



A Study of Conscious Uncoupling and its Social Acceptance

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Abstract : *In today's competitive era, where people value their careers and their independence more than anything, it becomes unfeasible for couples to reside together and carry on. The need for putting up one's freedom before their spouse has become somewhat crucial. Couples usually opt for divorces in such cases and this results only in chaos and bitterness.*

The world today is more focused in saving marriages but what about marriages that are already broken? Who is going to come to the rescue of the couples who are already going

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through so much after breaking up legally? There is a basic need to educate the distraught couples and bring them out of guilt and shame.

The findings illustrated that after coming to terms with each other, with the help of Conscious Uncoupling, the divorced couples felt less remorse and loosened up to great extent. They even try to come together to co-parent the child without any conflict. This has eased the lives of the divorcees and also has saved the child from facing any traumatic situation.

Keywords: *Conscious Uncoupling; Divorce; Marriage; Mutual Consent under Art. 13(B); Gwyneth Paltrow; Special Marriage Act.*

Introduction:

The idea of divorce is more than enough to break the families which are united by the marriage of two persons. Divorce is considered an outrageous step, which only leads to sabotaging all the bonds that two families shared and putting the future of kids in jeopardy. Even when both the parties get the divorce, the bitterness and the guilt survive in between them. This not only affects their future but also the future of the kid.

Divorce, in general, is considered a problem by the society which needs attention. But in recent times, with people opening to different ideas, divorce no more has to be a problem. With people setting their priorities and willing to live their lives their way rather than compromising people are choosing to set themselves free to live a life they aspire to live.

The concept of Conscious Uncoupling is one idea which liberates the couples from the pain of divorce and helps them to live a guilt-free life. The term originated when Hollywood celebrity Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin announced that they are ‘Consciously Uncoupling’. In her statement, Paltrow said that though they are getting separated in many ways, this separation has brought them closer. A lifestyle guru, Katherine Woodland Thomas, who is credited to create this term has told the media that ‘happily ever after is a myth’ and Conscious Uncoupling is ‘an alternative, should it be clear you are breaking up’.

The idea which was initially considered to be some word in some sassy magazine has now gained acceptability throughout the world. In India too there are celebrities providing an example for Conscious Uncoupling. Hrithik Roshan and Sussanne Khan got separated and still continue to be friends and spend time together for the proper upbringing of their kids. Both are still close to each other’s family and spend time with each other’s family.

We started with our research to see whether people in a small city like Patna, know about this term or not, whether they even look at divorce as an option or not. Divorce cases in the city have increased with every year. We collected the data from the year 2009 and here is what we found.

Year	Divorce cases filed per year	Cases dissolved per year	Filed with mutual consent
2009	813	–	–
2010	860	–	–
2011	953	–	–
2012	965	–	–
2013	989	–	–
2014	1137	242	159
2015	1325	1145	176
2016	1352	1097	220
2017	1428	863	186
2018	1123 (till September)	509 (till July)	211 (till September)

The number of divorce cases filed every year has increased constantly. So has the number of divorce cases filed with mutual consent.

Conscious Uncoupling can save the relationship from becoming toxic. When a couple decides to consciously uncouple, they also choose to co-parent their kids and stay friends for the rest of their lives. This helps them to dodge the guilt, pain, suffering that comes inevitably with divorce. Also, since the process of divorce becomes easy and involves no hard feelings, it helps the partners to serve as a good example in front of their children, as they continue to love their parents as one, without having to take sides.

With an age-old of concept of ‘till death do us apart’, people often think that it is only normal to continue to be in a relationship in which there is no love left, but Conscious Uncoupling gives a way out to all those couples who are aware of the fact that they are no more in a romantic relationship and that it is only wise to live lives separately.

This concept saves the family of both parties from the pain of running to courts and getting into heated discussions putting the blame on each other as it is a spiritual process where both the parties agree to go separate ways without having bitter feelings for anybody.

Conscious Uncoupling hence, is a better option for spouses who wish to end their relationship without affecting their respective lives and their kids. This is a way to put a full stop on the romantic relationship they once shared and start a fresh relation which is based on mutual understanding and respect.

Rationale of the study :

The topic of the study was chosen on the basis of how the society is slowly evolving, with the concept of family planning, concerning the husband and wife, and how their relationship can be balanced, even if there is no love between them. We focus on our careers, health, on our parents, in-laws and our kids, but most of the time we only feel obliged to our spouses. What if there is a therapy that separated couples are willing to go through in order to make their lives easier after filing a divorce? This therapy is known as Conscious Uncoupling. Here, couples are educated how to separate peacefully and how to remain acquaintances to each other at all times.

Conscious Uncoupling gives chance to the separated couples to reach out and help one another. It's only when you are allowed to speak and you are being listened to, that the level of understanding develops. It may become problematic for those couples who have kids, especially younger ones. There are many experts and advisers who come forward to enlighten these kids to save the trauma, but it is also true that if experts would school the partners too, at least for their kids' sake, to behave in a kind manner to each other, it would be so normal and less complicated.

Even if couples after divorces must have received advices and word of cautions, nothing will sum up to a better way of living, if they do not make peace with each other. Parents are ready to do anything for their children, even suppress their ego to come together to co-parent. If this can become a usual affair, half of the problems can subside as well.

Objective:

The research study aims to achieve the following objectives.

- To find out that whether parents come together after divorce for the sake of their kids,
- Conscious Uncoupling will minimise the pain and anger attached with divorce,
- To spread awareness regarding Conscious Uncoupling,
- To fight away the taboo attached to divorce, and
- Conscious Uncoupling can be a therapy for a peace of mind

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis of the study concerns the supposition on which the research lies, and would be validated by the study and its result. The hypothesis of our research is as follows:

- Conscious Uncoupling saves broken families.
- Conscious Uncoupling helps both the parties to live a guilt-free life.
- Conscious Uncoupling ensures security of the child.
- Society is opening up to such couples who have made a decision to end their relationship readily.

- There is an awareness regarding Conscious Uncoupling in the society.
- Youngsters are more open to the idea of Conscious Uncoupling.

Scope of the Study :

The study is expounding in nature and it calls for special attention at a time when divorce and separation are being backed by domestic and societal abuse, deception and lack of affection between partners. Further, it helps in understanding how Conscious Uncoupling helps in time of trauma and public humiliation, and how it saves family from being broken.

The study was conducted in Family Court of Patna, and involved going through filed divorce cases from the year January 2009 to September 2018. We conducted an online survey through which we received prompt responses and help from prominent lawyers of the city.

Limitations:

The scope of our study could reach only to the urban families of the city and not to the entire state or to the whole country that kept the real motive of Conscious Uncoupling concealed. Due to the fresh concept of Conscious Uncoupling, many showed ignorance towards the topic. As the questionnaire dealt mostly with married affairs, young boys and girls could hardly give their contribution.

The study tried to involve as many married couples, especially middle class and upper middle class couples, but due to language barrier or unawareness among these divisions, people simply could not adhere to the topic.

The lawyers, too, refused to share the divorce cases with us, and maintained anonymity, which made it complicated to understand the cases. It was difficult to talk to spouses who were separated and to children, whose parents were divorced or were in 6 to 12 months of separation.

Theme of the Study :

“Till death do us apart is just myth”

– Katherine Woodland Thomas, Life coach

Marriage is considered to be a bond which brings two souls together and keeps them together forever. But this concept of marriage is ages old. Carrying the coffin of long dead love forever can be exhausting for the

couples. With time the love diminishes and distance finds its way into the marriage in many cases. But the couples continue to carry the burden of the relationship not knowing if there is a way out. Conscious Uncoupling gives such couples an option to part their ways yet greet each other with a smile if they ever cross each other's path. It is a way to ensure spiritual separation of the emotions, guilt, complains for both the parties.

Divorce cases have increased every year. So has the number of people opting for divorce with mutual consent. The process of divorce which generally takes a lot of time becomes lot more easier when both the parties are on the same page and when both the parties are not literally 'fighting' for divorce. It gives a chance to the families of both parties to still be connected even after separation.

Conscious Uncoupling saves the kids from going through the pain of separation of their parents. They don't have to take sides or be a stranger to one of their parents as they are raised by both, their father and mother.

Methodology:

Area of study : We started our research work by visiting the family court in Patna and we went through all the divorce cases filed over past 10 years. We took out the number of cases filed in past 10 years and the number of divorce cases that were filed under different sections of different marriage laws, for divorce under mutual consent in past five years. We also studied different marriage Acts like the Indian Christian Marriage Act, The Hindu Marriage Act etc. to understand the concept of divorce and marriage in a better way. We talked to various experienced lawyers and a few divorced couples and their family members too.

We also conducted an online survey to know how open are the people from various age groups towards the idea of Conscious Uncoupling. The survey had 10 questions and 522 respondents answered the questions. The survey included 300 people between the age group of 18-25, 180 people between the age group of 26-40 and 42 people above the age of 40.

Data collection :

Primary sources: Information was collected with help of an online survey. The survey was conducted among 522 people of different age groups. The

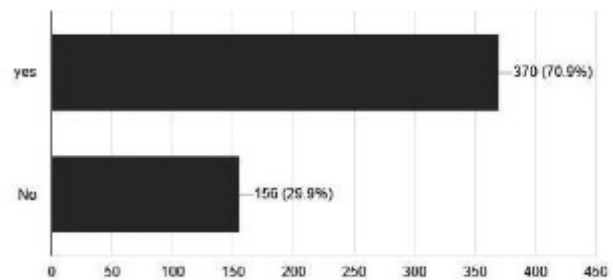
questionnaire which consisted of 10 questions related to the topic of our study.

Secondary sources: We visited the family court in Patna and collected the data from the case registers. We collected the number of divorce cases filed every year. We also studied a few of the cases of Conscious Uncoupling amongst the celebrity and took reference from different journals and studies and websites.

Data Analysis Interpretation :

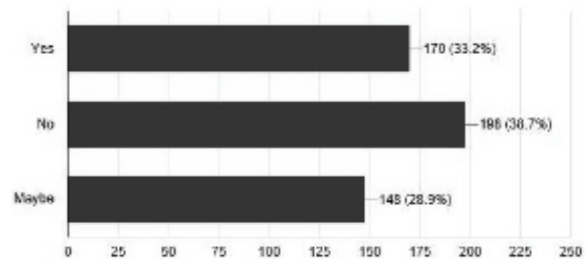
We asked the questions to 522 people, comprising of 300 people between the age group of 18-25, 180 people between the age group of 26-40 and 42 people above 40.

Question 1. Do you know what Conscious Uncoupling is?



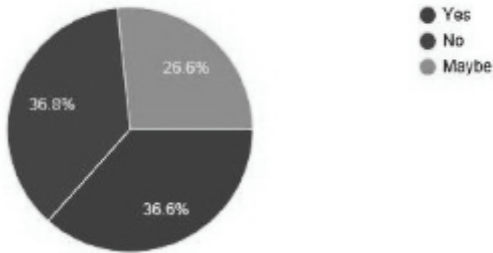
Responses	Responses
Yes	70.9%
No	29.9%

Question 2. Do you think future of the child is not affected in case of Conscious Uncoupling?



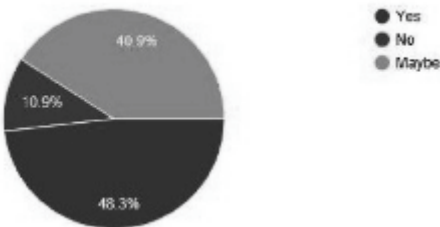
Options	Responses
Yes	33.2%
No	38.7%
May be	28.9%

Question 3. Do you think the child does not suffer any mental trauma due to their parents' divorce since after Conscious Uncoupling the parents decide to co-parent the child?



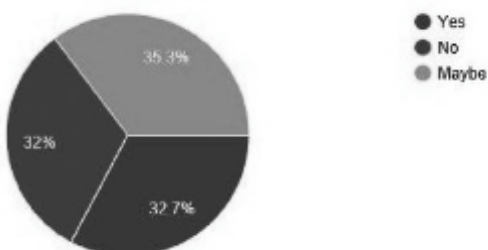
Options	Responses
Yes	26.6%
No	36.6%
May be	36.8%

Question 4. Do you think Conscious Uncoupling saves the couple and their family from lots of trouble?



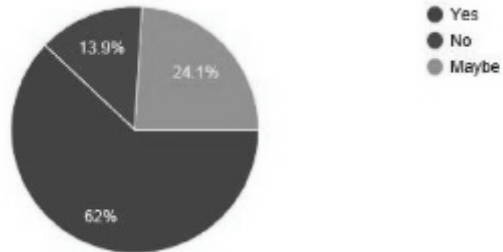
Options	Responses
Yes	48.3%
No	10.9%
May be	40.9%

Question 5. Do you think Conscious Uncoupling do away with the shame attached with divorce?



Options	Responses
Yes	32.7%
No	32%
May be	35.3%

Question 6. Do you think Conscious Uncoupling helps both the parties to live a guilt-free life?



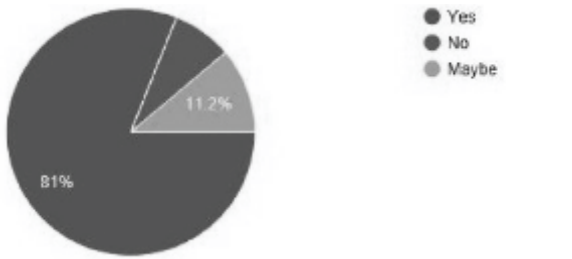
Options	Responses
Yes	62%
No	13.9%
May be	24.1%

Question 7. Is couple getting separated by mutual consent getting social acceptance now?



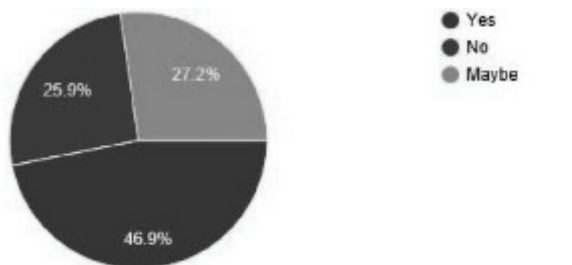
Options	Responses
Yes	37.7%
No	25.1%
May be	34.1%
Others	3.3%

Question 8. Do you think the concept of divorce is more acceptable in urban upper class as compared to middle and lower class?



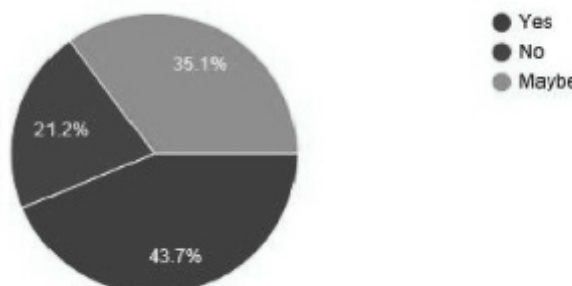
Options	Responses
Yes	81%
No	11.2%
May be	7.8%

Question 9. Do you think that couple getting separated just because they are not in love anymore rather than compromising and living together is getting social acceptance now?



Options	Responses
Yes	46.9%
No	25.9%
May be	27.2%

Question 10. Is it possible to be friends after getting divorced?



Options	Response
Yes	43.7%
No	21.2%
May be	35.1%

Findings :

According to the data collected through the primary sources, we discovered that the concept of Conscious Uncoupling has gained a little bit of social acceptance in upper middle class and upper class.

People do believe that it's hassle free to get a divorce with mutual consent and it's getting social acceptance now to get separated just because the love has vanished between the couples. Conscious Uncoupling helps the couple to lead a guilt-free life, as they decide to separate their ways because they want different things from their lives. There is no bitter feeling involved with the separation. Sometimes couples even choose to be friends after the divorce.

Though the parents decide to co-parent the kids the future of kids is considered to be affected by the divorce of their parents. They often get disturbed due to the separation of their parents.

According to the data collected from the secondary source, we found that the number of divorce cases filed every year and the number of divorce cases filed with mutual consent has increased in the past 10 years significantly. Mostly people between the age of 20- 30 go for divorce with mutual consent. The time duration in which divorce is granted if a case is filed under section 13 B of Hindu marriage law is 3 months to a year.

Recommendation :

There should be speedy trial in cases of divorce. The time duration even for mutually consented divorce is from six months to 12 months, which is exhausting, demanding and depressing.

There are shortages of marriage counsellors in India. At least for the children there should be more psychotherapists in order to bring the child out of trauma and help the kid accept the reality. Family members, too, should be exposed to proper sessions where they can be counselled and accept the concept of Conscious Uncoupling.

Conclusion :

Conscious Uncoupling is an all-new concept especially in India. Even though the term is new, but it has been in existence for years. Now the term 'Conscious Uncoupling' has given a concrete definition to separation with mutual consent. The concept is very much popular among the youth, but its idea is still not clear to middle and old age groups. They are still not open to discuss about this concept. The youngsters, on the other hand, are more open and are ready to accept it without any objections. So far, Conscious Uncoupling is more acceptable to upper middle class and the upper class as compared to the lower middle class and lower class societies. With education as the main challenge to these societies, people are yet not aware about this theory.

Conscious Uncoupling makes the process of divorce very smooth and saves the spouses from long court room trials. The couple become aware that it is better to separate with each other peacefully, if there is no more love between them. They come together for the sake of their kids and take decisions together. With this, the child remains unaffected and indifferent of the separation of the parents. Conscious Uncoupling also saves the child from mental trauma and allows enjoying the pleasures of childhood. Apart from that, the families are saved from humiliation and can continue their relationships even after divorce. Rather, there are no hard feelings attached to each other.

Conscious Uncoupling, therefore, allows the spouses to remain friends even after separation. It asserts that there is no hard feeling attached with the process of divorce. It is better to end a relationship if there is no love between them. Conscious Uncoupling helps in spiritual separation of couples and does away with the taboo that is attached with divorce. Though the couples go separate ways, they still remain part of each other's life as friends. This helps them to lead a guilt-free life and liberates them from the pain of losing someone.

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