)

According to the findings, the participants were currently found in a better living condition physically and psychologically. This became possible because, within an average of two years' time, they have begun to adjust to their new life style by applying mechanisms that they individually believed has help them shape their post-divorce adjustment process. The findings revealed that, the severities of the impact of divorce that the participants went through after their divorce were different.

In terms of coping, their inner strength and the availability of support system they had, had an influence in how they handled their problem. Even though they all faced emotional problem following the divorce, the level of impact it had on them differed. Some participants respond positively to negative life consequences and stress adaptation more positively to large stressors like divorce. Moreover, some participants tend to adjust better to divorce as they had more personal resources, such as higher income, education level.

According to the revealed information, some research participants have tried to adjust to their problems through secular life and others had used their belief system as a major tool to get through their problems. With regard to the literature using the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, it cannot be assumed that parental divorce will inevitably result in reduced adjustment or

adaptation for children. Although research clearly supports the idea that parental divorce typically encompasses a variety of stressor, professionals who use the Double ABCX Model to examine how divorce may affect a particular child will recognize that parental divorce occurs in a variety of ways and is accompanied by great variation in the pile-up of stressors. Further, the vast array of variation in the personal, internal family, and extra-familial resources available to children who experience parental divorce alters the experience for each child. The unique circumstances within a particular family experiencing divorce and with individual children within a family make parental divorce a unique experience for each child. Thus, concluding that parental divorce relates to child maladaptation is a perspective that fails to consider the unique experience of each child.

5.6 Children's wellbeing

Divorce will have a lot of impact on children's well-being in different manner. In this study, all children revealed that especially during the post-divorce they did not know what to say, as they were very little like 6-10 years. Therefore, it was not easy for them to understand the situation. However, the only think they mention during sharing their stories is that they usually cannot see their father as before and they really missed their dad. But the older they get they started asking question and better tries to understand the situation which is the divorce and start to act more positively because they start to adapt themselves with the situation.

Based on this study divorce will lead to many unrealized, unpredicted and unthoughtful consequence to parents and mostly to their children. Mostly children are the one who will encounter lots of challenge during the pre-crisis of divorce, as parents will only focus on their issues and during the post-crisis of divorce, again less attention will be given to children as parents themselves struggle for their own recovery of the divorce event. Therefore, it's within this specific moment that children will face a lot of problems like depression, loneliness and not having someone to nurture them as they were before.

Children at different ages experience the pain of divorce differently. Early age children tend to blame themselves and have nightmares. They might also show signs of depression and loneliness because of not seeing both parents together in the house. Age is a crucial predictor of a child's

reaction to divorce. Confusion and feelings of abandonment are common among infants and preschool children because the concept of divorce is very difficult for them to understand. School-age children are better able to understand what has happened when a divorce has occurred, and so confusion is not an issue for them, but they are very likely to experience anxiety, grief and sadness. School-age children often experience academic difficulties. They are also often asked to take on extra responsibilities that then encourage them to have a false sense of maturity. Older adolescents are struck with divorce at a time when their identities are in development and, thus, they often experience self-esteem problems. Behavioral and academic problems are also common among older teens (Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2006).

Divorce at younger age will affects how they feel about love, marriage, and family. Some children at younger age feel a sense of why all this happen and don't know the answer and parents also will tell their children that they are too young they will explain to them when they grow up. However, all this will create a stress on both the parents and the children and more of on the child side. At all ages, it is important to communicate with your children and to allow them to reciprocate. Many studies point to the relevance of age at the time of separation for children's divorce adjustment. Although early findings suggested that separation from a parent at an early age had more negative effects for children than for older youth, this factor has proven to be more complex than was initially believed. In a ten-year follow-up of pre-school children from divorced families, Wallerstein found the initial response to divorce to be worse for younger children, but in later years they appeared better adjusted than their older counterparts (Wallerstein, 1984). She concluded that those who are very young at marital breakup might be less burdened in the years to come than those who are older.

Finally, Kalter and Rembar (1981) found marital dissolution which occurred very early in a child's life (2½ years of age or less) was associated with separation-related difficulties; separation during the oedipal phase (2½-6) caused the greatest effects overall on children; and, for those 6 years of age or older, the results were inconsistent.

Referring to these study children are more likely to see their parents being together and happy. In the contrary, they don't want to see them quarreling, shouting and fighting as this will cause a depression and stress to the kids.

Summary of discussion. Finally, each participant's ability to adapt to the overall divorce process seemed to depend on the collective impact of the stressors faced, resources available and the perceptions formed about the experience, which is consistent with the conceptualization of family stress reflected in the Double ABCX Model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). All of the participants seemed to face many stressors; and some participants faced additional stressors that existed prior to the divorce with their partners. Furthermore, the most valuable resource among participants seemed to be religion, although each participant used it in slightly different ways. In the end, the participants who seemed to struggle most with adapting to the divorce process were those who had the negative perceptions about the event.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This study sought to explore the experiences of divorced custodial parent and their children wellbeing prior and after divorce experience and how they adapted to these experiences. The study revealed about the various stressors participants faced during the pre-crisis divorce concerning the different divorce causes including like religion impact, alienation, violence by partner, partners infidelity, falling in love with same gender, conflict because of family inheritance, low commitment, child from another partner, difficult personality partners difficult personality, physical & verbal abuse.

Families utilized various resources throughout the divorce process, some of which they sought out in response to the divorce process. They formed positive and negative perceptions about the divorce process, which seemed to be related to the stressors they faced as well as the resources that were available to them. Families used various coping and problem-solving strategies to overcome the adversity of divorce and to adapt to the changes in their family structure and relationships.

The ABCX Model would seem to provide a useful framework for uniting a range of variables to better understand adaptation in families facing divorce and understanding the coping and adaptation of children at all level of the divorce process. This model has the potential to provide professionals with a framework to have better understanding in individual parent's strengths and needs in order to assist them, and their children, to achieve their optimum level of functioning and outcome from early intervention.

Overall, participants demonstrated flexibility in the face of hardship created by the divorce process, yet some families responded in more maladaptive ways. Families' experiences reflect strong adherence to the tendency of relying on family and friends for support to overcome obstacles. Finally, research participants' experiences reflect the complexity of the absence of a family member (father) because of divorce especially for children. In general, we can learn from

this study that families struggle with multiple stressor for different reasons within the different families. However, in considering the Family stress model, one can identify and work through the identified crisis at pre-crisis level by using different existing resources and having positive perception of the crisis, which these will lead to end up with a well-managed post-crisis level and of course with the contribution of all family members to have a well-functioning family.

6.2 Implications

In the present-day society where culture has a falling value in the daily lives of people, divorce has been considered as a common phenomenon and is increasing at afrightening rate. Therefore, this needs an immediate attention from government, practitioners and other concerned body as these will contribute a lot in families of divorce in particular their children. Therefore, this study may have different implications on children's wellbeing, which is affected with divorce and parental neglect that imply the need of organizing parenting skills training in the absence of one of the parents at home. Children that experience trauma have emotional attachment loose because of the separation of parents. Therefore, psychosocial support program could be a one way to reduce the traumatizing events of divorce and parental neglect. More over families experiencing multiple stressors during the pre-and post-crisis periods, which may negatively imply to children's developmental needs could trigger the need of marriage counseling before and after the couple engage in marriage. Divorce erodes family resources that in turn affect the wellbeing of children. In addition, economic self-reliance program could support the family in general and children in particular. Divorce has negative societal reaction and program of awareness creation and advocacy could help reduce stigma and discrimination. In general, separated parents experienced maladaptation and they need rehabilitation. Hence, programs of psychosocial, economic and education have paramount significance to the affected families.

6.2.1. Implication for Social Work Practitioners

Social workers working with children who experienced adversity from divorce should work with their clients to get past the actual divorce and focus on themselves. Social workers need to promote client/practitioner positive relationship based on trust.

Social workers should create awareness about the family system and about divorce from the woreda level in order to always alert the community on everything regarding what an intact family is composed of and sharing the different cause of divorce and understand on how to overcome the problem that leads to separation or disruption of the family system.

In general, school social workers should work in collaboration with teachers to help children of divorced family improve their education by following up their academic performance, self-esteem and way they interact with their friends/classmates. They also have to have a direct conversation with the parents of children of divorce in order to understand more about the child and come up with a solution by working as a team, so that the children can be supported both at school and at home. Social work practitioners should advocate for pre and post-divorce counseling institutes to be open including all other professionals that will contribute in this manner in order to help divorced family cope with their stressors in a healthy manner without affecting their psychological and emotional wellbeing of them and their children. Social workers should work in collaboration with religious institutions in order to help married couples avoid divorce, as well as, to spiritually support people to cope with their stressors before and after the divorce process.

Using the Double ABCX Model as a Therapeutic Tool. The Double ABCX Model can be used to exploit as a framework to examine the process of pre and post-divorce and the adaptation. Additionally, the model has convenience as a therapeutic tool, which can benefit families and practitioners in identifying appropriate interventions. Social work practitioners who use the Double ABCX Model as a therapeutic tool must understand that each children and their family will have a unique and different experience of the parental divorce since they all will have experienced different stressors, resources, and perception of the divorce within the different families. Hence, the practitioner must not take on that the children and their family would be experiencing adjustment difficulties due to the parental divorce. The therapist can help the family in recognizing the different stressors and strains, the dominant crisis that contribute to the pile-up, which is the overall understanding of the crisis, and the different resources utilized to cope. The therapist can then picture and describe the specific factors confined within each of the components of the model for the specific family (Figure 1). This gives the family a more tangible understanding of the dynamics occurring in their lives, throughout the entire process. The

practitioner can shift the focus from the actual thinking of divorce to converging on the factors contributing to the maladaptation.

In addition to identifying, the different stressors that rise the potential for maladaptation, it is vital utilizing the Double ABCX Model to better identify the resources which may help the therapist in assisting the families therefore, the Double ABCX Model is a valuable tool in exploring the dynamics occurring within the specific family.

In general, the Double ABCX Model helps as a valuable tool in this complicated process like divorce. Moreover, the model provides a theoretical framework for sorting and understanding the process involved during pre and post-crisis of divorce and especially at the post-crisis adjustment on children of divorced parent. Therefore, by using the model as a therapeutic tool, practitioners can help a family in recognizing the different stressors contributing to their pile-up, available resources, and perception of the particular situation. In addition, this process enables the practitioners and families to frame a kind of an action plan aiming the decline of stressors and the rise of resources to enable a reframe of the situation, ultimately leading to the bonadaptation of the family.

6.2.2 Policy and Research
Based on this study finding, it is important for policy makers to pay attention and be more concernedon family with a clear way that escorts the implementation and evaluation of different interventions that address the psychoeducational, skill development and awareness creation on family crisis concerning divorce should be among the top priorities of government policy. Because a well structure family will contribute a lot in the development of a community and a country in large.

Concerning future research, this study has been only exploring the family stress model, which was a base in working using a model. Therefore, it is important for future study it should more focus on testing the model by using a mixed research approach.

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Appendix: A

<u>Interview Questionnaires</u>

In Depth Interview Guide for Divorced custodial parent

I am a master's student in the field of social work from Saint Mary University carrying out an interview on **Divorce, Parental Neglect and children's Wellbeing in the city of Addis Ababa**. This questionnaire is about my thesis work for Social Studies on Divorce, Parental Neglect and children wellbeing. I would appreciate in helping me answering questions with respect to the topic. These questions need to be answered openly so that the research could succeed and achieve its intended goal. Please note this information will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Thank you for your kindest co-operation in advance.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Demographic Characteristics

Part I

1. Sex———

2. Age———

3. Place of birth —————

4. Place of residence——————

5. Educational background ————

6. Religion ————

7. Your occupation ——————— your ex-spouse's occupation———————

8. Social status ——————

Part II

9. Would you please tell me about your marriage status?

- When did you get married?
- How many years did you stay as an ex-wife/husband?

----

10. Would you please tell me about your marriage life while living together?

- What were the most important things during marriage?

- What made life difficult during marriage?

----

11. Would you please tell me the main causes of your Divorce?

----

12. Have you ever received professional counseling about those problems leading to your divorce?

----

13. To whom you did talk about these matters/causes of conflict with your spouse?

----

14. What do you think is the most important preparation one should take into consideration before marriage?

----

15. Did you and your spouse tried to discuss with your children about your divorce?

----

16. What was the reaction of your children during and after divorce dealing with this particular issue?

----

17. When a couple decides to separate what are the options to be considered for the children?

----

18. What effects do you think divorce has on the children?

----

19. What is the best approach to use when telling a child that their parents are divorcing?

----

20. Who has custody of your children?

----

21. How did you arrive at the decision about who will have custody of your children?

----

22. What issues were considered in deciding who should have custody of your children?

----

23. Are you satisfied with the present custody arrangement?

----

24. What are the reasons that would influence you to change the present custody arrangement?

----

25. Is child support being given? Is it enough?

----

26. Do you think the non-custodial parent should take an active role in child rearing? If yes, please explain in which the non-custodial parent should take an active role?

----

27. During the divorce proceedings, do you think it would be helpful to have someone sit down with you and your spouse in order to work out a parenting relationship that would be the most beneficial for your children?

----

28. Who has been affected the most after divorce?

----

29. Have you noticed any change in your children growth that you think could be prevented if you had the chance living together?

Health:

School:

Relations with (Siblings, Friends, Grandparents and Other relatives)

----

30. Do you regret to be divorced now or are you happy with your decision?

----

31. How did the family adjust with all crisis happening to the family? Is there any experiences you could share to me?

Appendix: B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHILDREN

Demographic Characteristics

1. Sex——— Age——— Place of birth ——————— Place of residence ———————

2. Educational level ———————

3. How old were you when you learned that your parents divorced?

----

4. Who told you about it?

----

5. How did you feel when you learned that your parents would divorce?

----

6. Did you speak to your parents about your feelings?

----

7. What did you express to your parents?

----

8. What were your greatest fears about the divorce?

----

9. What did your parents do that helped you most through the divorce process?

----

10. What did your parents do that hurt you most or made managing the divorce difficult?

----

11. Do you think that you were the cause of the divorce?

----

12. If you thought that you were the cause of the divorce, why did you think this?

----

13. What do you think you could have done to stop the divorce from happening?

----

14. Who was the most helpful person to you during your parents' divorce?

----

15. Do you think that your parents did a good job managing the impact of the divorce for you? If so, how so? If not, why?

----

16. How did the divorce affect your life (education, health, appetite and relation with siblings & friends)?

----

17. How did you adjust to this situation?

----

18. What feelings do you have for marriage?

Appendix: C

SCREENING QUESTIONS

The Experiences of divorced custodial parent

Participant #:_____ Date: _____

Thank you for your interest in this study involving divorce. I am going to ask you a few questions to determine whether or not you are eligible for this study. This screening will take approximately 10 minutes. Would you like to continue?

(Proceed with questions if potential participant says yes)

1. How old are you? _____

2. Remarried/Single parent? _____

3. When did you divorce/separate with your partner? _____

4. How long did your relationship with your partner last prior to your divorce? _____

5. Did you have at least one child between the ages 12-16 that is living in the home when you divorce with your partner? _____

Potential participant will be thanked for their time and interest in the study. Those who are eligible will be asked if they would like to schedule an interview.

Appendix: D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Divorce, Parental Neglect and Children's Wellbeing

Purpose of the research study:

I am Meselu Mulugeta, and I am currently a student at St. Mary's University of Social Work Graduate Program. I am working on a research that will examine ways that families are impacted by divorce. Specifically, I am interested in hearing from families that are currently divorced regarding the process at pre & post-crisis level and the children wellbeing. I will be interviewing 7 divorced adults and 7 children of divorcees.

What you will be asked to do in the study:

You will be asked to answer a series of questions about your experiences of your family and the process of divorce. Questions will cover a range of subjects including your family's sociodemographic characteristics, in addition to how you and your child have been affected by the divorce and coping mechanisms used. You will be asked whether you are willing to have your responses tape recorded. Unless you object, the researcher will turn on the tape-recorder at the beginning of the interview and turn off the tape-recorder when the interview will end.

The interview that the parents and children are going to be asked will be anonymous. The researcher is working under the supervision of the advisor (Habtamu Mekonnen, PhD) from the department of Social Work, St. Mary's University, to ensure that I don't do anything unethical.

Please note that during the interview the researcher will not place your name on the interview paper or anything that could be used to figure out who you are. You are asked to please not say your name/nickname or talk about specific things that could be used to identify you or your child while you are being tape-recorded. If you do say anything that can be used to identify you, it will be left out during transcription. The researcher is interested in understanding your experience of having a divorced family and how the process went. If you agree to let me interview you, please sign this consent form and return it to the researcher.

Time required:

It should take about an hour but could be longer depending on the length of your answers.

Benefits:

The researcher does not intend to pay participants for taking part in this research study. However, your feedback will help the researchers understand how divorce affected families and

could be used to inform policy makers when they are considering how to serve families of divorced parents.

Risks and confidentiality:

Taking part in this study will create no risk to you. Your responses will be kept private. No one other than me working on this study will know your responses. I will not put your name or other identifiers on any of the responses you give. Rather, the interview will have a code attached to it. I will keep a list of names and codes separate to make sure that if someone reads your interview answers, he or she will not be able to determine that they are yours. The list will be kept so the researcher can contact participants if their answers need to be clarified, or if they are willing to be contacted for possible follow-up interviews. Your recorded answers will be transcribed using only the code attached, and any identifying information recorded (i.e., names) will be left out of the transcription. The tapes will be transcribed word by word as soon as possible; the tapes will then be erased afterward so your voice cannot be recognized later.

Voluntary participation:

You do not have to answer the questions or be recorded. Your participation is completely voluntary. Nothing will happen if you do not want to join the study; it will not affect you or your family member in any way.

Right to withdraw from the study:

You have the right to leave the study and stop the interview at any time. You can answer some questions and not answer other questions.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Meselu Mulugeta, Department of Social Work, P.O. Box 40048, Cell phone- +251 963178400

Agreement:

I have read this consent form. I voluntarily agree to answer the questions for this study and I have received a copy of this form.

Participant's   Researcher's

Name and signature ----------------------------Signature ------------------- Date ----------