ASSESSMENT OF COPING SKILLS OF SINGLE DIVORCED VENDA WOMEN

BY

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that the work on which the dissertation is based, is original, and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree at this or any other University.

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SUMMARY

Single parent family structure is becoming prevalent in South Africa as a result of divorce or separation. Venda, as part of South Africa is not immune from divorce, however traditional values have an impact on this issue amongst Venda women. Venda like other African nations that value their culture, is in transition to Westernisation. Marriage is greatly valued and is viewed as an avenue for security, social and emotional fulfillment. Girls are raised to believe that the dignity of the mistress of the house demands concealment of dissension within it. Venda women are expected to stay in and preserve their marriage no matter how difficult it becomes. Modern women who are increasingly better educated and more conscious of their rights, often feel they must challenge their husbands and may seek divorce when the marriage is intolerable. Although women in Venda are seeking divorce more frequently, conflict arises between cultural background and Westernisation. Divorced women are not acceptable, regarded as failures and are denigrated by society. Due to the kind of issues that divorce women in Venda are faced with, a survey assessing their coping skills was conducted on 50 divorced women with children and working in an industrial area at Shayandima in Venda. The demographic questionnaire and translated "Ways of Coping" scale (Revised) by Folkman and Lazarus (1984) as adapted for the purpose of this study was used. The results of the study reflected the different kinds of coping mechanisms used, i.e denial, avoidance, regression, counterphobia, rigidity, projection, self - destructive behavior, inventive behavior and dependency. Most of the women exhibited symptoms of depression, and were not aware of their mental condition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

1. 1   INTRODUCTION

The family is seen as the most basic social unit in most societies. It is a universal institution, although it takes on different forms in every society, being either patriarchal or matriarchal, (Solomon, 1965:1).

There are different definitions of a family that are debated upon. Viljoen cited in Steyn, Stryjdom, Viljoen & Bosman (1987:5) indicated that family is seen as a substructure, which fulfils specific functions in the orderly framework of functionalism.

In African societies where extended families exist, great value has been placed on the existence of the family and its members. The family is more than just a mere biological unit; it is the primary social unit within which the individual functions. Society stresses the importance of the family, within which personal needs are satisfied and because of the value placed on the family and its unity, any break in this idealised figuration is perceived as an intense threat to self (Solomon, 1965:1). The stress of divorce is comparable to the trauma imposed by the death of a family member (Seaman, 1988).

In the olden times Venda people preferred marrying people with whom they were related in fear of getting mixed up with wanderers from afar and witchcraft, however this is gradually changing. According to Venda custom a man ought to marry his "cross-cousins" i.e. the daughters of a maternal uncle. Presently inter-marriages within non-relatives are common because people are now allowed to choose their future partners (Van Warmelo and Phophi,(a) 1948).

1.2   THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The family like any other system has various members with interlocking and interdependent functions. They are linked together with visible and invisible loyalties and mutual commitment needs. What ever happens to one member of the family has an impact on the whole family. Whether the organisation is primarily healthy or dysfunctional, their style of interrelating respectful and individuated, enmeshed or disengaged, their lives are intertwined so that the decisions and actions of any member has implications for all of them (Kaslow and Schwartz, 1987:7).

Single parenting is as old as the existence of people. In the past, it resulted from bereavement, but in today's world divorce or separation has contributed to the existence of single parenting.

The single parent family is becoming a prevalent and enduring form of family life, it is critical to understand the types of stresses and strains confronting individuals in single parent families and how they adapt to those stresses (Compass and Williams, 1990:526).

In African populations the extended family structures which for many years provided family support in the face of adversity have been eroded. This has meant that single parents are faced with more tasks to cope with, resulting in psychological, physiological and socio-economic pressure. This study focuses on the coping skills of single parents, which were tested using a scale which highlighted the thoughts, and actions they used to cope with stresses encountered during the period immediately after divorce.

Marriage in Venda culture like any other African culture happens between two families and not just between the husband and wife. There are different kinds of marriages in Venda culture i.e. cross cousin, marriages of chiefs, marriages with non-relatives and strangers. There are different processes followed in the different types of marriages. In most cases the bride wealth is supposed to be paid out by the prospective husband's family before the woman is taken to the husband's home except in a case of a cross-cousin marriage and the father of the daughter feels sorry for the husband; then he may only require that the bride wealth be paid later or in instalments especially in a case where the husband is an orphan (Van Warmelo and Phophi, (a) 1948).

In the olden days some girls were betrothed whilst still small. When such a girl grew up she could not refuse where she was sent, should she refuse, she would be beaten till she obeyed. A boy did not make his own choice, the father would marry a girl for him and once that was done there was no turning back. In other instances, if the father died leaving unmarried but prospective wives that were not yet brought home, his eldest son then married them, if he already had a wife, he would give them to his unmarried brother. If the elder son refused to marry the women then the father's younger brother (uncle) might take them and cohabit with them (as if they were widows, the only difference being, if they were young girls, they were under much stricter control that real widows). In cases of a death of a husband the remaining brothers then took over and cohabited with them. (Van Warmelo and Phophi,(a) 1948).

There are some changes around the betrothal process today. Whilst previously the arrangements would be left in the parents' hands, the young man would start working and request the family to search for a wife for him. These days he sees a girl, proposes on his own, and then after an

3

agreement with his girlfriend, he will go and inform his parents who will send people to the girl's family and if they are both in agreement and accept each other then the process of marriage commences.

Traditionally African men are allowed to marry more than one wife and would be expected to support all of them. If the husbands are migrant workers they will visit home during long holidays like the Easter weekend and Christmas. The wife (ves) will be left in the care of the husband's mother.

During the whole process from birth to marriage the girls would have had no say in their lives. Their families dictated that for them and, when married, the in-laws then took over and would be in charge. Women played a passive role throughout. They were not allowed to go to school and were made to believe that they didn't need an education because the woman's place is in the kitchen. When men went to work, women were expected to take care of household duties and raise children.

In the past women were not allowed to go to school. Much has changed; women are increasingly becoming educated to a higher school level. They are no longer restricted to household tasks or to entering certain (female dominated) professions. Legislative changes have also ratified their equality under the law. This has encouraged many women to reject restrictive traditional practices. However, traditions die gradually and, in some cases, there are misunderstandings that men can't deal with and in some cases this leads to divorce

Venda women are respected for their perseverance, being silent when things go wrong in the family

and respecting their husbands, irrespective of their bad conduct or behaviour at home, e.g. ill treatment of wives and children or both including irresponsibility in the family matters. Girls are raised to believe that men have the final say in everything that concerns their families.

Traditionally, after divorce the women would go and live with their own parents, however some expressed the need to be independent and would move into their own home.

There is no evidence of any study or studies that looked at parents' coping skills after divorce or separation neither amongst Venda women nor in South Africa as a whole. It was necessary for a needs assessment to be done on single divorced parents because of the impact of divorce or separation. That research has been neglected in the field of nursing.

The study focused on the state of single parenthood ensuing from divorce or separation. Since the study focused on Venda women it was important to look at their customs pertaining to divorce and how they cope with the divorced state.

1.3   RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question was "what are the coping strategies of single divorced mothers in Venda?

1.4   THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to identify and describe coping strategies used for adaptation by Venda single mothers after divorce.

5

1.5   OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were:

(i)   To identify factors that precipitated divorce, which would indicate the intensity of pre-divorce problems.

(ii)   To identify coping strategies used;

(iii)   To assess the use of social support systems supplied by health care providers and

(iv)   To make recommendations / guidelines on the needs of single divorced woman.

1.6   OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this research, the following definitions will apply:

1.6.1 Single parent - the separated or divorced Venda woman who has custody of children.

1.6.2 Coping skills - internal and external resources the woman mobilised to deal with the stresses she encountered in her present status of single parenthood,

*   Internal resources include the woman's affective, cognitive, behavioural and spiritual functioning.

*   External resources are the support system the woman might have used such as relatives, churches and health workers.

1.6.3 Divorce/separation - complete legal separation of husband and wife leading to legal proceedings for divorce or African traditional separation whereby a woman was sent to her original home by the in-laws and the husband.

1.6.4. Marriage - the traditional Venda or legal union of man and woman to become husband and wife.

1.7 CONCLUSION

In most societies the family is the basic unit; seen as the substructure which fulfils specific functions. Great value is placed on the family and existence of its members in African society, and when an individual divorces his or her partner, it becomes very difficult because an individual does not marry a partner but the whole family. In the past, single parent families only resulted from death of the spouse. However, in today's world divorce and separation have contributed to the existence of single parenting. African girls grew up being told that the women's place is in the kitchen and were not allowed to go to school. They are now becoming educated and no longer feel restricted to the household tasks and are entering certain professions. Women increasingly are being encouraged to reject old restrictive traditions, and this has led to tensions in the marital relationship in some cases leading to divorce.

Divorce is a very stressful situation hence the need for research to assess the coping skills of single divorced mothers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The family remains an important institution that emphasises social values regardless of the community

it stems from. Although no studies have been conducted on coping skills of single parents in South

Africa, studies have been carried out in other countries. Some of those studies indicated similarities in

coping strategies of women post divorce or separation, which are relevant to the present study.

This chapter focuses on the importance of the family, the phenomenon of single parenthood, causes of

divorce, traditional influences, the stages of divorce, changes in mental health status, adaptation,

coping strategies and socialisation.

Divorce studies which have been conducted tend to focus on the impact of divorce on children. Very

few concentrated on the needs of single parents, including their coping skills (Volgy, 1991).

Although the single parent family is an emerging type of family structure in South Africa, some

consider it pathological. The prevalence of single parent families presented a threat to the American

family system and values and this has been considered to have impact on the children as pointed out

by Dorbusch and Gray in Dornbusch and Strober (1985:274).

2.2 IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY

2.1.1 Global Perspective:

The family is an important system in one's life. While still married, divorced women felt they belonged to a social unit. They became accustomed to thinking of themselves as part of a unit and upon the dissolution of marriage, had to return to thinking of themselves as individuals. (Volgy, 1991:226).

2.2.2 African Perspective:

In African culture marriage remains the major avenue to security, full participation in neighbourhood affairs and social and emotional fulfilment. The bride wealth (dowry) is considered a guarantee for the stability of marriage and an inducement to the woman's relatives to use their influence to prevent dissolution for frivolous reasons (Mair, 1934:74). The acceptance of the dowry symbolises the acceptance and the willingness of the woman's family to extend family relations to the man's family. This extension gives the family authority to intervene when there is conflict between the two partners.

Van Warmelo and Phophi (c) (1948) did an extensive study on Venda culture and divorce. However, they did not focus on divorcees' coping skills. They pointed out that, within the Venda culture, marriage did not only occur between two people or partners but involved the two families which brought the husband and wife together and therefore divorce did not come easily. Nothing happens in Venda culture without the involvement of the family.

There are different views on dowries in the United Kingdom and South Asia. The findings of the study conducted on South Asian women in Britain indicated that dowries are used to sell women as property in the arranged marriage relationship. This differs from how traditional women in South Africa view dowries. Highly educated women who were cohabiting with their partners said dowries degraded women, yet the women with lower educational level in arranged marriages said that dowries are part of tradition, custom, and identity of South Asian women (Bhopal, 1997).

2.3. PHENOMENON OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD

Single parenthood is not a new concept and will be looked into from different perspectives. This type of parenthood is not isolated to a certain culture or society. It happens everywhere and is not restricted to age either. The global concept will be discussed below and the significance of single parenthood in Venda/ African culture will be explored. There are also cultural influences that play a part when one is going the process of divorce and these will impact on how the person copes with the process.

2.3.1 Global Concept

Barber and Eccles (1992:109) pointed out that although not all single parenthood was due to divorce, marital dissolution is the largest single contributor to the increasing number of children living with one parent. "Until recently most researchers and mental health professionals had viewed the family as incomplete following divorce, using terms such as "father absent" and "broken" to describe single parent female headed families and lamenting the disappearance of the traditional family". This prevailing negative conceptualisation biased the current knowledge base about the impact of divorce on families because of its impact on the range of outcomes and mediators studied.

Single parenthood is not a new concept but appears to be unacceptable to many people. Women are not welcomed by the society, they are denigrated, not respected and regarded as a failure because they could not keep the marriage together. This has been an observation made by the researcher.

Divorce research in America has sustained a negative impression on single parenting, because its emphasis has been on children's adjustment to the stressors accompanying family transition after divorce (Barber and Eccles, 1992:108).

According to Song cited in Volgy (1991:219-220) divorced Asian American women had traditionally been considered as outcasts by the ethnic community and they also suffered rejection, were neglected and were blamed for having failed in the most important women's role of a wife and homemaker according to cultural norm. The unjust persecution has slowly subsided due to the occurrence of divorce as a universal phenomenon.

Divorce has been characterised as a highly disruptive life event creating effects ranging from devastation to relief. Divorce itself is considered stressful, resulting in the loss of marital relationship leading to feelings of rejection. Stress after divorce resulted from the process involved as the individuals learn new coping skills. (Volgy, 1991: 34 & 38).

Divorce usually represents a major loss and people who experience this loss grieve. Accepting and moving beyond this loss requires a mourning process. The mourning stages described in loss through death apply to any loss of marriage and partner through divorce. There are four grief stages reviewed in correlation to divorce.

Stage 1, has been classified as "Shock" or "Denial"; this is the initial stage after the loss. The person is usually in a state of disbelief and feels lost and dazed. This is a stage of shock and it helps

temporarily. A grieving person is not immediately overwhelmed by loss of a partner because there are many things that need immediate attention or preclude the person from thinking about loss of a partner.

In stage II, that of "protest" stage is characterized by the preoccupation with the loss of the partner and obsessing over the relationship's details. As one progresses through the stages of grief one experiences psychosomatic symptoms; body aches and emotional tension. One might also have guilt feelings because one cannot successfully deal with issues in the same manner as under normal circumstances. One also becomes very angry about things. One does not understand why the loss has happened even though one is knows that it had to happen.

In stage III, that of "Despair", the person begins to accept the loss. Depressive symptoms and disorganised feelings are common as the person withdraws from the former partner but is not yet ready to redirect energies. Grief cannot be hurried, but eventually the emotional balance returns to the grieving person.

Last, stage IV is a time of "Detachment" or "Resolution" in which the mourners start to recognise their lives and demonstrate interest in new activities and relationships. Even though one can't bring back the person one has lost, one has to face reality. Once a change happens in one's life, one finds new meaning in life. Anniversaries and other precipitants may evoke sad and empty feelings, but preoccupation with the lost partner has disappeared. When loss strikes it is a terrible blow and pain is tremendous. It takes time to heal a painful wound, especially one that affects the heart. One cannot afford to give up but try and make life significant. These stages have oversimplified the real life situation. People react differently to divorce. Having the four stages does not mean they will go through each one of them chronologically (Pappas, 1989, Kubler –Ross, 1960 and 1975).

"Growth can come in unexpected ways of our life's experiences" (Kubler-Ross, 1975; 98).

Song (in Volgy, 1991: 220) reported that the fact that divorce could be a problematic occurrence did not mean that the act itself was detrimental or destructive to individuals. After divorce, women were left alone, without the status, comfort or security that their previous social status provided and this was accompanied by dislocation in social activities and friendship. It was stated that a few women reported that they discovered negative attitudes towards them because they presented a threat to wives who might believe that divorced women were after their husband, and to husbands who might also fear that the divorcees would, in turn, encourage their wives to seek a divorce. (Volgy, 1991:226).

2.3.2 Venda / African Significance:

Single parenthood in African / Venda culture is difficult to accept due to traditional expectations and cultural influences regarding the process of divorce.

Bvuma (1994: 28) indicated that social and cultural pressures have kept women conforming to the expressive role expected of them (i.e. conforming to the ideal-self) and this is a role that dictates conformity and obedience, while men occupy the instrumental role of power and rationality.

Eisentein (1988) holds that those societal expectations for normal behaviour in females are referred as femininity. The societal stereotype of the feminine female refers to those characteristics that distinguish men from women. These are characteristics such as passivity, weakness and compliance.

Traditionally in Venda culture the wife is expected to be long-suffering as regards what she should consider major offences. Being beaten up from time to time was taken for granted, and not considered

a good enough reason to leave her husband unless her life was in danger. It could happen that the husband beat his wife to death if he was thought to have a good enough reason. In such cases he would not be severely condemned by the public opinion. Girls were brought up to believe that the dignity of the mistress of the house demanded a decent concealment of dissension within it. Women were not supposed to quarrel with their husbands and the attitude towards an unfaithful husband would be summed up by phrases such as "we know how men are". Such behaviour is increasingly not tolerated by the majority of modern women who are becoming educated and learning their rights and feel that they have to challenge their husbands (Mair, 1934:76).

Though women might try to act according to their legal rights, cultural values still apply. They experience conflict with regard to the process of divorce. Traditional marriages could only be dissolved when the bride wealth or 'lobola' had been returned after the woman had gone home, however, that did not prevent those who were married legally from proceeding with their legal, western divorce.

Venda people like other Africans, are going through a transition to Westernisation and are experiencing conflict because of their cultural background. Africans are not the only people who are in the process of going through a transition period to Westernisation. Song (in Volgy, 1991:220) discussed the study of Asian women who had immigrated to the United Kingdom. They were confronted with a Western culture, which in many aspects was at odds with their own traditional culture. As they continued to retain many traditions they were unable to discard, understanding their feminine roles from a cultural context proved to be helpful and alleviated the conflict for these women.

2.3.3 Cultural Influences

According to Young Song (cited in Volgy (1991:221) early in the socialisation process, women were made to believe that they were inferior, must expect and acquiesce to preferential treatment accorded males, were subjected to spatial constraints in movements, were expected to maintain a proper social distance from men in their household and practice social avoidance with unrelated men. They were expected to conceal their emotions, which were incompatible with their role requirements and were expected to cultivate covert strategies for goal realisation i.e. they learnt to work the system. They were married into strange households where their reception was uncertain. Conformity to traditional norms and commitment to the cultural role assigned to them ensured their acceptance by society and their continued social security.

In South Africa, in the past, divorce proceedings were handled differently according to the reasons and the manner in which the wife was sent home (Van Warmelo & Phophi, 1948). On many occasions women were humiliated throughout the whole process. If the husband decided he did not want the wife any more due to a perception that she was involved in witchcraft, laziness or was just tired of her, he had to send her home accompanied by a go-between with an accompanying-gift. Should the in-laws not accept the gift it meant that they did not want to break the relationship and would like them to reconcile. Court proceedings are not something new. When the families had problems with the traditional divorce procedure, the matter was taken to court. When there were children involved in the marriage, the custody problem had to be dealt with. In Venda custom the husband could not claim custody of children unless he returned the dowry in full. Krige and Comaroff (1981:13) reported that the Venda rule on divorce gave the mother custody of the children and the husband was required to return the bride wealth.

3.3 CAUSES OF DIVORCE

Cutrufeli (1983) reflected on how societies and cultures were affected in different ways by colonisation not forgetting the social change. The most frequent consequence was the breakdown of the family structure and traditional kinship grouping, followed by a transformation of the social function of a family that inevitably primarily affected the traditional sexual division of labour.

Cutrufeli (1983) reported that the results of a study on divorce in the Luvhale people showed that only a small percentage of divorce was due to prolonged absence of a migrant husband and this appears to also be the case in Venda. Divorce was very difficult in the olden days and the native courts proclaimed that it was their duty towards a tribe's migrant not to grant his wife an easy divorce. Even though different cultures had different ways of granting divorce, it was generally taken for granted within the first, second and third years of the husband's absence that he would be back even if he had never sent any word home, therefore desertion of less than 2 years could never be a cause for divorce. (Cutrufeli, 1983).

Richard's (Cutrufeli, 1983:109) analysis of the grounds on which the Native courts would grant divorce revealed that the courts appeared to rule in favour of men. When looking at other cultures like the Nguni (for example Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi and Ndebele), women were unable to divorce their husbands for any reason while a man could do so at any time. The customary law for matrimonial societies was usually characterised by a large degree of tolerance towards human frailties. Among the Yansi (for example Malawians) occasional unfaithfulness by either party did not justify divorce. It was not considered a serious issue if a man assaulted or was violent to his wife but if a woman abused her husband the elders of the lineage considered the case carefully. Any physical violence used by the

woman against her husband was a grievous affair tantamount to a public injury. Divorce would probably take place if an angry wife broke her husband's possessions and threw them outside (Cutrufeli, 1983:102).

2.5   DIVORCE STAGES

Divorce literature generally described divorce as a multistage process occurring over time and stages, which might overlap and not necessarily occur in fixed order. Hansen and Shireman (1986) noted that generally physical separation and legal divorce occur before individuals achieve final 'emotional' and 'physic' divorce. Chiriboga (1982) indicated three stages that indicated the complexity of divorce and separation, the transition period of learning how to live a new life in a new world and re-establishment in the social order.

Krantzler (1974) described divorce as an emotional crisis triggered by a sudden and unexpected loss. The death of a relationship was the first stage in a process in which the death was recognised; the relationship was mourned and then laid to rest to make way for self-renewal.

After the initial shock people began the painful process of restoring balance in their lives by developing new ways of coping in a frantic effort to reduce their internal tensions produced by the crisis. Krantzler reported that, in that process, hidden resources and abilities were tapped, although in the initial stages people might be in too much pain to recognise them. He concluded that the crisis and stages of divorce needed understanding. Chiriboga (1982) reported that a study done on adaptation to marital separation in later and earlier life indicated that, during the period immediately after separation, a period during which even previous research indicated the major changes occur in on individual's life, the older respondents were more unhappy.

17

2. 6   CHANGE IN ECONOMIC STATUS

William (1989:29) raised the issue that single parent households tend to have a lower income than two parent households and that, while this problem had partially been attended to by employment, the income generated by the single person is often not adequate to support the whole family. Cutrufeli (1983:92) reported that President Nyerere had said "In the Africa of old everybody used to work". This demonstrated that people had their own social function and source of income. "Political independence has, no doubt, brought an increase in the number of women workers everywhere, not so much in industry as in the so-called "modern sector" of the economy. In other words, more women today work for a wage or salary" (Cutrufeli, 1983:92). Factory work is done primarily by single women like widows, divorced or unmarried mothers and this fact has also been observed in Venda, amongst women employed in the Shayandima industrial area.

Several studies have indicated that the burden of financial loss, leading to poverty and the loss of a partner to perform parenting functions hampers the process of adaptation especially for those with young children (Volgy, 1991, 182; Chiriboga, 1980; William, 1989; & Eiduson, 1983.).

In the past, Venda people used to rely on agricultural production as the primary source of income as in most African countries. However, this has dropped to a low level due to drought. Economic resources have been a cause for concern when assessing the relationship between marital status and income. Marital dissolution generally leads to a decline in the economic situation of women and their children (Barber & Eccles, 1992).

2.7 CHANGES IN MENTAL HEALTH STATUS

Hall, Gurley, Sach, and Krysio (1991, 218) documented the high-risk status of low-income single mothers for depressive symptoms. Previous research indicated that everyday stressors are directly associated with depressive symptoms. Hall et all observed that the main effects of everyday stressors were avoidance coping, a decline in the quantity of family relationships and perceived tangible support. He concluded that mothers who lack support from family and friends may be likely to use avoidance as a strategy to deal with chronic stressors and that this approach might result in increased depression since direct attempts to reduce stressors were not made. There is evidence that parental psychological disturbances place children at risk for negative outcomes and may lead to abusive parenting behaviour and that maternal depression may impact adversely on the health of the child (Hall et al, 1991:214).

According to Krantzler's findings from his counselling sessions, people who showed depressive features after divorce were unaware that they were depressed (Krantzler, 1997). They could hardly sleep, had no appetite, felt numb, felt distant and felt cut off from the real world, had no interest in anything and were isolated and withdrawn from the society. He described the reaction to divorce or separation as "separation shock". The longer and more involved the marriage, the greater the severity of symptoms and more extensive their spread throughout their lives. Although there was proof of depression, after divorce women were more depressed after 18 months of divorce and this depression centred more on continued feelings of abandonment and feeling overwhelmed by day to day living, parenting responsibilities, a failure to achieve gratification and the happier state they envisaged in seeking divorce. The same study showed that two years later the

pleasure of being notably more mature was evident and women felt more competent and more capable of handling themselves (Wallerstein and Kelly (1980).

In contrast to Krantzler, Song (Volgy, 1991:219) reported that newly divorced women were significantly more depressed and their increased depression was affected by greater economic problems, lower perceived standard of living and lesser availability of a close, confiding relationship.

"Through torment of painful emotions, divorcee's struggled to cope with depression. Among the distress and dislocations that accompany divorce is the tendency for a woman to blame herself for the failure of her marriage" (Volgy, 1991:223).

According to Brown and Harris (1978) a study done in Cumberwell indicated a high rate of psychiatric disorder in divorced women. They also pointed out different reasons why people do not seek treatment either from their general practitioners or a psychiatric department. These included reasons like having young children and different explanations regarding their psychiatric state, the social support and environment was of crucial importance than seeking professional help. The last reason cited was their personality factors. It was realised during interviews that many women were determined to carry on with their lives as though nothing or little was wrong in spite of the intolerable burden of symptoms.

Durkheim, in Brown and Harris (1978: 283) found that there was a high suicide rate amongst childless wives. He therefore suggested that children offer women greater protection than men because women are comforted more by children and are more sensitive to their influence. A number of women recounted that the only thing that prevented them from harming themselves was the need to care for their children.

Kaslow and Schwartz (1987:198) did a study on Americans comparing variables among divorced adults by gender and parental status and showed that suicidal thoughts occurred more frequently among the childless than among divorced parents, but the childless had a slightly better score on 'Total Quality of Life Now' as compared with same sexed subjects who had children.

Antai-Otong described the feeling of hopelessness as a feeling of giving up and often accompanied by depression. Clients were often apathetic, detached from others, had a poor self-concept and were self-deprecating. Some of the them were depressed, presented with somatic complaints, sometimes complained of not knowing why they felt sad and were more likely to threaten suicide (Baumann, Johnston & Antai-Otong, 1990; 186).

2.8   ADAPTATION POST DIVORCE

Important variables that played a part in mothers adapting post divorce were family structure, the presence or absence of children, age of the youngest child, the age of the mothers and duration of the marriage. Previous research has demonstrated that termination of marriages produced more traumatic effects and more problematic adjustment for older women (Volgy, 1991 and Chiboga, 1980). It is reported that women with a traditional sex role attitude experience fewer positive adjustments in the divorce process and reported a high level of psychological distress (Brown and Manela, 1978).

Chiriboga (1982) reported that the twelve and eighteen month periods immediately after divorce or separation brought major changes to the individual's life: the elderly showed more unhappiness than the young .

The period immediately after divorce is critical, when one engages in exploration of the individual's inner world as well as outer environment. Some of the subjects were fortunate enough to receive psychotherapeutic treatment were able to sort out their lives and mobilise their energy and optimism to utilise the opportunities inherent in their complete life. For others life continued as a prolonged period of reactive depression, a time of undebated fury, desire for revenge and a sense of hopelessness (Karslow and Schwartz, 1987).

It is unclear whether single mothers experienced more psychological symptoms than their married counterparts. However, the interview data reported by Hetherington and Cox, indicated that during the first and second years after divorce, single parents are faced with more economic and household problems and stresses than their married counterparts (Compass and Williams, 1990: 526-527).

2.9   COPING STRATEGIES

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described coping as the person's constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external or/and internal demands that were appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources. It also meant the person's efforts to manage demands whether successful or not. Mothers with young children in transition from being married to being a single mother expressed the feeling of being trapped because of their children's greater dependence on them (Volgy, 1991:226).

Various types of coping strategies have been studied and it has been shown that the use of avoidance as a coping strategy is common in mothers without a social support system and that this had been assessed as generally ineffective. However, in divorce cases there was not much one could do to

change the situation, but rather use emotion - and problem-focused management of responses to the stressors rather than trying to change the situation (Volgy, 1990).

According to Folkman (1984), the relationship between personal control and stress, coping and adaptational outcome is more complex than once assumed. 'Believing that an event is controllable does not always lead to a reduction in stress or to a positive outcome, and believing that an event is uncontrollable does not always lead to an increase in stress or to a negative outcome" (Folkman, 1984:839).

There are two major functions of coping - the regulation of emotions or distress (emotion focused coping) and the management of the problem causing distress. Aldwin (1994:191) pointed out that the process through which the socio-cultural context affects the stress and coping process is not well understood. The influence of culture on stress and coping is so pervasive that it is little noticed. There are four ways in which culture can affect stress and coping i.e. cultural context shapes the types of stressors that an individual is likely to experience, affects appraisal of stressfulness of a given event affects the choice of coping strategy that an individual utilises in any given situation and the provision of different institutional mechanisms by which an individual can cope with stress. Coping in a non-culturally prescribed manner may result in greater stress. Shek and Cheung in Aldwin (1994) indicated that cultures are divided into those that are self-reliant (internal locus of control) and those that rely more on others (external locus of control).

Meninger, in Lazarus and Folkman (1984:119), identified orders of regulatory devices that are ranked according to the level of internal organisation they indicate. These are called coping strategies and include self-control, humour, crying, sweating, weeping, boasting, talking it out, thinking though and working off energy (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984:119).

Sue, in Aldwin (1994: 209), supported the indirect action of coping which to cultures other than Western (for example Asian and African) is a preferred way of problem solving. This may be viewed as passivity by those used to taking a more direct stance. For example, in both Asian and traditional African cultures (of which Venda is one), the daughter in-law or son may not confront in-laws and in cases where there is a problem, an elderly person like an uncle is called in to iron out the differences between the two parties.

Acceptance may prove to be a buffer against stress and excessive blame. Aldwin (1994), in discussing the learned helplessness theory of depression, concluded that there was no difference in the control of the environment exerted by people with chronic depression and non-depressed people.

CONCLUSION

It has been deduced in this chapter that the family plays an important role in one's life. In African culture marriage takes place between two families and this makes divorce difficult to handle.

Single parenthood is not a new concept, it happens everywhere. There are cultural influences that play a major role when going through the process of divorce and these have impact on how the person copes with the process.

Divorce usually represents a major loss and people who experience it go through grieving process. The four stages of divorce are similar to the stages of mourning described in loss through death. Throughout the whole process hope persists.

Venda women like any other Africans are going through a transition to Westernisation and are experiencing conflict because of their cultural background.

The researcher could not find literature on studies done in South Africa on coping skills of divorced women. It had been indicated that divorce is not just an easy way out of the marriage but is a process and women go through stages, which are sometimes not easy to manage. In African culture marriage remains an important avenue for security. The woman is not just married to her husband but to the whole family, that is why divorce is not easy.

The depressive features they exhibit indicate some of the difficult moments they go through. Different ways of coping and ways of adapting to the situation are used.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a detailed outline of the study design, data collection, ethical

considerations, methods ensuring reliability, validity and the method of data analysis of the

study.

3.2 STUDY DESIGN

It is an exploratory, descriptive, survey conducted on a group of Venda divorced

mothers with children. Those women came from similar socio-economic backgrounds.

3.3 POPULATION

3.3.1 TARGET POPULATION

The target population of the study was single women between the ages of 18-40 years residing

in the Thohoyandou district of Venda which is in the Northern Province, who had been

divorced or separated and were employed in the Shayandima industrial area. The list of names

of employees was obtained from ten different small business factory managers who kept

records of employment specifying the marital status (legal and traditional) of every employee

in that factory. It was a group of divorced women from a similar socio-economic background.

3. 3. 2 SAMPLING

Sample size - A non- probability, convenience (quota), sample of 50 separated or divorced mothers who met the criteria (i.e. divorced women with children, over the age of 18years, working in the factory, present on the day of the interview, agreeing to voluntarily participate in the study after being given information and signed consent) from the 200 single women working in different factories were interviewed. Ten factories were used and were identified by numbers.

Quota sampling is a means by which samples reflect certain characteristics of the population being studied. The target population was selected because of their similarity in socio-economic background and their life circumstances.

Procedure - The sample was selected conveniently and proportionally from workers present and available on the day in the ten different factories. A quota sampling procedure was implemented, this is a form of convenience sampling but the criteria (i.e. divorced women with children, who are over the age of 18years, working in the factory, present on the day of the interview, voluntarily participate on the study after being given information and signed consent) were identified and determined by the researcher (Polit and Hungler, 1991:238) a 25% (i.e. 1:4) representation from each factory was required to ensure equal representation and participation from each factory. In factories with less than four people, one person was interviewed.

THE DETAILS WERE ILLUSTRATED AS FOLLOWS

TABLE 3.1

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE TOTAL STUDY POPULATION: -

FACTORIES	NO.OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES	NO.OF DIVORCEES	RESPONDENTS
1	17	4	1
2	25	2	1
3	100	58	15
4	125	20	4
5	150	10	2
6	150	40	10
7	50	12	3
8	160	30	8
9	55	2	1
10	100	22	5
TOTAL	972	200	50

3.3.3   DATA COLLECTION

3.3.3.1. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The "Ways of coping scale" (Revised) by Folkman and Lazarus (1984) (See Appendix 3B) was adapted for the purpose of this study. Permission to use and adapt the scale was obtained from Mind Garden in California. This scale has been extremely well researched and

revised. This was a Likert-type scale, which was submitted for expert consideration to an expert researcher for his comments. After discussion with the representative from the Medical Research Council of South Africa, it was recommended that the scale be reworded to ensure clarity by simplifying it to yes/no format. The researcher reworded the revised scale, originally a Likert scale. The scale was reworded to a yes/no response instrument as the researcher postulated that the population under study would be more likely to be able to respond to these types of questions in view of their low educational background. This was then piloted and the researcher's postulation appeared justified as the respondents indicated that they found the categories easy to respond to. This is a 58-item questionnaire listing a wide range of thoughts and actions that might be used to deal with stressful encounters. Single parents were asked to indicate which of the 58 behaviours, thoughts or feelings they had used since separation from their husbands. There were nine new items added on the scale as suggested by the postgraduate committee to cover the depressive symptoms, child abuse and relocation of the mother i.e.

1.(d) Child and wife abuse.

22. I lost interest in many things.

23. I thought of dying.

24. I tried to kill myself.

28. Slept more than usual.

29. I slept badly.

34. I gained / lost weight.

39. I moved to a different place.

47. I cried a lot.

3.3.3.2 Demographic questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire with standard questions concerning age, income, number of children, ages of the children, number of people living in the home and the number of breadwinners was utilised.

3.4 METHOD OF COLLECTION

A survey was conducted by means of a structured interview schedule using a questionnaire and scale i.e. Ways of Coping (Revised by Folkman and Lazarus 1984) as adapted for the purpose of this study. Written consent was obtained from the managers of different factories for using their facilities and the researcher also informed participants before the administration of the questionnaire commenced. The researcher on an individual basis administered the questionnaire to those who met the criteria and were available on duty on that particular day. The administration of the questionnaire was conducted in a private place at their work place to avoid the inconveniences of travelling and to maintain privacy. The questionnaire was administered in Luvenda, the respondent's own language and lasted a maximum of 45 minutes, and it was administered at a time suitable for both the employer and the respondents after obtaining consent from both the employer and participants.

3.5 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main study. This was undertaken by distributing the tool to four single mothers who met the criteria. The pilot study revealed that the respondents encountered difficulties in responding to most English questions because of

their lack of regular use of the language and unfamiliar idiomatic expressions and they constantly sought assistance from family members.

It was therefore decided that an interview be conducted in their own language which was Luvenda and idioms and activities congruent to Venda culture reviewed. An independent translator was assigned to verify the translation. The questionnaire was translated into Luvenda and the same words were used for every respondent to avoid misinterpretation. The researcher administered the questionnaire. Re-translation back into English ensured that the questionnaire retained the original meaning.

3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES

The ethical considerations were based on principles of protecting human subjects participating in research as required by the human subject ethical committee. Ethical issues considered were the following:

3.6.1 Informed consent - this included providing the subjects with a full description of the purpose or aims, method, anticipated benefits, potential hazards, the discomfort it might entail and how any distress or pain would be handled; how privacy, confidentiality and anonymity would be guarded and the manner in which information would be used.

Furthermore they were informed of the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from participation without fear or recrimination. Each subject was given an information sheet outlining the purpose of the study (See appendix 1). They were asked to read and sign the consent sheet.

Consent - a written consent was obtained from both the participants and managers of different firms before commencing with the interview, (see Appendix 1& 2).

3.6.2 Confidentiality - the participants' anonymity was guaranteed by ensuring that

their names were not used on the questionnaire or in any publication arising from the study. Participants were identified using numbers. The right to privacy to all participants was guaranteed. The study was conducted in an office provided by the employer and there were no disruptions or interference until the end of the interview.

3.6.3 Safety - Since it was expected that some women might experience an adverse or emotional reaction during participation in the study, provision was made for the participants to avail themselves of a group counselling session. The interviewer contracted with a psychiatric nurse at Tshilidzini Hospital to organise this group each time ten women had participated in an interview. This was independent of the researcher and was to address freedom from harm of the psychological sequelae, which may have arisen due to participation in this study (Polit and Hungler, 1978:28). They were given the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

3.7 VALIDITY

Validity refers to the extent to which various research elements measure what each is supposed to measure (Seaman, 1987:317). The instrument has previously been used for testing maternal coping skills (Volgy, 1991). There are various ways of judging validity. When addressing content validity - the questionnaire and the scale are representative of appropriate questions in relation to coping skills. The items in the tool are arranged logically starting with the demographic data and then items on coping skills.

3.8   RELIABILITY

Reliability refers to the consistency, stability, accuracy and dependability over time of what the scale is to measure. Stability was not ascertained because the study was done only once. The instrument is able to discriminate and therefore is sensitive. It was developed to assess coping skills only. All subjects were asked the same questions using the same terminology to ascertain that the instrument was objective. The appropriateness of the instrument had been checked and it was translated and translated back again to check for proper use of language and meaning.

3.9   DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed with the help of the consultant statistician from the medical Biostatistical services at the University of Witwatersrand. Descriptive data will be presented in graphs, tables and pie charts.

Clinstat Cc using SAS system was used for allocation of scores and analysis the data.

Data were also interpreted with the assistance of the clinical psychologist to avoid any bias.

3.10   CONCLUSION

The pilot study had been satisfactorily conducted and the researcher had to translate the questionnaire and scale to Luvenda, which is easily understood by all respondents. Additional questions which cover depressive symptoms, child abuse and relocation of the mother were added. The presence of the researcher was significant as the participants required clarification about their benefits after participation, which was clearly stipulated on the information sheet.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Data from single mothers were analysed and are presented in this chapter. The consultant statistician from the Biostatistical techniques used software statistics to determine frequency distribution. Data will be presented in descriptive statistics using tables, pie charts and graphs and were arranged using a Freelance Graphics programme.

Many respondents elaborated on the answers given. Where they have done so, this will be given in the text as their elaboration provides a greater insight into their responses.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

%
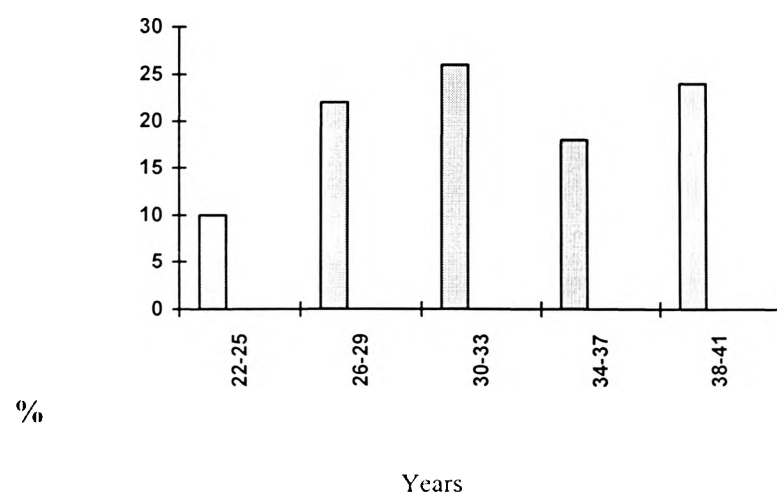
Years

n=50

Fig 4.1 Age of respondents

4.2.1 Age of Respondents

Eleven (22%) respondents were between age 26 and 29 years and between 30 and 33 years, 13 (26%) were between the age 38 years and 41 years, 9 (18%) were between age 34 and 37 years and only 5 (10%) were in the youngest group between age 22 years and 25 years. There was no one between 19 years and 21 years.

Steyn, Stryjdom, Viljoen & Bosman (1987: 446) indicated that there is no information regarding black marriages or on the dissolution of such marriages, as the Central Statistical Service has indicated that many black people marry according to customary law, therefore no figures about ages of divorced women are available. Figures for other nationalities were provided in 1984. Asian women had the highest percentage of 40% of divorcees aged between 20 and 29 years, Coloured women 36% and whites 37% in the same category of years.

4.2.2 Income of respondents per month
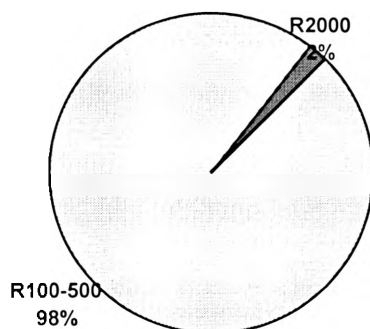
n=50

Fig. 4.2 Income per month

The majority of the respondents were in the lower income bracket. N = 50 (98%) earned between R100 and R500 per month. Only one person (2%) was on the extreme, earning more than R2001-00 per month in the middle-income bracket.

The income of the subjects is below what is recognised by the National Education, Health & Allied workers (NEHAWU) as a living wage, which is R1500-00, and it was one of the demands of NEHAWU in the historic strike of 1992 (NEHAWU, Special edition 1992). NEHAWU is a recognised union in the Republic of South Africa.

4.2.3   Number of Children
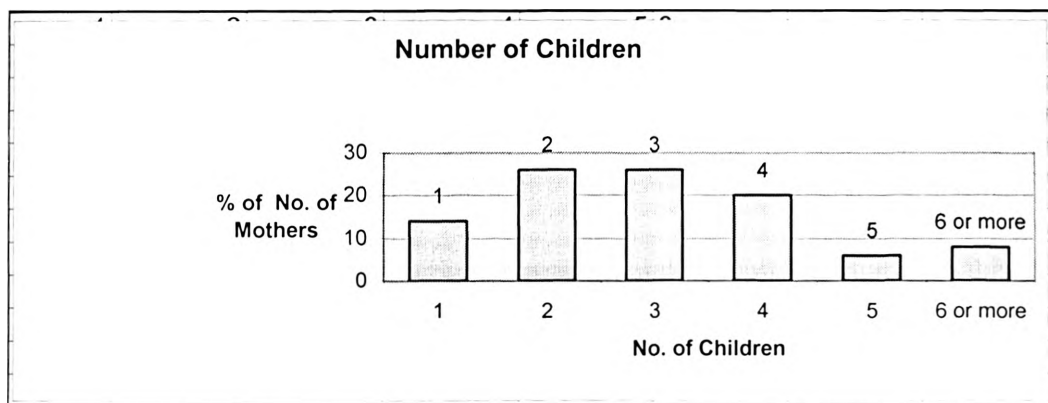
Number of Children

n=50

Fig. 4.3 Number of children

Figure 4.3 indicates that there were a total of 152 children from 50 mothers. 7 (14%) mothers had one child each, 13 (26%) mothers had 2 children each, another 13 (26%) had 3 children each, 10 (20%) mothers had 4 children each, 4 (8%) had a different number children and out of these 4 (8%) one mother had 7 children and 3 mothers had 6 children each. The number of children became a significant socio-economic stressor in women who are not earning a living wage yet are required to support themselves.

36

4.2.4 Ages of children

4.2.4.1 Age 0-3 years. N=16

13 (81,3%) mothers had one child and 3 (18,8%) had 2 children each in this age category.

4.2.4.2 Age 4-6 years. N=21

18 (85,1%) mothers had one child and 4 (13,3%) had 2 children each in this category of age.

4.2.4.3 Age 7-9 years. N=30

In this category 26 (86,7%) mothers had one child and only 4 (13,3%) had 2 children. N=30 children in this age group can be very stressful because they are beginning school and in the rural areas most children start school in that age category.

4.2.4.4 Age 10-12 years. N=18.

17 (94%) had one child each and one (5,6%) had 2 children.

4.2.4.5 Age 13-15 years. N=19

Out of 19 mothers who responded, 15 (78,9%) had one child and 4 (21,1%) had 2 children in this age category.

4.2.4.6 Age 16 and above 16 years N=15

All 15 mothers had a different number of children in this category. 4 (26%) had one child each, 6 (40%) had two children each, 2 (13,3%) had 3 children.

Children in this age group can be a good support system to their parents. This was confirmed by Cian (1988:568) who reported in his study that 25 of 30 divorced women reported that apart from other support systems their adult children were also primarily responsible for the eventual improvement in their circumstances or psychological functioning.

4.2.5 Number of people living in the home

Adults

% of
Mothers

No. of Adults

Children

% of
Children

No. of
Children
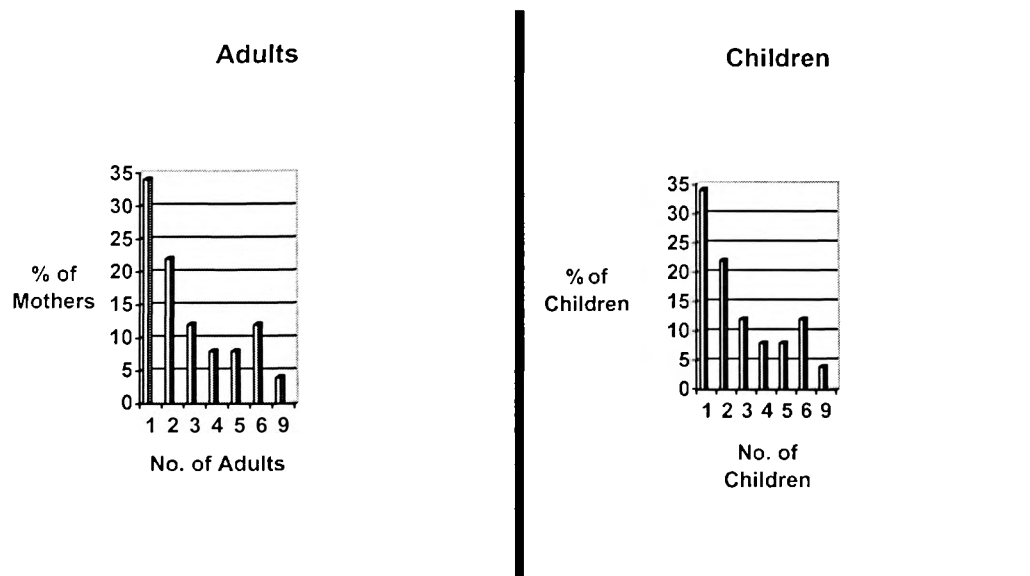
Figure 4.4 Number of people living the home

n=50

4.2.5.1 Adults (over age of 18yrs.)

All 50 homes had adults living in them 17 (34%) of homes had one adult in addition to the divorcees, 11 (22%) had 2 adults, 6 (12%) had 4 adults and 2 (4%) homes had 9 adults in each home. The figures included the respondents themselves. Viljoen, in Steyn et al (1987:10) reflected that the presence of other adults among low-income families might ease the burden of economic deprivation. Viljoen again reported that the findings of Kellam, Ensminger and Turner (1977) indicated that living in multigenerational households might improve the psychological functioning of family members. This has important implications for single-parent families.

4.2.5.2 Children

This item incorporated all children including the respondent's own children under the age of 18 years in that home. In African culture it is customary for members of the extended family and their children to live together. Sisters, sisters in-law, cousins might reside at family home, especially if husbands are contract workers, if mothers are divorced, or never married, consequently many children might reside in household along with the respondent's children. One mother had no children under the above-mentioned age and therefore out of 49 mothers who responded to the question 5 (10,2%) of them had one child. 15 (30,6%) had 2 children each, 16 (32%) had 3 children each, 8 (16,3%) had 4 children each, 4 (8,2%) mothers had 5 children each and lastly only one mother had 6 children. The total number of all the children under the age of 18 years in that home was 154, this number includes children from other family members.

4.2.6   Number of breadwinners
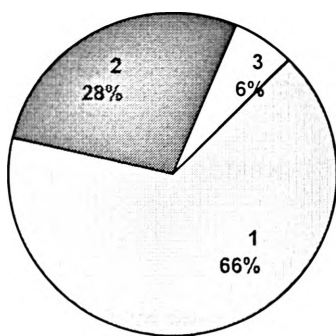
n=50

Fig. 4.5   Number of breadwinners

Of the 50 mothers who responded to the question 33 (66%) of them were the sole breadwinners, 14 (28%) had 2 breadwinners in the family and only 3 (6%) had 3 breadwinners.

4.3 WAYS OF COPING

Different coping mechanisms are used and the scale "Ways of Coping" was used to assess different coping skills and also to identify contributory factors to divorce. Findings utilising "Ways of Coping" (Revised) by Folkman and Lazarus, 1984 as adapted for the purpose of the study are as follows:

4.3.1 The causes of divorce:

4.3.1.1 Financial problems
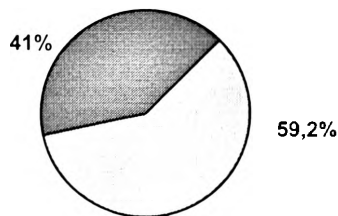
N=49

Fig. 4.6 Financial problems

Out of 49 mothers who responded, 29 (59,2%) of them stated financial problem as a cause for their divorce and 20 (41%) denied having had financial problems that lead to their divorce. There was a missing value from one subject.

4.3.1.2 Conflict

49%

51%

YES
NO
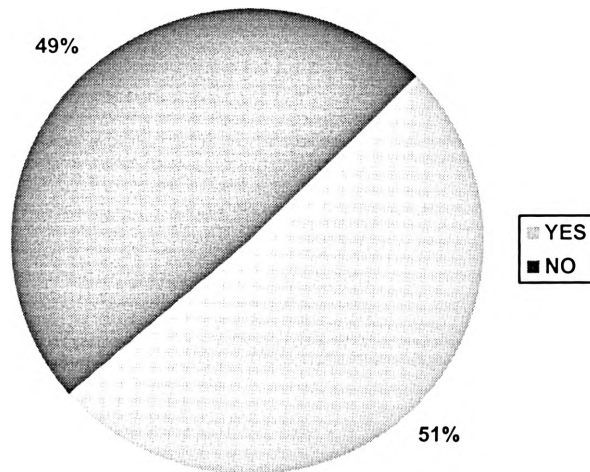
N=49

Fig. 4.7 Conflict

Over half of the study subjects (51%) reported that divorce was due to unresolved conflict 24 (49%) did not cite conflict as a contributory factor to their divorce. There was a value missing from one questionnaire for this question.

4.3.1.3 Alcohol problem

69% 31%

□ YES
■ NO
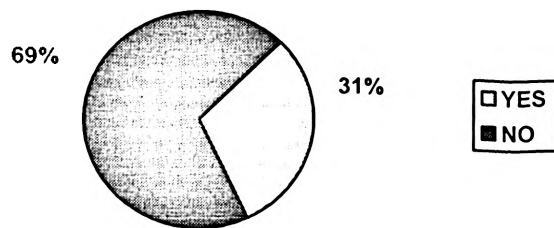
N=49

Fig. 4.8 Alcohol problems

Fifteen (30,6% =31%) mothers stated that their divorce was due to alcohol problems and the

rest, 34 (69,4%=69%)) had no alcohol problem in their marriage. There was a missing value

from one subject's questionnaire.

4.3.1.4 Child and Wife abuse

56% 44%

YES
■ NO
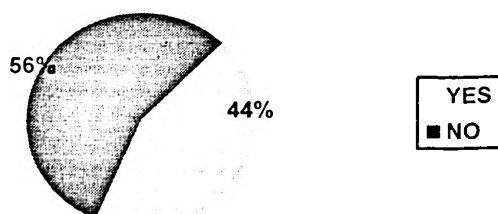
n=48

Fig .4.9 Child and wife abuse

Twenty seven, (56,3%=56%) of the respondents denied any abuse, however, 21

(43,8%=44%) stated that there was abuse in the family. These results are almost a true

42

reflection of how abuse is perceived in African or Venda community. A great deal of abuse is under-played and, unfortunately, there is no evidence of studies done in the African community on child or wife abuse as a cause of divorce. Steyn et al (1987) indicated that most research on family violence concentrated on whites and not much has been done in other population groups.

4.3.1.5 Other causes of divorce

32%

□ YES
▣ NO

68%
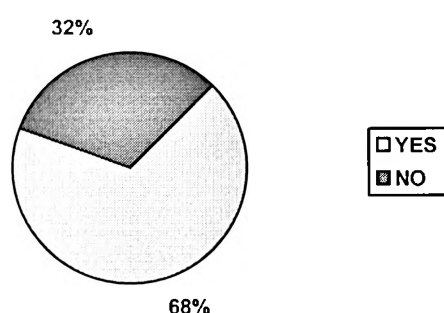
n=50

Fig. 4.10 Other causes of divorce

34 mothers stated that there were other factors contributing to their divorce, 2 (5,9%) of them reported that there were extra-marital affairs and another 2 (5,9%) reported that there were fertility problems in the marriage, 27 (79,4%) reported that there was another wife and the other 3 (8,8%) said they were divorced due to witchcraft.

Witchcraft is the alleged possession and exercise of magical powers, black magic used for evil intent. Practitioners of witchcraft often have considerable skill in herbal medicine and traditional remedies. Traditionally people who practice witchcraft are considered dangerous and evil because it is believed that they have extra ordinary powers that they can use to fulfil their desires, even if it means killing someone mysteriously or making someone mentally ill.

43

The high number of mothers, who could not continue with marriage because of another wife, appears to suggest that polygamy is not well tolerated as is commonly believed in African culture. Polygamy is the practice of having more than one spouse at the same time. Traditionally Venda men are allowed to marry more than one wife. Dlamini in Steyn et al (1987:50) pointed out that there is a decline in polygamy because it is economically a burden to maintain more than one wife and due to its incompatibility with the monogamous marriage, polygamy creates conflict with the modern ideas of status of a woman as a result of education, Christianity and Westernisation.

4.3.2 COPING MECHANISMS UTILISED BY DIVORCEES

4.3.2.1 "Just concentrated on what I had to do".

2%

| YES
| NO

98%
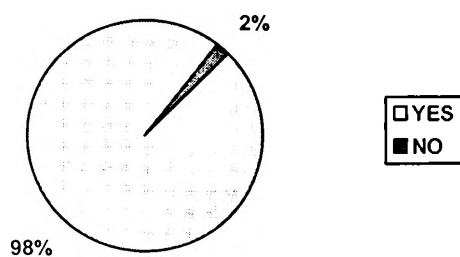
n=50

Fig. 4.11 Concentrated on what had to be done

The majority of the mothers 49 (98%) opted to just concentrate on the next step and only one (2%) decided not to do this. The results are similar to what Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis & Grue (1986:997) found in their study using the same scale and

indicated that when the threat to self-esteem was high, the subjects used more planned problem solving by concentrating on what they had to do.

4.3.2.2 " I tried to analyse the problem"

22%

☐ YES
■ NO

78%
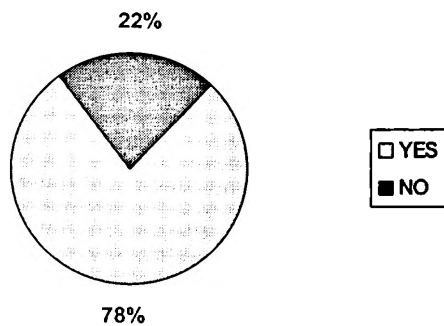
n = 49

Fig. 4.12   Analysis of the problem

A higher percentage 38 (77,6%=78%) of the 49 women who responded to the question indicated that they tried to analyse the problem in order to understand better while only 11 (22,4%=22%) indicated that they did not analyse the problem.

4.3.2.3   "Felt time would make a difference"

20%

YES
NO

80%
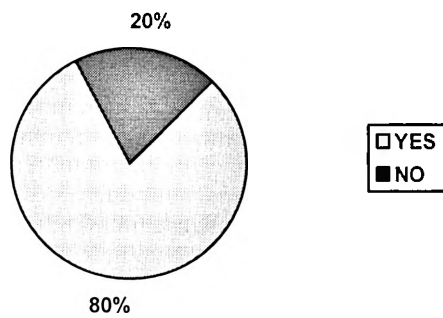
n=50

Fig. 4.13 Time would make a difference

Out of 50 subjects, 40 (80%) admitted that they felt that time would make a difference; they believed that the only thing to do was to wait.

4.3.2.4   " I criticised or lectured myself "

Table 4.1 Criticised or lectured myself

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	52
No	24	48
Uncertain	0	0
TOTAL	50	100%

n=50

Fifty two percent of the respondents believed that they were responsible for the divorce and were critical of and blamed themselves. 48% did not believe that they were to blame for the dissolution of the marriage.

Perrez & Reicherts (1992) indicated that people who are depressed are likely to take responsibility and blame themselves. Self-blame is also common in divorcees.

4.3.2.5. "Went along with fate"

Table 4.2 Went along with fate

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	82
No	9	18
Uncertain	0	0
TOTAL	50	100%

n=50

The majority of single mothers, 41 (82%) distanced themselves by detaching from the situation. They said they went along with fate, and that sometimes they just had bad luck only 9 (18%) felt that they didn't use this defence.

4.3.2.6   "I told myself things that helped me feel better"

6%

☐YES
■NO

94%
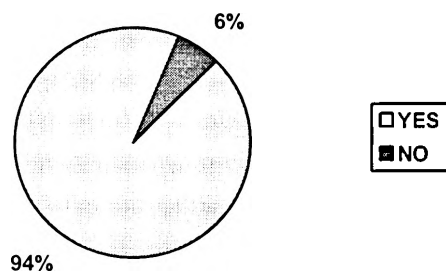
n=50

Fig. 4.14 Things that helped me feel better

The majority of single mothers 47 (94%) reassured themselves with affirmative thoughts, which helped them feel better, and only 3 (6%) did not do this. Examples of the affirmations were "I persevered long enough in this marriage". "I am not the one who became unfaithful in the marriage."

4.3.2.7   **"Talked to someone to find out more about the situation."**

38%

| □ YES |
| ■ NO |

62%
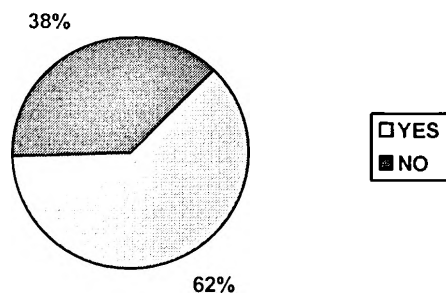
n=50

Fig. 4.15   Found out more about the situation

Out of the 50 respondents only 31 (62%) sought social support by talking to someone to find out more about the divorce situation 19 (38%) did not do this. This appears to be the norm in the Venda society. Traditionally they would normally be secretive about family matters.

4.3.2.8   **"Tried to forget the whole thing"**

19%

| □ YES |
| ■ NO |

81%
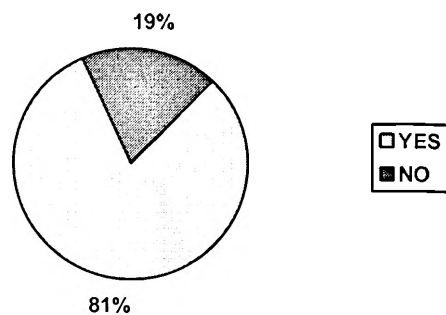
n=50

Fig. 4.16 Tried to forget

49

A number of respondents 42 (84%) distanced themselves by "trying to forget the whole thing" yet only 8 (16%) denied doing this.

4.3.2.9 "I waited to see what would happen before doing anything."

Table 4.3   Waited before taking action

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	92
No	4	8
Uncertain	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

n=50

The majority of the subjects 46 (92%) exercised the self-control measures of regulating their feelings and actions by waiting to see what would happen before doing anything and the rest, 4 (8%) did not do this. Responses to other questions like "I cried a lot" revealed that their behaviour was perceived as a demonstration of self-control in that they assumed a facade of imperturbability and self control despite their emotional distress.

4.3.2.10 "Rediscovered what was important in life"

Table 4.4 Discovered what was important in life

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	94
No	3	6
Uncertain	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

n=50

Forty seven (94%) made efforts to create positive meaning by focusing on personal growth, which in this case was indicated by rediscovering what for them was important in life, only 3 (6%) stated that they did not try to rediscover what was important in life.

4.3.2.11 "Did not let it get to me:"

16%

□ YES
■ NO

84%
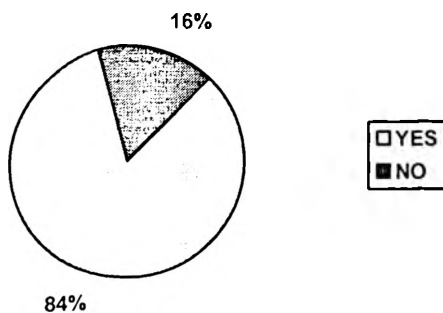
n=50

Fig. 4.17 Remained calm

Forty-two (84%) of the subjects made an effort to detach themselves by not letting the situation get to them by refusing to think about it, whereas only 8 (16%) did not do this.

4.3.2.12   **"Refused to get too serious about the situation"**

14%

4%

☐YES
■NO
☐UNCERTAIN

82%
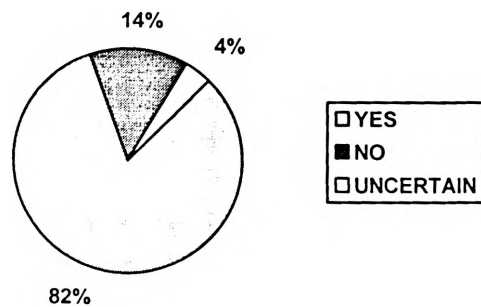
n=50

Fig. 4.18   Refused to get too serious about the situation

The majority of the subjects 41 (82%) distanced themselves by claiming that they made light of the situation and refused to get too serious about it and only 7 (14%) did not do this, 2 (4%) were uncertain of what they did.

4.3.2.13   "Denied that it had happened"

16%

☐YES
■NO

84%
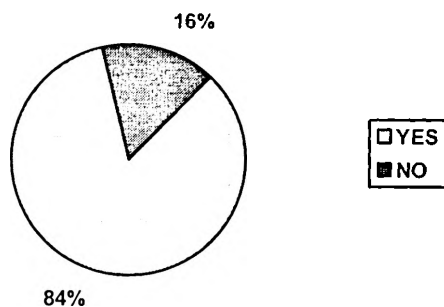
n=50

Fig. 4.19   Denied that it had happened

This item indicated that 42 (84%) of single mothers used an escape-avoidance mechanism by refusing to believe that it had happened, whilst eight 8(16%) denied using this mechanism.

4.3.2.14 **"Accepted it, since they believed that nothing could be done"**

26%

74%
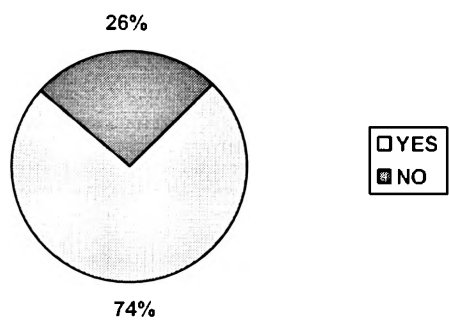
n=50

Fig. 4.20 Accepting and believing that nothing could be done.

Some mothers, 37 (74%) felt helpless. They agreed that they accepted the situation since there was nothing they could do about it. Thirteen (26%) did not accept the situation.

4.3.2.15 **"Wished that I could change what had happened or how I felt"**

Table 4.5

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	94
No	3	6
Uncertain	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

n=50

This response indicated how most of the single mothers 47 (94%) wished to escape from the situation by wishing that they could change what had happened or how they were feeling, 3 (6%) did not wish this.

4.3.2.16 "I dreamed or imagined a better time"

Table 4.6

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	68
No	16	32
Uncertain	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

n=50

This is another form of escaping from the situation, whereby 34 (68%) of the single mothers agreed that they dreamt or imagined a better time and 16 (32%) denied using this as a means of coping.

4.3.2.17 "Wished I could change situation or how I felt"

2%

□ YES
■ NO

98%
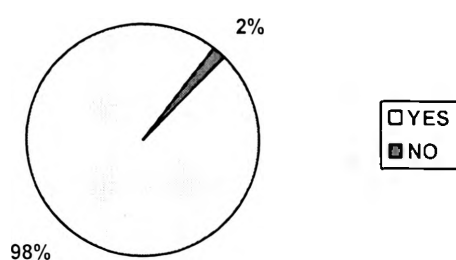
n=50

Fig 4.21 Wished that situation would change

The majority of the subjects 49 (98%) wished the situation would go away or somehow be over with and only 1 (2%) person did not wish the same. This item showed a significant number of women who wanted to escape from the situation.

4.3.2.18 "Fantasised on how things might turn out"

4%

☐ YES
■ NO

96%
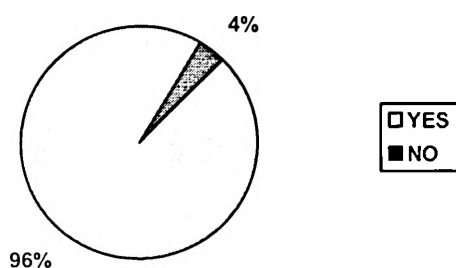
n=50

Fig.4.22 Fantasy

Forty-eight (96%) of the subjects said that they had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out and only 2 (4%) did not have such fantasies.

4.3.2.19 **"Used the person I admire as a model"**

8%

YES
NO

92%
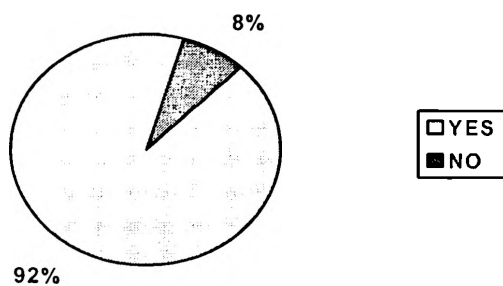
n=50

Fig. 4.23 **Used someone as a model**

Forty-six (92%) of the respondents chose to identify with a person whom they admired and attempted to model their behaviour in the manner in which they assumed the model would respond.

4.3.2.20 **"I reminded myself on how much worse things could be"**

2%

YES
NO

98%
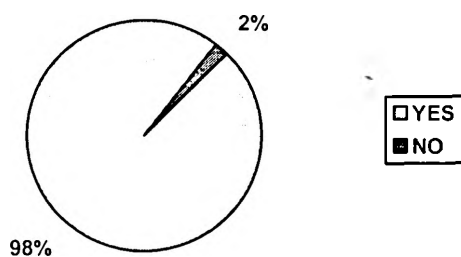
n=50

Fig 4.24 Reminded myself on how much worse things could be

Out of 50 subjects, 49 (98%) of single mothers reminded themselves how much worse things could be, and only 1 (2%) denied doing this.

4.3.2.21 **"I lost interest in many things"**

6%

YES
■NO

94%
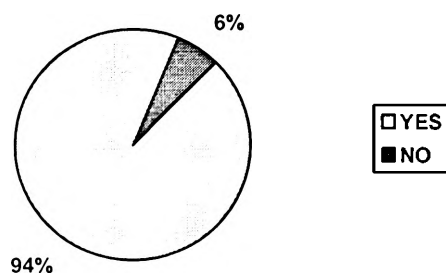
n=50

Fig. 4.25 Loss of interest

A number of single mothers 47 (94%) indicated that they lost interest in many things and only 3 (6%) denied loss of interest. This is one of the typical signs of depression amongst divorced mothers. Hall *et.* al (1991) indicated that divorcees experience clinical depression and that loss of interest is one of the symptoms.

4.3.2.22   "I had thoughts of dying"

58%

☐YES
■NO

42%
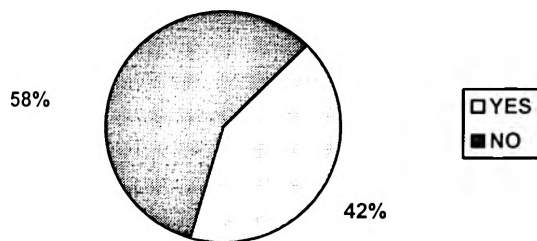
n=50

Fig. 4.26 Thoughts of death

A number of the subjects, 29 (58%) did not think of dying, yet 21 (42%) thought of it. It

was indicated in Brown and Harries (1978) that for most depressed women the presence of children

deters them from thinking of or planning suicide. This was the case in this study. Given that 52% felt

responsible for the divorce, 74% felt helpless, 94 % lost interest in previously enjoyed activities, it

would appear that a significant number of divorcees experienced depressive symptoms after divorce.

Durkheim, in Brown and Harris (1978: 283) found that there was a high suicide rate amongst childless

wives. He therefore suggested that children offer women greater protection than men because woman

are comforted more from children and were more sensitive to their influence

4.3.2.23 "I thought of killing myself"

38%

YES
NO

62%
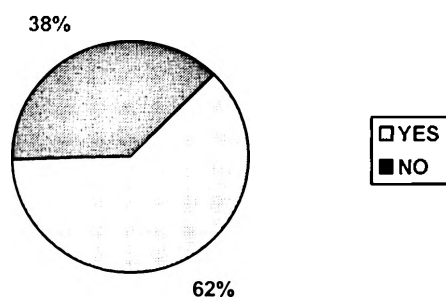
n=50

Fig. 4.27   Attempted suicide

This is a more active response as it represents an actual and serious attempt of taking one's life. Thirty one (62%) felt desperate enough to think of ending their lives and 19 (38%) did not think of killing themselves. Thirty-one who felt desperate enough to kill themselves actually made an attempt at suicide. They reported that they attempted suicide by trying to hang themselves and some of them were rescued on their way to do it with ropes in their hands. None of the desperate divorcees indicated any other means of committing suicide except by rope, which reflects that they might not have had access to other means of ending their lives.

4.3.2.24 "Turned to work to take my mind off things"

10%

☐YES
■NO

90%
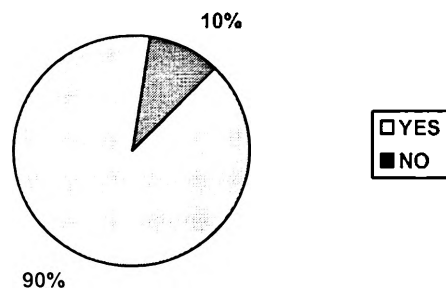
n=50

Fig. 4.28   Turned to work to take my mind off things

The deliberate avoidance of the reality by immersing oneself in one's work is a common means of avoiding the harsh reality of a situation. 90% of the respondents indicated that they had utilised this method of coping.

4.3.2.25 "Tried not to burn my bridges"

Table 4.7 Tried not to burn the bridges, but leave things open somewhat

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	92.0%
No	2	4.0%
Uncertain	2	4.0%
TOTAL	50	100%

n=50

This was an indication of the importance given to self-control amongst Venda women. A large number 46 (92%) tried to maintain self-control by trying not to burn bridges, but left things open somewhat and only 2 (4%) did not do this. As the researcher indicated in the literature review; marriage in African culture occurs between families and not only partners, the respondents indicated that they keep contact with their ex-husband's families though they might not have had contact with the ex-husbands.

4.3.2.26 "I went on as if nothing happened"

2%

☐ YES
■ NO

98%
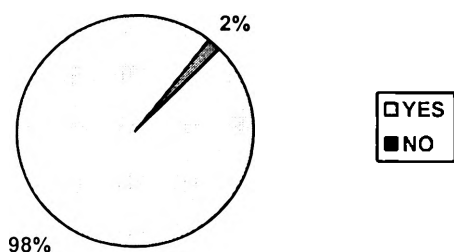
n=50

Fig. 4.29   Went on as if nothing happened

Most of the subjects distanced themselves from what was happening. This is again evident when 49 (98%) of them went on as if nothing happened and only 1 (2%) could not do this.

4.3.2.27   "Slept more than usual"

14%

☐ YES
■ NO

86%
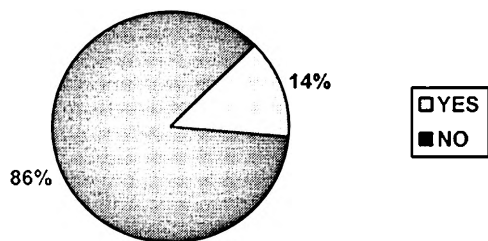
n=50

Fig 4.30 Slept more than usual

Only 14% slept more than usual but 86% did not sleep a lot. Only a small number indicated they tried to escape from the reality of the situation by sleeping, which they said in the long run was not a satisfactory way of coping with their situation.

4.3.2.28   "I slept badly"

6%

☐ YES
■ NO

94%
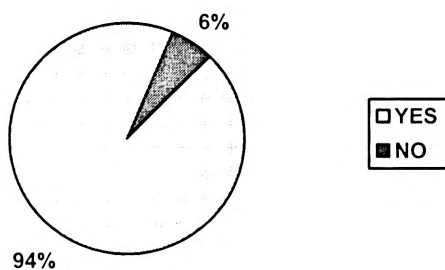
n=50

Fig. 4.31   Insomnia

A large number 47 (94%) indicated that they slept badly. The respondents indicated that they had difficulty in falling sleep and struggled to keep asleep. They complained of early wakening and difficulty in falling asleep again. Insomnia is one of the symptoms of major depression.

4.3.2.29 **"Changed or grew as a person in a good way"**

Table 4:8 Experienced personal growth

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	98%
No	1	2%
Uncertain	0	0%
TOTAL	50	100%

n=50

The majority of the subjects said that the experience of divorce had resulted in their personal growth. Forty nine (98%) of them agreed that they changed or grew in a good way and only 1(2%) denied making an effort.

4.3.2.30 "I made a Plan of Action and followed it"

Table 4.9   Plan of Action

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	94%
No	3	6%
Uncertain	0	0%
TOTAL	50	100%

n=50

The majority of the single mothers in the study 47 (94%) indicated that they made efforts to alter the situation. They coupled this with an analytical approach to problem solving by making a plan of action and following it, 3 (6%) did not focus on problem solving and change.

4.3.2.31 "Got away for a while"

16%

YES
NO

84%
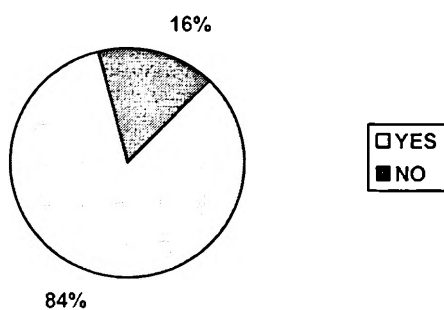
n=49

Fig. 4.32 Went on holiday

This item indicated a behavioural effort to escape. Going away has been a strategy previously used by Venda women to try and relax e.g. when a woman experiences difficulties in her own family or with

in-laws she would pack her bags and go to one of her relatives to "cool off"as the Venda people put it.

In this case 8 (16.3%=16%) did not manage to do this and 41 (83,7%=84%) agreed that they went away. The reasons for their inability to go away were not elaborated on in the questionnaire, however, the subjects indicated that it was due to lack of finance and no place to go.

4.3.2.32　　　"Tried to make myself feel better by using substances"
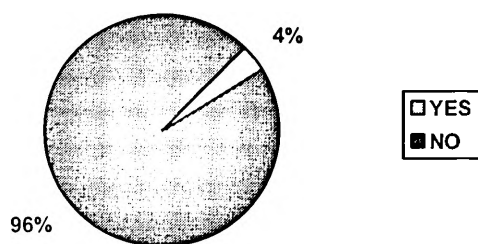
n=50

Fig.4.32　Substance use

The respondents were questioned about eating more, smoking, drinking alcohol, using medication or street drugs as a means of helping them cope.

Most (96%) denied using substance to try and cope and only 2 (4%) agreed they used some kind of substance. There is a relationship between the income and likelihood of substance use. However, it has not been a common practice amongst African women in the rural area to use substances.

4.3.2.33 "Change in Weight"

4%

□YES
■NO

96%
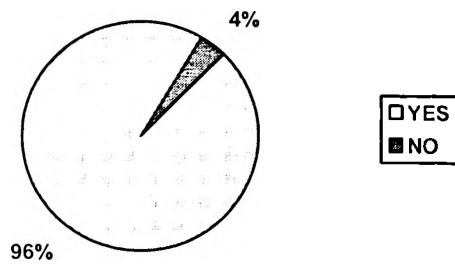
n=50

Fig. 4.34   Change in weight

A large number of the subjects, 48 (96%) agreed that their weight had changed, and only 2 (4%) had

no weight change. There are different factors that can be attributed to change which were not explored.

The majority of these women indicated that they had loss of appetite and did not care about food; this

is also a symptom of major depression.

4.3.2.34 "Took a big chance or did something very risky"

12%

□YES
■NO

88%
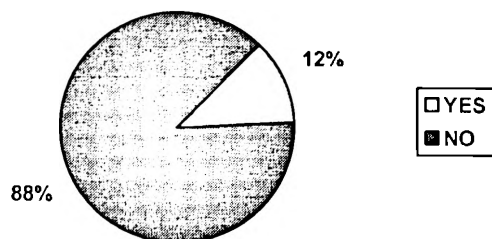
n=50

Fig. 4.35   Took a big chance

A constructive coping measure, which indicated a level of risk taking. 6 (12%) agreed that they took a big chance or did something risky, e.g. some divorcees indicated that moving out and getting their own place to stay with their children was a big step for them and risky because they left the support of family and decided to be on their own. Some respondents elaborated on their answers indicating that moving out of the family home was 'risky' and that they 'took a big chance'. They perceived this as a significant step towards independence.

4.3.2.35 "Changed something so things could turn out all right"

6%

☐ YES
■ NO

94%
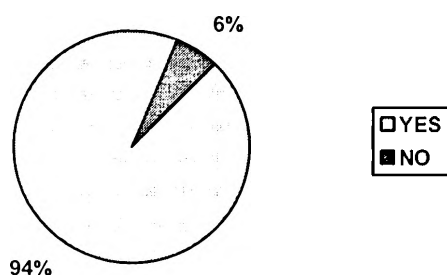
Fig. 4.36 Made changes so things could turn out all right

n=50

Positive reappraisal had been used by a number of single mothers, 47 (94%) of them changed something so things would work out all right, yet 3 (6%) did not agree that they did anything. There was no exploration of which things were changed.

4.3.2.36   "I avoided being with people in general"

Table 4.10   Avoided being with people

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	90%
No	5	10%
Uncertain	0	0%
TOTAL	50	100%

n=50

Forty-five (90%) indicated that they avoided being with people in general and 5 (10%) didn't. This indicates social withdrawal and isolation. Lasare (1979) reported that this is indicative of unresolved grief and divorce and disrupts social relationships. Divorcees often find it difficult to share their loss and as such feel lonely, without comfort from other people. Generally, society's response to the divorce situation, unlike in death, adds to the aloneness.

4.3.2.37   "Took it out on other people"

24%

□ YES
■ NO

76%
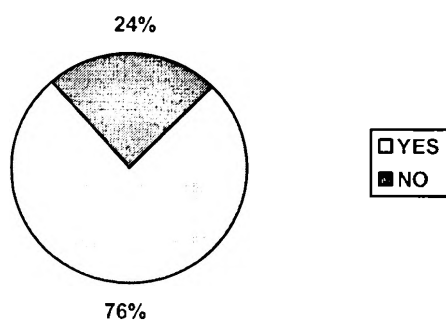
n=50

Fig. 4.37   Took it out on other people

The majority of the respondents (76%) indicated that they had vented their frustration by being rude to other people or beating children and only 12 (24%) managed not to do this. They displaced their feeling to other people.

4.3.2.38   "I beat the children more frequently"

72%   28%   ☐YES
                                  ■NO
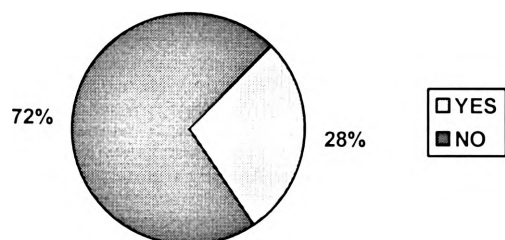
n=50

Fig. 4.38   Beating Children more frequently

Fourteen (28%) agreed that they projected their anger on children by beating them more frequently and 36 (72%) did not do this. This was indicated previously as a way of venting frustration.

4.3.2.39   " I doubled my efforts to make things work"

4%
                                  ☐YES
                                  ☒NO
96%
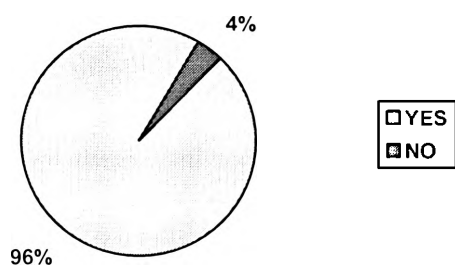
n=50

Fig. 4.39   Doubled my efforts to make things work

The majority of the participants confronted their situation and worked harder to make things work. About 48 (96%) women agreed that they doubled their efforts to make things work only 2 (4%) denied that they doubled their efforts. Pappas (1989) indicated that working through grief also requires being tolerant of inner disorganisation that results from withdrawing previous emotional attachments. This depends on the mourner's ego strength and the personal meaning of the loss.

4.3.2.40 " I changed something about myself"

Table 4.11 Changed something about myself

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	92%
No	4	8%
Uncertain	0	0%
TOTAL	50	100%

n=50

Majority of single women 46 (92%) made efforts to create positive meaning by changing something e.g. some of them said they had to change their attitude towards life and themselves, and became positive and 4 (8%) did not make these kind of efforts.

4.3.2.41 "I moved to a different area"

Table 4.12 Moved to a different area

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	71.4%
No	14	28.6%
Uncertain	0	0%
TOTAL	49	100%

n=49

Relocation is something most Venda women do in order to start a new life after divorce. 35 (71,4%) of the study subjects also moved to a different area and 14 (28.6%) did not. This was regarded as a big step to new life by many of them. There was one subject that did not respond to this question.

4.3.2.42 "I prepared myself for the worst"
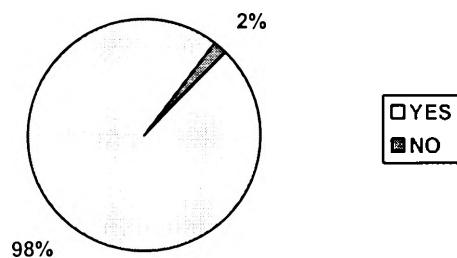
n=50

Fig. 4.40 Preparation for the Worst

72

Forty-nine (98%) prepared themselves for the worst and only 1 (2%) did not. This state may be similar

to Stage III of grief whereby the woman tries to detach herself from the former partner but is not yet

ready to direct her energy anywhere else (Pappas; 1989:507-508).

4.3.2.43 **"I tried to see things differently"**
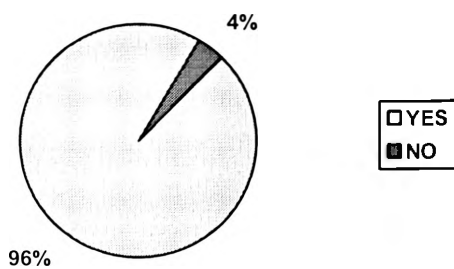
n=50

Fig. 4.41 **Tried to see things differently**

The majority of the subjects 48 (96%) tried to see things differently. They indicated that they tried not

to be bitter about the situation. and only 2 (4%) did not try to see things differently.

4.3.2.44 "I worked harder"

38%

☐YES
☒NO

62%
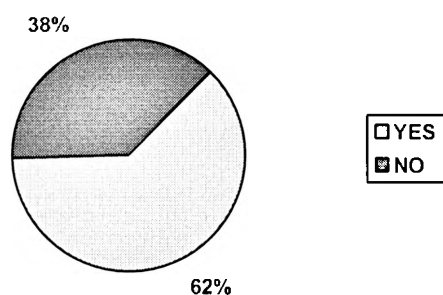
n=50

Fig. 4.42 Hard working

The results indicated a need to avoid facing their problems by working hard. Thirty-one (62%) of mothers reported that they worked harder and only 19 (38%) did not use that type of coping skill.

4.3.2.45 "I tried to keep my feelings to myself"

8%

☐YES
☒NO

92%
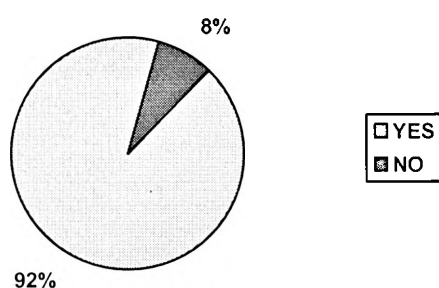
n=50

Fig. 4.43   Tried to keep my feelings to myself

74

Forty-six (92%) tried self-control or withdrawing measures by keeping their feelings to themselves, 4 (8%) of them did not do this. The danger of keeping feelings to oneself had been indicated previously when 76% of mothers vented them out in different ways (refer 4.3.2.37); 62% worked harder (refer 4.3.2.44), 28% took them out on children (refer 4.3.2.38).

4.3.2.46 **"I cried a lot**

Table 4.13 **Cried a lot**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	42	84%
No	8	16%
Uncertain	0	0%
TOTAL	50	100%

n=50

Forty-two (84%) single mothers allowed themselves to let go of the pressure by crying and 8 (16%) of them still resisted the urge to let go of the pressure. Crying is perceived by many in the society as a sign of weakness and as such the respondents indicated that they cried privately. This is indicative of the depressive state. Crying is the way of trying to minimise the pain and sadness that one goes through.

4.3.2.47   "I let my feelings out somehow"

Table 4.14   Letting feelings out

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	39	78%
No	11	22%
Uncertain	0	0%
TOTAL	50	100%

n=50

The results indicated that it had not been easy to the mothers to let their feelings out. Eleven (22%) of the subjects could not do it. However, 39 (78%) let their feelings out in some ways. The different ways were indicated earlier in the study, e.g. (refer 4.3.2.46 and 4.3.2.44).

4.3.2.48   "Kept others from knowing how bad things were"
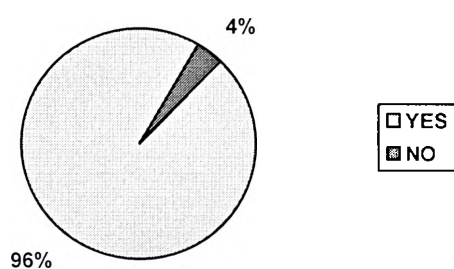
n=50

Fig. 4.43   Kept others from knowing how bad things were

This item is indicative of self-control and describes how the majority 48 (96%) made efforts to regulate their feelings by keeping others from knowing how bad things were and 2 (4%) did not do this.

4.3.2.49 "I kept my feelings from interfering with other things"
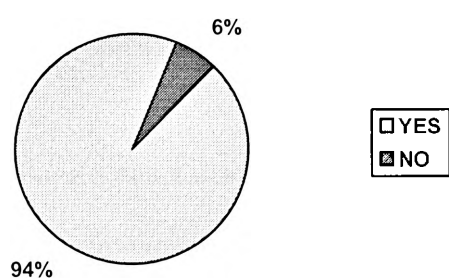
n=50

Fig. 4.45 Kept feelings from interfering

A majority of participants 47 (94%) maintained a level of control that made them keep their feelings to themselves in fear of interference with what they do and only 3 (6%) denied controlling their feelings.

4.3.2.50 "I found a new faith"
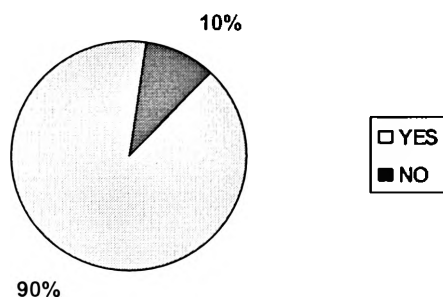
n=50

Fig. 4.46 Found new faith

This item describes a positive reappraisal that has a religious connotation in it of finding new faith and 45 (90%) of single mothers agreed to that coping strategy and 5 (10%) did not agree to using that.

4.3.2.51 " I prayed"

10%

☐ YES
■ NO

90%
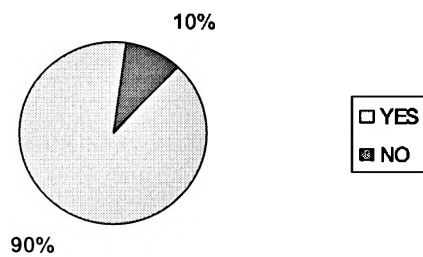
n=50

Fig 4.47 Prayer

A large number of the subjects used prayer, 45 (90%) and a minority 5 (10%) did not use prayer. The respondents indicated that they found comfort in prayer and those who were unable to vent their feelings could do so when praying because they believed God would give them answers which they were prepared to wait for.

4.3.2.52 "Acceptance of sympathy and understanding"

10%

☐ YES
■ NO

90%
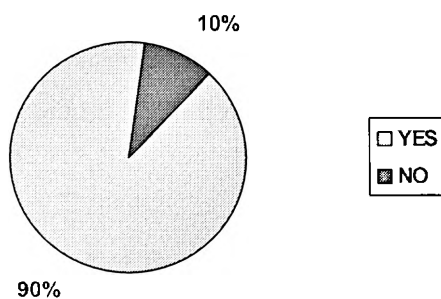
n=49

Fig. 4.48 Acceptance of sympathy and understanding

About 45 (90%) of the participants accepted sympathy and understanding from someone and 5 (10%) found it difficult to do so.

4.3.2.53 "I talked to someone who could do something"

6%

☐ YES
▣ NO

94%
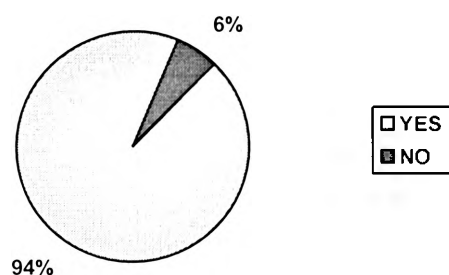
n=50

Fig. 4.49 Spoke to someone

The majority of the subjects sought social support, 47 (94%) made use of the support system. They agreed that they spoke to someone like the priest or social worker who could do something concrete about their problem and 3 (6%) did not talk to anyone.

4.3.2.54 I asked a relative or a friend I respected for advice

n=50

Forty-six (92%) of the respondents made use of a support systems available, e.g relatives or friends for advice and 4(8%) said they did not have the family or friends to go to for assistance. These four respondents appeared to be very isolated; all indicated that they did not belong to any community organisation, not even the local church.

4.3.2.56 "Talked to someone about how I am feeling"
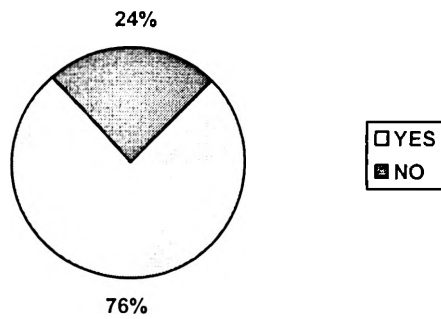
n=50

Fig. 4.50 Spoke about my feelings

Twelve respondents (24%) did not speak about their feelings and 38 (76%) talked to someone about how they were feeling. This indicates the use of the support system available. The respondents also used their support system even when they needed advice.

4.3.2.57 " I got professional/traditional healer's help"
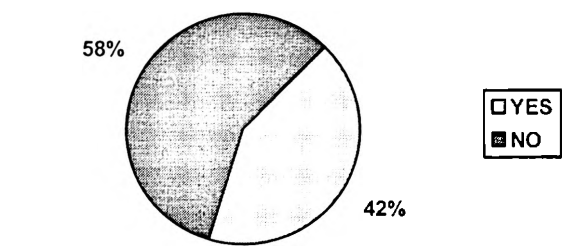
n=50

Fig. 4.51 Professional/Traditional healer's help

More than half the number of subjects 29 (58%) reported that they did not consult either the professional or traditional healer. 21 (42%) agreed that they consulted the above-mentioned people. The results are congruent with what African communities' practice when handling conflict in a home environment. Family matters are not discussed with strangers.

4.3.2.58 " I tried something different"
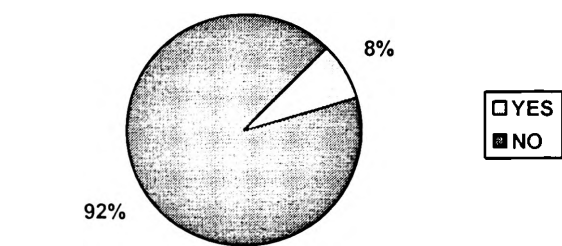
n=50

Fig. 4.52 "Tried something different"

A small number 4 (8%) stated that they tried something different to any of the above and 46 (92%) did not try different thing other than those mentioned. The respondents gave examples of some of the different approaches like going to the 'prophet' to get 'holy water' and 'holy tea', and other traditional remedies.

4.4   INTERPRETATION OF COPING SKILLS (As done by clinical psychologist)

Table 4.1 Coping Strategies with Divorce as a Stressor

Group	Coping Strategy used and Question	YES	NO
A	**DENIAL**		
	2. Just concentrated on what I had to do next – the next step	98%	2%
	6. Went along with fate sometimes I just had bad luck	82%	18%
B	**AVOIDANCE**		
	7. I told myself things that helped me to feel better.	94%	6%
	32. Got away from it for a while; tried to rest or take a holiday.	84%	16%
	42. I moved to a different place.	71.48	28.6%
	14. Refused to believe that it had happened.	84%	16%
	13. Made light f the situation; refused to get too serious about it.	84%	14%
		84%	
C	**REGRESSION**		
	28. Slept more than usual.	14%	86%
	29. I slept badly.	94%	6%
	47. I cried a lot.	84%	16%
D	**COUNTERPHOBIA**		
	12. Did not let get on me; refused to too much think about it	82%	16%
	13.Made light of the situation; refused t get too serious about it.	84%	14%
	14. Refused to believe that t had happened.	84%	16%
	35. Took a big chance or did something risky.	12%	88%
	40. I Knew what had to be done so I doubled the effort.	96%	4%
E	**RIGIDITY**		
	6. Went along with fate; sometimes I just had bad luck.	82%	18%
	15. Accepted it, since nothing could be done.	74%	26%
	27. Went on as if nothing happened.	98%	2%
	46. I tried to keep my feelings to myself.	92%	8%
F	**EXCLUSION**		
	9. Tried to forget the whole thing.	84%	165
	17. I day- dreamed or imagined a better time or place than the one I was in.	68%	32%
	37. Avoided being with people.	90%	10%
	50. I tried to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much.	94%	6%

G	**SELECTIVE MEMORY** 7. I told myself things that helped me feel better. 18. Wished the situation would go away or somehow be over with. 19.Had fantasy or wish about how things might turn out.	94% 98% 96%	6% 2% 4%
H	**PROJECTION** 5. Criticized or lectured myself. 16. Wished I could change what had happened. 20. I thought about how a person I admire would handle the situation and used that as a model. 33. Tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, using drugs or medication, etc. 34. I gained /lost weight. 41. I changed something about myself.	52% 94% 92% 4% 96% 92%	48% 6% 8% 96% 4% 8%
I	**REACTION-FORMATION** 10. I waited to see what would happen before doing anything. 21. I reminded myself how much worse things could be. 25. Turned to work or substitute activity to take my mind off things 36. Changed something so things would turn out all right. 38. Took it out on other people. 39. I beat the children more frequently. 49 Kept others from knowing how bad things were.	92% 98% 90% 98% 94% 76% 28% 96%	8% 2% 10% 2% 6% 24% 72% 4%
J	**SELF DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR** 22. I lost interest in many things. 23.I thought of dying. 24. I thought of killing myself. 33. I tried to make things better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs, or medication, etc. 34. I gained / lost weight.	94% 42% 38% 4% 96%	6% 56% 62% 96% 4%
K	**INVENTIVE/CREATIVE BEHAVIOUR** 31. I made a plan of action and followed it. 43. I prepared myself for the worst. 45. I worked harder. 56. Talked to someone about how I was feeling. 57.I got professional / traditional help.	94% 98% 62% 76% 42%	6% 2% 38% 24% 58%
L	**DEPENDENCY** 4. I felt that time would make a difference – the only thing to do was to wait 44. I tried to see things from other person's point of view. 51. Found new faith. 52. I prayed. 53. Accepted sympathy and understanding from someone. 54. Talked to someone about how I was feeling. 55. I asked a relative or a friend I respected for advice.	80% 96% 90% 90% 92% 94% 92%	20% 4% 10% 10% 8% 6% 8%

4.5 ANALYSIS

To avoid any bias the results were interpreted with the assistance of a clinical psychologist. Interactive coping mechanisms identified are as follows:

4.5.1 Denial, exclusion of stimuli and selective memory may be healthy ways of coping when used on a short-term basis.

4.5.2 Avoidance, regression, self-destructive behaviour, rigidity and projection are unhealthy ways of coping and have unsuccessful adaptability.

4.5.3 Counterphobia, inventive behaviour and reaction formation are healthy and calculative coping mechanisms.

4.5.4 Dependency may be seen as the use of support system and / or may be failure for one to confront the situation.

There has been inconsistency in some of the responses for instance, when asked about taking out feelings on other people, a higher percentage (76%) agreed that they took that out on other people, however (72%) denied beating the children. There are two explanations for the differences on these responses, either they felt comfortable in admitting to taking it out on other people because it may be unacceptable to beat the children yet the children are the closest people to the divorced women because they stay with them or they could not beat their children out of modesty.

The respondents appeared to be comfortable with the researcher and opened up, shed tears in certain instances and some of the mothers informed the researcher that it was the first time they had shared this kind of information with a stranger. This was very significant when looking at the Venda culture that does not share family matters with strangers.

4.6. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS:

The statistical analysis of the data was conducted on the SAS System, and p values = 0.05 were considered significant.

The first question in the 58-item questionnaire identified causes of divorce. The 57 remaining items, when answered in the affirmative, could be classified into three categories: 25 questions addressed adaptive coping strategies, 25 items addressed maladaptive coping strategies, and 7 items identified symptoms of depression,

The following items reflected adaptive coping strategies: 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 20, 21, 26, 30, 31, 35, 36, 40, 41, 43, 45, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, and 58.

The following items reflected maladaptive coping strategies: 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 27, 32, 33, 37, 38, 39, 42, 44, 46, 49, and 54.

The items that identified symptoms of depression, which were included at the request of the Research Committee, were item numbers 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 34 and 47.

The items in these three categories appeared in a non-systematic order in the questionnaire. The idea of using adaptive and maladaptive coping came out from the traditional conceptualisations of coping, which often equated coping with mastery. Within the ego-psychology model, coping is defined as realistic and flexible thoughts and acts that solve problems, thereby reducing stress. When it is said

that someone has coped with the demands of a particular situation it suggests that the person has mastered those demands, and to say that someone did not cope implies that the person's efforts were inadequate.

The ego-psychology approach of coping distinguishes among a number of ego processes used for handling person-environment relationship. These processes are arranged in a hierarchy, with coping as the highest, most advanced, or mature ego process. The next level with defences, which signifies neurotic modes of adaptation. The lowest level comprises the processes representing primitive modes of adaptation. This hierarchical arrangement makes a priori judgements about the inherent quality of coping strategies.

In contrast, the quality of coping strategies can only be judged relative to adaptational outcomes in specific contexts. The example of humour was given as ranked high on the hierarchy of ego processes, yet ill-timed humour can be maladaptive Menninger (1963) as indicated in Folkman and Lazarus (1988)

This approach enables investigators to evaluate the effectiveness of a given coping strategy contextually and on an empirical basis, thus allowing the possibility that it may be adaptive in one context and maladaptive in another. (Folkman and Lazarus, 1988).

4.6.1. Analysis of coping strategies

Whenever the response was a "Yes" for an item indicating an adaptive coping strategy, the item was allocated a weight of 1, and if the response was a "No" a weight of -1 was allocated. Whenever the response was a "Yes" for an item indicating a maladaptive coping strategy, the item was allocated a weight of -1, and if the response was a "No" a weight of 1 was allocated. A Total Coping Score (TCS) was calculated for each subject by adding together the weights that were allocated for the 50 coping strategy items (25 adaptive and 25 maladaptive) in the questionnaire.

A positive value for TCS indicates that the adaptive coping strategies that were followed by a subject outnumbered the maladaptive coping strategies. A negative value indicates that the maladaptive strategies outnumbered the adaptive strategies. A TCS of zero indicates that there were just as many maladaptive as adaptive coping strategies.

The results of the various analyses are summarised in Tables A to F below.

4.6.1.1 Total Coping Score

Table A: Basic statistics for the Total Coping Score

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Total Coping Score, TCS	50	2,48	4,97	-12	16

The mean TCS of 2,48 is statistically significant (t test, Ho: ī=0, p<0,001), indicating, on average, a significant adaptive coping strategy among all the subjects that were surveyed.

Out of the 50 subjects in the study 31 (62%) had a positive TCS, 8 (16%) had a negative TCS and 11 (22%) had a TCS of 0.

4.6.1.2 Age of the subject

Table B: Total Coping Score in relation to age of the subject

Age, years	Basic statistics for TCS				
	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
< 26	5	-1,60	6,69	-12	4
26 - 29	11	4,36	4,18	0	10
30 - 37	22	1,00	4,13	-8	8
> 37	12	5,17	4,71	0	16

The 50 subjects were classified into the four age categories shown in Table B. The mean TCS of -1,60 for the age category "<26 years" and the mean TCS of 5,17 for the age category ">37 years" differ significantly (Anova with Bonferonni multiple comparisons, p=0,05). Women under the age of 26 years found it significantly more difficult to cope with the divorce situation in the sense of overruling

maladaptive coping strategies, compared to matured women over the age of 37 years who mostly followed adaptive coping strategies. The conclusion must be interpreted with caution because of the small sample size of 5 for subjects under the age of 26 years.

4.6.1.3 Income

From the 50 subjects in the analysis 49 earned less than R500.00 and 1 subject earned more than R2000.00. With this distribution a statistical analysis of the effect of income on coping strategies was not possible.

4.6.1.4 Number of children in the family

Table C: Total Coping Score by number of children in the family

Number of Children	Basic statistics for TCS				
	n	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
2	14	-0,29	4,95	-12	6
3 – 4	22	3,73	5,03	-8	16
>5	4	5,50	5,00	0	12

The number of children did not have a significant influence on the TCS. Three distinct groups that could be identified are shown in Table C, together with the basic statistics for the TCS. Although the three means don't differ significantly it is interesting to note the increasing trend in the mean TCS

associated with an increase in the number of children in the family. It seems like the bigger the family, the more the mothers followed adaptive coping strategies.

4.6.1.5 Number of adults living in the home

Table D: **Total Coping Score by number of adults living in the home**

Number of Adults	Basic statistics for TCS				
	n	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
<=6	48	2,21	4,85	-12	16
9	2	9,00	4,24	6	12

Two distinct groups that could be identified for the number of adults living in the home are shown in Table D. The sample size of 2 only for the second group is too small to justify a statistical comparison of the two mean values. It is, however, interesting to note the exceptionally high mean TCS with 9 adults in the home. This must be interpreted with caution because of the small sample size.

4.6.1.6 Number of children living in the home

Table E: **Total Coping Score by number of children living in the home**

Number of Children	Basic statistics for TCS				
	n	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
<5	45	2,98	4,85	-12	16
=5	5	-2,00	4,00	-8	2

Two distinct groups that could be identified for the number of children living in the home are shown in Table D. The two mean values differ significantly (t test, p=0,032), which shows that mothers with 5 or more children found it significantly more difficult to cope with the divorce situation in the sense of overruling maladaptive coping strategies, compared to mothers with less than 5 children who mostly followed adaptive coping strategies. The conclusion must be interpreted with caution because of the small sample size of 5 for mothers with =5 children.

4.6.1.7 Number of breadwinners

Table F: Total Coping Score by the number of breadwinners

Number of	Basic statistics for TCS				
Breadwinners	n	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
1	33	3,76	4,68	-6	16
2	14	0,71	4,48	-12	6
3	3	-3,33	5,03	-8	8

The mean TCS of 3,76 in the case of one breadwinner differs significantly from the mean TCS of 0,71 in the case of 2 breadwinners (t test, p=0,045), which indicates that a single breadwinner coped better with the divorce situation in that she followed significantly more adaptive coping strategies.

The last category of 3 breadwinners was not compared with the former two categories because of the small sample size. The 3 subjects in this

category obviously found it difficult to cope with the divorce situation in that maladaptive strategies overruled their adaptive strategies.

4.6.2 Analysis of depression

Whenever the response was a "Yes" for an item indicating a symptom of depression, the item was allocated a score of 1, and if the response was a "No" a weight of 0 was allocated. A Total Depression Score (TDS) was calculated for each participant by adding together the weights that were allocated to the 7 items that identified symptoms of depression. The TDS is simply a count of the number of depressive symptoms from which a subject suffered.

The results of the various analyses are summarised in Tables G to J below.

4.6.2.1 Age of the subject

Table G: Total Depression Score in relation to age of the subject

Age, years	Basic statistics for TDS				
	n	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
22-25	5	5.00	1.73	2	6
26-29	11	4.91	1.45	2	7
30-33	13	4.77	1.36	3	7
34-37	9	4.00	0.50	3	5
38-41	12	4.50	1.17	3	6

The age of the subjects did not have a significant influence on the number of depressive symptoms

4.6.2.2 Income

From the 50 subjects in the analysis 49 earned less than R500.00 and 1 subject earned more than R2000.00. With this distribution a statistical analysis of the effect of income on the number of depressive symptoms was not possible.

4.6.2.3 Number of children in the family

Table H: **Total Depression Score by the number of children in the family**

Number of	Basic statistics for TDS				
Children	n	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
1	6	3,50	1,52	2	6
2 – 3	26	5,15	1,16	3	7
4+	17	4,12	0,86	3	6

The number of children in the families were classified into three categories as shown in Table H. The mean TDS of 3,50 for families with 1 child differed significantly from the mean TDS of 5,15 for families with 2-3 children, which indicates that mothers in the latter group presented, on average, with significantly more depressive symptoms (Anova with Bonferonni multiple comparisons, p=0,05). Attention is once more drawn to the fact that the sample size is small for families with 1 child.

4.6.2.4 Number of people living in the home

94

Table I: **Total Depression Score by the number of people living in the home:**

Number of People	Basic statistics for TDS				
	n	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
3 – 6	30	4,97	1,13	3	7
8 – 11	14	4,14	1,35	2	7

Two categories were identified for the number of people (adults and children) living together in the home, as shown in Table I. The two mean values differ significantly (t test, p=0,040), which indicates that mothers of families where 3-6 people live together presented with significantly more depressive symptoms.

This means that in smaller families (with 3-6 people) there is a higher chance of people getting depressed than families with more people (8-11 people). The assumption would be that bigger families are too busy to even focus on the depressive symptoms. There is a need for further research on this.

4.6.2.5 Number of breadwinners

Table J: **Total Depression Score by the number of breadwinners**

Number of Breadwinners	Basic statistics for TDS				
	n	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
1	33	4,55	1,23	2	7
2	14	5,14	1,10	4	7
3	3	3,00	1,00	2	4

The number of breadwinners did not have a significant influence on the TDS. The average number of depressive symptoms was the lowest in the case of 3 breadwinners, but this was not statistically compared with the other two mean values because of the small sample size.

Note

The ages of the children in a family varied over the response categories provided for this question in the questionnaire, and could not be used as a variable to relate to coping strategies or depressive symptoms.

4.7   DISCUSSION:

The results of the study call for concern in certain aspects. The demographic data indicated the background of all participants. They were all adults between age 22 years and 41 years. Their income was below the recommended living wage and that calls for concern because they all have children to

support.

Although Venda is still regarded as the rural area, the economic status has changed to the extent that it is difficult to live on a salary of less than R500-00 as many of the respondents were forced to do.

It is understood from previous studies that having children is an extra burden. 60% of mothers have children between age seven and nine years old and these still need the mother's attention.

The presence of a physical support system makes a difference in the family. However, the study indicated that 17 (34%) of the population are sole breadwinners and during the interview most of them revealed that they don't get financial support for their children from their ex-husbands.

Taking into account the cultural background of single mothers, some of the responses were not expected. The extra-marital affairs or involvement of ex-husbands with other women is linked to all other causes like poor financial support, unresolved conflict and wife abuse. The presence of another woman had been taken for granted for many years. The stereotype that first wives accepted the tradition that their husbands are allowed to take another wife was indicated to be fallacious; about 79% indicated that divorce was caused by the presence of another wife.

Some of the mothers showed signs of depression. However, they seemed not to be aware of what they were going through. They lost interest in many things, had sleep disturbances, changes in weight, and became isolated. However, it was interesting to note that though the thought of death prevailed in

some women, 38% went a step further by planning or attempting to take their lives.

Different coping mechanisms were noted, i.e. confronting strategies, distancing, self control, seeking social support, problem solving, escape avoidance, selective memory, exclusion of stimuli, rigidity, projection, regression, counterphobia, self destructive behaviour, creative behaviour, accepting responsibility, positive re-appraisal and dependency.

The scale used, i.e. "Ways of coping as revised for the study" observed the type of behaviour, emotional and psychological effect women exhibited in trying to cope with their new marital status.

There were instances when women confronted the situation by letting their feeling out somehow and some of them took a big chance and did something daring, e.g. moving out to stay on their own with their children and thereafter look for a job.

While experiencing difficulties some people tend to distance themselves from the situation. This was apparent in the study - some participants made light of situation, and carried on as if nothing happened, refusing to think about it.

Measures taken to indicate the need to maintain self control were: trying to keep feelings to themselves, trying not to burn the bridges in that they maintained relationship with the husband's family, keeping feelings from interfering with other things, were secretive and used someone admired as a model.

As indicated earlier in the study that availability of a support system plays a vital part in one's life.

Ways that were indicative of seeking support were: talking to someone who would do something about the situation, accepting sympathy from someone and getting professional help. This kind of coping may also be regarded as dependency.

Although they sought a support system, some of them believed that they were responsible for the divorce and were critical of and blamed themselves.

Different mechanism were used to indicate that the divorced women avoided addressing the situation, i.e. they wished the situation could go away, hoped a miracle would happen, avoided being with people in general, refused to believe that it had happened. Some took it out on other people, slept more than usual, or had fantasies on 'how things might turn out'.

There were instances whereby divorced women showed some strength though they were going through a difficult time, i.e. making plans on how to help themselves move on, making some changes with the aim of deriving something positive.

It was interesting to observe that the majority had a common belief that there is someone who rises above all problems and they turned to God and prayed, found new faith and changed something about themselves.

4.8   CONCLUSION: -

In administering the questionnaire the researcher was afforded the opportunity to observe the participants body language and congruency when responding to questions. Some were openly tearful, however, they still maintained that they would never allow themselves to be seen as weak by other people in the society.

Some of the women indicated that they were sharing their experiences for the first time since their divorce, however, they were hopeful that things would come right one day. One of the causes of divorce was extra-marital affairs and the presence of the second wife. It was interesting to see that 90% turned to prayer and found new faith in God.

Out of 50 subjects, 62% of them showed that they used adaptive coping strategy and that was statistically significant. The age of the subjects had an influence on how the subjects coped with single parenthood. The subjects under the age of 26years found it significantly more difficult to cope with the divorce situation than the subjects above the age of 37years.

Subjects indicating that they were the sole breadwinners appeared to have coped better with the situation than subjects who had two breadwinners in the family. This area requires further research as there is no clear indication as to why this showed to be the case

The number of children in the family did not seem to have a significant impact on the coping strategy used, however it was interesting to note that the increasing trend on the mean value associated with the

increase in the number of children. It's seemed like the bigger the family the more adaptive coping strategies used.

The age and income of the subjects had no significant influence on the exhibition of depressive symptoms. Subjects with more than two to three children appeared to have more depressive symptoms than subjects with one child. The smaller families with three to six people showed to have a higher chance of getting depressed than larger families with eight to eleven people. This is another area that needs further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the final chapter of the study the limitations will be discussed on recommendations will be made. The cultural background of the participants will always be taken into consideration when making recommendations.

5.2 GENERAL DISCUSSION:

The family is regarded and seen as the most basic social unit in most societies. It is in many cases the support system for many in African culture including Venda people, being together as a family is emphasised. The family functions as a system and, if something happens to one member of the family, it affects the whole family. The family is more than just a biological unit but the primary social unit within which individuals function. The study indicated that there were more than one and two breadwinners in other homes which may indicate that the single woman has moved in with another adult family and this may be another source of support.

It is vital to note that in African culture marriage does not happen between two people but between the two families, which makes it difficult when one partner wants a divorce.

102

Marriage is regarded as an avenue for security in Venda culture and girls are brought up believing that the dignity of the mistress of the house demanded a decent concealment of dissension within it.

Women are generally brought up believing they are inferior and must accept that men have the freedom of living anyhow, i.e. men have total control over their wives. Most of the respondents (84%) said that they initially refused to believe that it had happened which shows as the initial phase of mourning (Kubler-Ross; 1960). However after some time had elapsed 74% of the respondents said they became resigned to the situation and just accepted the situation as it was since there was nothing they could do about it. It was assumed by the researcher that respondents utilised different coping mechanism at different stages of their loss.

Discrepancies were noted in the participants. Ninenty two percent of the respondents "Tried to forget the whole thing" while 78% tried to analysis of the problem. Another example is 92% attempt to keep their feelings to themselves but 78% let them out. It is postulated that these were all coping mechanisms that were used at different times of their adaptation to the situation or that the scale is not so easily transferable for one culture to the next.

Things have been changing lately. Women are becoming educated and independent and are learning new ways of living their lives without men. Previously women were expected to conceal their emotions even though things are difficult for them and to earn respect from the society for their endurance and perseverance.

Divorce has never been an easy process. Previously women who decided to get out of the marriage for valid reasons were humiliated through the whole process. The man was allowed to seek divorce for reasons like laziness and being fed up with her. In these instances the wife would be accompanied home. In cases where there is dispute between two families then the case would be taken to court. Where there were children involved, the Venda law would award the mother custody of children. The study indicated that all mothers had custody of their children.

Though more women are seeking divorce the society still does not accept them. They are denigrated and regarded as weak because they could not keep their marriages intact. The respondents elaborated during the interview on how they were perceived post divorce and they wished they could change what had happened or how they felt.

Divorce is described as a multi-stage process that occurs over time and the stages are not fixed. Generally people go through physical separation and legal divorce and lastly 'emotional' and 'psychic' divorce.

Literature review demonstrated that there are changes to be expected after divorce, e.g. the economic status. Women who had never had to work had to then get employment to generate income. There is an obvious burden of financial loss leading to poverty and loss of partners to assist in performing parental functions, which hampers the adaptation process when there are children involved. The majority of the respondents earned between R100.00 - R500.00 per month and they all had children and were expected to survive on that amount irrespective of the number of children they had.

There has been evidence of changes in mental health status. Women showed signs of depression and some of them were not aware of their depressive state. Their self-esteem became lowered. The tolerance threshold changes and in some cases their frustration was taken out on children who would be beaten up. Although children become victims of circumstances, they are also the ones that save fatal situations like in cases where mothers have suicidal ideas. It was indicated that those who never went ahead with the planned suicide thought of their children.

Even though subjects showed depressive symptoms the age and income had no influence on the number of depressive symptoms.

The period after divorce is stressful and mothers struggle in every aspect to try and adapt to a new life style. There are different variables that have to be taken into consideration, i.e. the age of the mother, the ages of children and period of marriage. Literature indicated that divorce was more traumatic to elderly women than younger ones. However this study showed that the older, mature participants used more adaptive coping strategies, which means that they coped better than the younger subjects. Though divorce was traumatic somehow women had to learn to cope and adapt to the new life style. Spontaneous information offered by the participants in addition to answers to questions posed to many of the mothers with younger children indicated that they felt trapped because their children were still fully dependent on them.

The subjects with two to three children on average presented with more depressive symptoms than subjects with one child.

This field of study has been neglected in South Africa as a whole. The researcher felt a need for a study on coping skill assessment of divorced women and decided to do it on Venda women in the Northern Province. (The study results will assist health professional and other caregivers to identify areas of deficiency and then be able to plan their services for the identified need) The study was conducted on a group of Venda divorced women of a similar socio-economic status and working in a similar environment.

The researcher had a task to fulfil and in order to obtain confidential and highly private information about family matters; she had to win the women's trust. Speaking the language, understanding of the Venda women and being a Venda woman herself are significant factors because they don't open up easily to those who don't know their language and culture. The researcher treated the respondents with respect and sensitivity. The conduction of the study went well. However, it was noticed that hidden emotions were evoked and some of them were tearful when talking about the causes of divorce. It was interesting to note how they concealed their emotions immediately after the responding questionnaire. This correlated with their response that they would not allow their feelings to interfere with their work. It was noticed during the administration of the questionnaire that the majority of the women indicated that it was the first time they had spoken to someone about their feelings in the way they did. There was a sense of relief for them because they had managed to voice their feelings that had been embedded deeply in their hearts for a long time.

The biographical data had been vital in this instance. It gave the researcher an indication of the type of people she was dealing with. They had different coping skills used by

Venda divorced women, i.e. confrontive strategies, distancing from the situation, self control, seeking social support, planful problem solving, escape, avoidance, accepting responsibility, positive re-appraisal and turning to God.

Although the divorced women tried different coping strategies, they spontaneously voiced their concerns for their future due to lack of financial and emotional support. Some of them were hopeful that their ex-husband would come back to them even though they had remarried.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

It was reflected earlier in the study that to the researcher's knowledge this is the first attempt in South Africa to study the coping skills of single divorced mothers and as such there was limited South African literature on that subject.

The study focuses on one single ethnic group of women and there was no control group. South Africa is a multicultural country and divorce does not discriminate on a cultural basis, however, this time only one culture was selected for the study.

Literature indicated that women's coping skills differ and are influenced by the period of stay in marriage, age of the woman and length of period after divorce. The study does not make any distinction along those lines - the period in marriage or after divorce was not taken into account. The other limitation was the non-consideration of the level of education of single mothers.

The "Ways of coping scale"(Revised) by Folkman and Lazarus (1984) was reworded to ensure clarity by simplifying it to yes/no format. The alterations to the standardised scale from a Likert to a yes/no scale could have likely introduced limitations however the meaning of the questions was not changed and the objective to make sure that the questions were well understood by the respondence was achieved.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a considerable shortage of South African studies on rural women and how they cope after divorce. If researchers take interest on this type of studies and identify areas that has to be given attention it will be a relief to health professionals because they will then in turn focus on identified and not assumed problems.

Northern Province has a limited number of practising therapists compared to other provinces and Thohoyandou has no practising clinical psychologist who could assist the other health professionals in providing counselling services for single parents. The researcher recommends that the available resources (i.e. social workers and nurses) be adequately equipped so that they can render all required services. Psychiatric nurses could be of great help if they are given in-service training counselling skills because they are close to the community. Self-help groups may be of help in assisting divorced women to become self reliant and independent.

The participants indicated that there was no structured system, i.e. lack of psychosocial support system they can rely on. The majority of them (59%) had financial problems and

were getting no assistance from their ex-husband. Assistance needs to be provided so that they can get the necessary legal aid for support and maintenance.

5.5 CONCLUSION:

The study reflected different types of coping skills used, adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. The biographic data comprised indicated the background of these women including their socio-economic status. They managed to live under difficult circumstances, earning less than R500-00 with children of school going age. The majority of the respondents (62%) managed to use adaptive coping strategies when dealing with their situation even though they did not have enough support system. Some of the women lived with their children and 66% of them were the sole breadwinner even though they were living with some of the family members.

The subjects did not agree upon the stereotype acceptability of polygamy in African families on this study. 79,4% of the subjects reported that the presence of another wife was one of the causes of dissolution of their marriages. Women are now strongly disapproving of polygamy by taking serious measures like divorce.

Nothing in life comes easy; these women had to work hard on making their life manageable and learnt to cope with their situation. They indicated that they made plans and concentrated on the next step to be followed and for that they had patience to wait for time to pass, having hope that things would be different. They found ways of counselling themselves and tried to distance themselves from the situation by detaching themselves. They showed symptoms of depression and were not even aware that they

were suicidal. They indicated that the presence of children made them reconsider their stand and made them aware that there is life after divorce.

It was interesting to note that the majority of them did not turn to the use of substances such as alcohol to help after divorce. There are some reasons that one can speculate upon why they did not use substances, i.e. not being informed about such things, their personal values and norms, disapproval of women using substances, even cigarette smoking and the lack of financial means to buy substances. Help was gained from new faith and prayer.

There was a clear indication of the lack of service to help them cope after divorce. There were no clinical psychologists in practice in Venda at the time the study was conducted. They indicated that the grants were administered by social workers but accessing these grants was difficult due to the paucity of social workers in the service and the length of the time required for the processing of the documentation. This was just information volunteered by the subjects and not part of the questionnaire.

This study provides an indication of the needs of single divorced mothers and highlights possible areas for more research studies.

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APPENDIX 1- CONSENT LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

<div align="right">

Witwatersrand University
Medical School
Department of Nursing Education
7 York Road
Parktown
2195
10 September 1994

</div>

_____

_____

_____

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a Masters student at University of Witwatersrand at present engaged in research project entitled "Assessment of coping skills of single parents" under supervision of Dr. A Muller and Prof. B Robertson, Head of Department of Nursing Education.

This research intends to look at coping skills of divorced or separated mothers. Your subjective experience will help to assess the difficulties you experience as single parents and this will later help health professionals to address areas of deficits. Please bear in mind that presently this research is done for academic purposes.

The interview will be conducted at your work place and will take a maximum of 45 minutes. Your anonymity will be guarded by omitting your name and that of the factory. You will give consent prior to the interview by signing at the end of this letter and will reserve the right to cancel at any stage of the proceedings. You are under no obligation to participate in this project.

I shall provide referral sources if you need to further express your feelings about your participation in the study. Research results will be made available for personal use on request.

Researcher: _____ Supervisor: _____

MRS. N A RAMUTHAGA DR. A MULLER

Participant: _____

Signed at: _____ Date: _____ Witness: _____

APPENDIX 2- CONSENT LETTER TO EMPLOYER

<div align="right">

Witwatersrand University
Medical School
Department of Nursing Education
7 York Road
Parktown
2195
19 March 1998

</div>

_____

_____

_____

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I wish to request your consent to conduct research at your factory for my Masters degree in Psychiatric Nursing, which I am registered for at Witwatersrand University.

The title of my research project is "Assessment of coping skills of single parents" under supervision of Dr. A Muller and Prof. B Robertson, Head of Department of Nursing Education at Witwatersrand University.

Participants will be interviewed at the work place and this may take a maximum of 45 minutes. Consent will be obtained from the participants before interview is commenced and anonymity will be guarded by omitting the use of names of participants and those of their factories. Their right to cancel at any time of the interview will be reserved. Results will neither reflect on the factory nor have any significance on the place of work.

Referral sources will be provided should they require to further express their feelings about participation in the study. Research results will be made available for both yourself on request.

Researcher: _____   Supervisor: _____
        MRS. N A RAMUTHAGA   DR. A MULLER

Participant: _____

Signed at: _____ Date: _____   Witness

APPENDIX 3A - <u>DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE</u>

PLEASE READ EACH ITEM AND INDICATE BY A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK:

1. <u>Age</u>

19-20	22-25	26-29	30-33	34-37	38-41

2. <u>Income (Rands)</u>

100-500	501-1000	1001-1500	1501-2000	>2000

3. <u>No. Of Children</u>

1	2	3	4	5	OTHER

4. <u>Ages of Children</u>

0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16 & above

5. <u>NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE HOME</u>

Adults: (Over the age of 18)

1	2	3	4	5	OTHER

Children

1	2	3	4	5	OTHER

6. <u>Number of breadwinners:</u>

1	2	3	4	5	OTHER

APPENDIX 3 B - WAYS OF COPING (REVISED) BY FOLKMAN AND LAZARUS (1984) AS ADAPTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

Please read each item below and indicate, by a cross in the appropriate category.

	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	UNCERTAIN
1	What was the cause of divorce? a) Financial problem b) Conflicts c) Alcohol Problem d) Child & Wife abuse e) Other			
2	Just concentrated on what I had to do next - the next step.			
3	I tried to analyse the problem in order to understand it better.			
4	I felt that time would make a difference - the only thing to do was to wait.			
5	Criticized or lectured myself.			
6	Went along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck.			
7	I told myself things that helped me to feel better.			
8	Talked to someone to find out more about the situation.			
9	Tried to forget the whole thing.			
10	I waited to see what would happen before doing anything.			
11	Rediscovered what is important in life.			
12	Didn't let it get to me; refused to think too much about it.			
13	Made light of the situation; refused to get too serious about it.			
14	Refused to believe that it had happened.			
15	Refused to believe that it had happened.			
16	Accepted it, since nothing could be done.			
17	Wished that I could change what had happened or how I felt.			
18	I day-dreamed or imagined a better time or place than the one I was in.			
19	Had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out.			
20	I thought about how a person I admire would handle this situation and used that as a model.			
21	I reminded myself how much worse things could be.			

22	I lost interest in many things.			
23	I thought of dying.			
24	I thought of killing myself.			
25	Turned to work or substitute activity to take my mind off things.			
26	Tried no to burn my bridges, but leave things open somewhat.			
27	Went on as if nothing had happened.			
28	Slept more than usual.			
29	I slept badly.			
30	Changed or grew as a person in a good way.			
31	I made a plan of action and followed it.			
32	Got away from it for a while; tried to rest or take a holiday.			
33	Tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc.			
34	I gained/lost weight.			
35	Took a big chance or did something very risky.			
36	Changed something so things would turn out all right.			
37	Turned to work or substitute activity to take my mind off things.			
38	Took it out on other people.			
39	I beat the children more frequently.			
40	I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts to make thins work.			
41	I changed something about myself.			
42	I moved to a different area.			
43	I prepared myself for the worst.			
44	I tried to see things from the other person's point of view.			
45	I worked harder.			
46	I tried to keep my feelings to myself.			
47	I cried a lot.			
48	I let my feelings out somehow.			
49	Kept others from knowing how bad things were.			
50	I tried to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much.			
51	Found new faith.			
52	I prayed.			
53	Accepted sympathy and understanding from someone.			
54	Talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.			
55	I asked a relative or friend I respected for			

	advice.			
56	Talked to someone about how I was feeling.			
57	I got professional/traditional healer's help.			
58	I tried something entirely different from any of the above. (Please describe below) _____ _____ _____			

APPENDIX 4A – MBUDZISO DZA VHUNE

Vha humbelwa u vhala tswitenwa tshinwe na tshinwe vha sumbe nga tshinga (X)
kha zwibuloko zwo teaho.

1. **Minwaha**

18-21	22-25	26-29	30-33	34-37	38-41

2. **Mbuvelo (nga dzirannda)**

100-500	501-1000	1001-1500	1501-2000	>2000

3. **Tshivhalo tsha vhana**

1	2	3	4	5	VHANWE

4. **Minwaha ya vhana**

0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16 na u vhira

5. **TSHIVHALO TSHA VHATHU VHA NO DZULA AFHO MUTANI**

    Vhaaluwa : (vha ntha ha minwaha ya 18)

1	2	3	4	5	VHANWE

Vhana

1	2	3	4	5	VHANWE

6. **Tshivhalo tsha vha no shuma**

1	2	3	4	5	VHANWE

APPENDIX 4 B -KUTSHILELE NGA MURAHU HA U FHANDEKANA (SA ZWE ZWA SEDZULUSWA NGA FOLKMAN NA LAZARUS (1984) SA ZWE ZWA DZUDZANYIWA HO SEDZWA NGUDO INO.

Kha vha vhale zwitenwa zwire a fho fhasi vha sumbedze nga hetshi tshiga (X) kha zwibuloko zwo teaho.

	MBUDZISO	EE	HAI	U sa vhana vhutane
1	Ndi mini tsho disaho phandekano a) Thaidzo ya mali (masheleni) b) Phambano c) Thaidzo ya halwa d) U sa farwa ngandila yo teaho ha nwana kana mufumakadzi. e) Zwinwe vho			
2	Ndo vhea muhumbulo kha zwine nda tea u ita tshifhinga tshi daho - liga litevhelaho.			
3	Ndo lingedza u sengulusa thaidzo u itela u I pfesesa vhukwine.			
4	Ntu pfa uri tshifhinga tshi tshiya zwithu zwi do vha khwine - tshitu tsho teaho u itwa ho vha u lindela.			
5	Ndo di sasaladza kana u di vhudza nga nne mune.			
6	Ndo di sendeka nga maanda a sa laulei nga muthu: zwinwe zwifhinga ndi di tou vha vho na mashudu mavhi.			
7	Ndo di vhudza zwithu zwe zwa vhuya zwa nkhuthadza nda pfa ndi khwine.			
8	Ndo amba na munwe muthu u itela u wanululusa nga ha tshiimo tshine nda vho khatsho.			
9	Ndo lingedza u hangwa nga ha zwothe.			
10	Ndo lindela u vhona zwine zwa nga bvelela phanda ha musi ndi saathu u ita tshinwe tshithu.			
11	Ndo wanulula zwithu zwine zwa vha na ndeme vhutshiloni.			
12	A thongo tenda i tshi nkunda; ndo hana u humbula zwinzhi nga hayo.			
13	Ndo leludza tshiimo itsho, nda si tende tshi tshi ndzhenesa muhumbuloni.			
14	A tho nga tenda uri zwo bvelela.			
15	Ndo zwi tanganedza ngauri ho vha hu si na zwine nda nga ita.			
16	Ndo tama uri ndi nga shandukisa zwe zwa bvelela kana zwe nda pfisa zwone.			

17	Ndo humbula nga ha tshifhinga kana fhethu ha khwine madzuloni a hafho hune nda vha hone.			
18	Ndo tama uri ngavhe tshiimo itshi tshi tshi nga fhira kana tsha sokou pfuka nga inwe ndila.			
19	Ndo vha na muloro kana lutamo lwa nga ha hune zwithu zwa vhisa zwone.			
2 0	Ndo humbula nga muthu ane nda mu tama uri a ga dzudzanyisa hani tshiimo itsho, nda mu shumisa sa tsumbo.			
21	Ndo di humbudza nga ndila ine zwithu zwa nga konda ngayo.			
22	Ndo tutshelwa nga dzangalelo kha zwithu zwinzhi.			
23	Ndo humbula uri ngavhe ndo tou difela.			
24	Ndo humbula a u dzhia vhutshilo hanga.			
25	Ndo shuma kana ndo ita zwinwe madzuloni a zwinwe u itela u bvisa muhumbulo wanga kha zwe ndi vha ndikhazwo.			
26	Ndo lingedza usa tshinyadza zwithu zwine zwa nga nthusa hone nda sokou litsho zwithu zwo sokou di ralo.			
27	Ndo bvela phando na vhutshilo ha nga a hu na tsho bvelelaho.			
28	Ndo edela u fhirisa lwa misi.			
29	Ndo vha ndi sa edeli zwa vhudi.			
30	Ndo shanduka kana u aluwa sa muthu nga ndila ya vhudi.			
31	Ndo vhamba mano a zwine nda tea u ita nda tevhela one.			
32	Ndo do tuwa lwa lwa tshifhinga nyana; nda lingedza u awela kana u ya madaloni.			
33	Ndo lingedza u di khuthadza nga u la, u daha, u nwa, u shumisa zwidzidzivhadzi kana mishonga, na zwinwe vho.			
34	Ho vha na tshanduko kha tshileme tshanga.			
35	Ndo lingedza zwithi zwi hulwane kana u ita zwithu zwi re na khombo nga maanda.			
36	Hu na zwe nda shandukisa u itela uri zwithu zwi vhe nga ndila ya vhudi.			
37	Ndo di bvisa kha u tangana na vhathu.			
38	Ndo bvisela vuvu nga vhanwe vhathu.			
39	Ndo pfuluwa nda you dzula huriwe.			
40	Ndo vha ndi tshi divha zwine nda fanela u ita, zwenezwo nda lusa uri zwithu zwi tshimbile.			
41	Ndo shandukisa zwinwe kha nne mune.			
42	Ndo pfuluwa nda you dzula huriwe.			
43	Ndo di imisela zwikondaho vhukuma.			

44	Ndo lingedza u sedza zwithu nga ndila ine vhanwe vha zwi vhona ngayo.			
45	Ndo shuma u vhirisa ndinganyo.			
46	Ndo lingedza u dzumba vhudipfi hanga.			
47	Ndo vha ndi tshi lila nga maanda.			
48	Ndo bvisela vhudipfi hanga nnda nga inwe ndila.			
49	Ndo dzumbela vhanwe kuvhifhele kwa zwithu uri vha songo zwi divha.			
50	Ndo lingedza u dipfara uri hu si vhe na zwi no thithisea nga vhudipfi hanga.			
51	Ndo wana lutendo luswa.			
52	Ndo rabela.			
53	Ndo tanganedza u pfelwa vhutungu na u pfesesiwa zwi tshi bva kha vhanwe.			
54	Ndo amba na muthu a ne nga nthusa nga ndila i vhonalaho nga ha thaidzo iyo.			
55	Ndo humbela tsevhudzo kha shaka kana khonani ine nda i thonifha.			
56	Ndo amba na munwe nga zwe nda vha ndi khou pfisa zwone.			
57	Ndo wana thuso ino bva ha vho zwigudelaho/ nanga ya tshirema.			
58	Ndo lingedza zwinwe zwo fhambanaho no izwo zwire afho ntha.			

124