

Abstract

The thesis aims to examine women's life experiences pertaining to violence in the family, their responses to such violence by either divorcing their husbands or maintaining their status as a wife, and the effects of their responses on their life and their family. Using the feminist methodology, the thesis studies samples of married women with a daughter (or daughters) who reacted against the violence by divorcing their husbands, and seven married women with a daughter (or daughters) who choose to maintain their status as a wife.

The findings of the study are that the violence in the family that women encounter comes in various forms: women are abused physically, verbally, mentally, and sexually. Most of the women from low income families are physically abused by their husbands and suffer from either minor or major injuries. Their reactions against such physical violence differ. Some fought back whereas some left the scene, and some moved out and stayed with their relatives. Women from all income levels are verbally abused by their husbands. Their responses to the abuse range from scolding their husbands or keeping quiet to leaving the scene. All selected samples have had painful experiences: their husbands commit adultery and do not take responsibility for the family. Some husbands who are the sole provider of the family financially take advantage of and control their wives. Some made business decisions without consulting their wives, and when they got into debt, they pit the blame on their wives. Some women from rich families would not get a divorce, but they choose to separate from their husbands. Some rich women divorce their husbands to start a new life. However, some do not divorce their husbands so that their husbands would not be able to remarry. With regard to sexual abuse, some women were raped by their husbands, and some responded to such violence by divorcing their husbands. After the rape, if the women get pregnant, they are usually forced by their husbands to have an abortion.

The women who choose to get a divorce would become happier and more independent after the divorce. On the contrary, those who remained with their

husbands must learn to be patient and be able to cope with all the problems. Some had to rely on the Lord Buddha's teachings to calm themselves, hoping that when their husbands get old, they will become less violence. With regard to the factors affecting the women's decision to divorce or not to divorce their husbands, it was found that the couples from low and middle income families would decide to get a divorce more than those from the high income families because the women could not stand their husbands' behavior any longer and since there was no dowry, they do not have to worry about it. However, some women from low income families could not divorce their husbands because they worried about their children future and education. The wealthy couples do not get divorces because they have problems dividing their properties and assets, so the women decide to separate from their husbands but are still the legal wife.

Recommendations:

1. To improve the legal procedure of divorce for clarification and justice for divorcing women that lead to justice and advantage for women.
2. To reinforce women's strength by supporting women to realize of their ability to support themselves and to educate them on family's laws in order to prevent them from any disadvantages caused by their husbands.
3. To realize the value of a person as a human and not to be divided into man or woman who equally has intellectual mind and vice should respect each other's right.