

# Social and Economic Determinants of Divorce in Pakistan: A Case Study of Multan District

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## Abstract

The objective of the study is to analyze the social and economic factors that affect divorce in Pakistan. The study collects cross sectional data of 1000 women respondents through simple random sampling technique from urban and rural areas of Multan district. On the basis of graphical analysis, the study concludes Education of Respondent, Arranged Marriage, Education of Husband, Income of Husband, Use of Drugs by Husband, Bata System, Age at Marriage, Husband Abuse and Son's Wish as significant factors affecting divorce of women in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Cross Sectional Data, Multan District, Education, Drug Addiction, Age, Abuse, Son's Wish, Income

## 1. Introduction

The right of men to terminate marital agreement or nikah is called Talaq in Islam. In some religions by law and in Islam by the order of Allah if a married couple fails to solve their different disputes they can go for separation through the right of talaq or divorce. In every country there is a law of divorce. There is some proper procedure that a married must follow if they want to discontinue their marital relation. In some countries this procedure and law has been imposed in the light of Islamic orders and in some of the countries they have law according to their own will.

Divorce is a complex event that can be viewed from multiple perspectives. For example, sociological research has focused primarily on structural and life course predictors of marital disruption, such as social class, race, and age at first marriage (Bumpass, Martin & Sweet, 1991; White, 1991). Psychological research, in contrast, has focused on dimensions of marital interaction, such as conflict management (Gottman, 1994), or on personality characteristics, such as antisocial behavior or chronic negative affect (Leonard & Roberts, 1998).

Early marriage increased the risk of divorce (Anderson, 1997; Kiernan, 1986; Kravdal, 1988) according to economic theories as they argued the partners did not spend enough time and energy for finding suitable spouse and they did not possess the necessary emotional, educational and economic resources required for a marriage (Martin- Bumpass, 1989). Those cohabiting before marriage got divorced more frequently (White, 1987; Booth-Johnson, 1988; Thornton, 1991), one possible explanation was that the mode of getting married reflected a selection and those harboring more liberal views got divorced more easily. Nonetheless Kiernan (2002) argued that phenomenon was not general as thought earlier due to the fact that there was no such relationship in several European countries. Dourleijn és Liefbroer (2006) came up with an explanation that the impact of cohabitation was dependent on the incidence of cohabitation in the concerned society. Having children made marriage more stable, because it increased the value of marriage and thus the costs of dissolution. With the growth of children the risk of divorce decreased and the impact was stronger among the first born children.

Compared with men, women tend to monitor their relationships more closely, become aware of relationship problems sooner, and are more likely to initiate discussions of relationship problems with their partners (Thompson & Walker, 1991). Men, in contrast, are more likely than women to withdraw from discussions of relationship problems (Gottman, 1994). Perhaps for these reasons, wives are more likely than husbands to initiate divorce (Albrecht, Bahr,&Goodman, 1983; Goode, 1956; Kitson, 1992). Given that marital discord and divorce are gendered experiences, it is not surprising that researchers have documented differences between men's and women's accounts of divorce. For example, several studies have shown that former wives provide longer and more complex explanations for their divorces than do former husbands (Cleek & Pearson, 1985; Kitson, 1992; Levinger, 1966). Divorce is one of the most often mentioned major life events (Gähler, 1998) and can cause major stress and upheaval for many, and a sense of relief and opportunity for personal growth for

others.

Keeping in view issue of divorce, objective of this study is to find social and economic factors that can lead to divorce in Multan district, Pakistan. This study is divided into five sections. First section is consisted of introduction, section two elaborates previous literature, section three discusses data and methodology and section four presents some key findings and concluding remarks are provided in fifth section.

## 2. Literature Review

The trend of divorce is not as wide spread as in the neighboring region of Bangladesh including South and Southeast Asia, as it is in many developed countries. The rate of divorce in Pakistan is lower than in developed countries.

Pothen (1986) studied causes and consequences of divorce in Hindu society based on 200 husbands and 200 wives in India. The study argued that divorce was a product of multiple factors like biological, psychological and environmental (familial, economic, social etc.). Causes of divorce were also multi-dimensional and overlapping. The research found a considerable number of causes of divorce in Hindu society in India such as: cruelty, husbands' interest in other women, husbands' failure in the provider role, and interference of in-laws / relatives. According to this study, the post-divorce consequences for the divorced were severe. Most of the divorced were stricken by personal problems like frustration, inferiority complex, shyness, loneliness, economic hardship and ill health. But the consequences of divorce were unequal for men and women. According to the study, women were subjected to more criticism and neglected than men. On the other hand, women showed greater progress in education and employment in the post-divorce period.

Jesmin & Salway (2000) suggested that marital breakdowns were relatively more common among urban people than in rural areas of urban slum areas in Dhaka city. According to them, reduced social control against divorce and weaker familial ties because of increased female labour participation had given more freedom to women. Consequently women were more likely to be able to escape out of domestic violence by rejecting unfavorable marital ties or re-partnering. At the same time, the study found that women were appeared to be suffered by increasingly unstable and uncertain nature of marriages.

Ahmed (2001) argued that divorce was more common among rich and middle class. However, divorce was easier for poor because of the lack of large dowry and dower payments at the time of marriage. The study found that instead of actual divorce, in most cases permanent or long separation was preferred. At the same time, divorce tended to disgrace the divorced women and their family, and children often became a burden if women could not marry again.

Moinuddin (2002) elaborated divorced and separated Muslim women belonging to two districts of West Bengal. The study concluded extra marital relationships of husbands, poor economic conditions of both parties and family quarrels as the most prominent reasons of divorce. Other reasons for divorce were dowry issues, infertility, second marriages and a reestablishment of relationship with the first wife.

Acharya (2005) explores the causes of divorce in Pokhara, a sub-metropolitan city of Nepal in 1997-1998 among different caste and ethnic groups. This study identified educational differences between spouses, occupational status, unequal social and family background, role conflict and physical defects as causes of divorce. The study also found economic incompatibility and differences in the economic expectations of spouses, cruelty, and sexual incompatibility of the spouses after marriage as major causes of marital disruption. The study revealed occupational mobility, low age at marriage, immaturity, adjustment problems of new wives, and clashes between traditional and modern expectations among brides, mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law to be significant factors of divorce in Nepal.

Gillani et.al (2009) explored relationship between crime and various divorced indicators in Pakistan. The study was conducted for the period from 1975 to 2007. The causality results showed that crime was Granger caused by divorced in Pakistan.

## 3. Data and Methodology

The study collects cross sectional data from 1000 divorced women of Multan district of Pakistan using simple random sampling technique. Each respondent is interviewed through structured interview as structured questions are more reliable and minimize the errors. The analysis of the study is based on graphical analysis. Various social and economic factors are included in the study like Education of Respondent, Arranged Marriage, Education of Husband, Income of Husband, Use of Drugs by Husband, Bata System, Age at Marriage, Husband Abuse and Son's Wish.

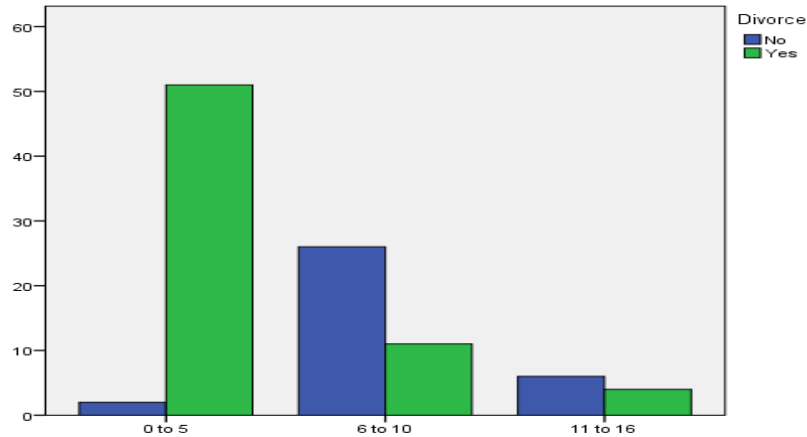
## 4. Results and Discussion

Graphical analysis depicts overall picture of Multan district regarding few causes of divorce in which green line shows the percentage proportion of divorced women while blue line is about the women who are successfully living with their life partners means they are not divorced.

#### 4.1 Education of Respondents

Figure 1 tells us that about 51 percent divorced women are primary educated or less. 11 percent women are divorced having middle and matriculation education while only 4 percent graduated women are divorced. This graph presents that the ratio of divorce is higher in less educated women and lower in highly educated women.

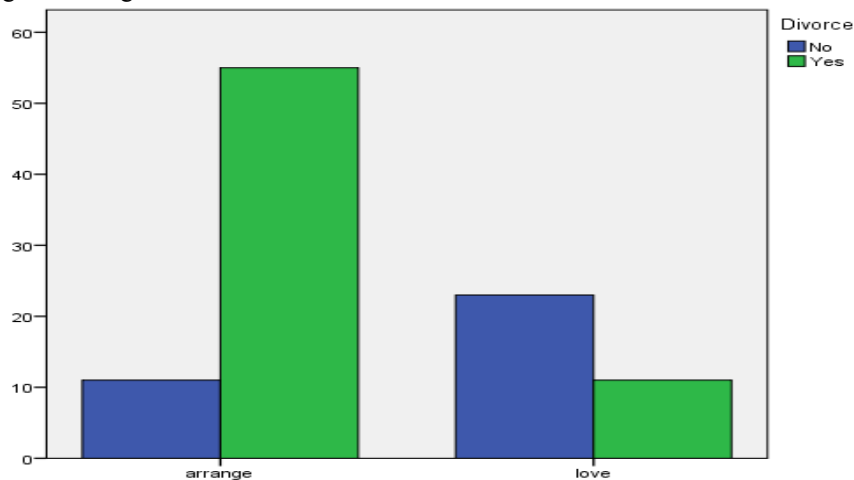
Figure 1: Education of Respondents



#### 4.2 Arranged Marriages

Graph 2 shows us total number of arranged marriages and love marriages along with how many of them are divorced. Approximately, 55 percent arranged marriages are failed in our data and 11 percent love marriages are successful. It shows that arranged marriages are not successful as compared to love marriages in Multan district. It has a strong reason because Multan is an agricultural area, Bradri system is too strong in this area. Usually parents of child decide their marriage in their early ages. When they grow up, their preferences must change their spouses that may lead to various conflicts.

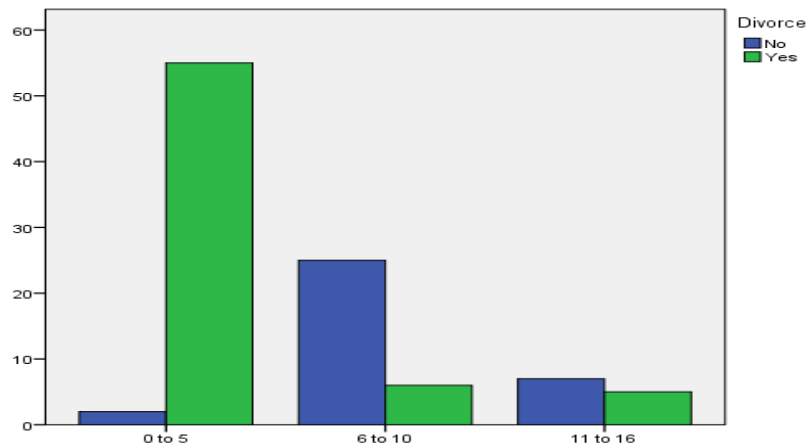
Figure 2: Arranged Marriages



#### 4.3 Education of husbands

As education of female is an important variable, education of husband is also having its importance. Approximately, 55 percent husbands are primary educated who have broken up their marital relations in the data set. Similarly, 6 percent husbands are secondary educated and 5 percent are graduated who have divorced and broken up their marital relations in Multan district. It shows that education of husbands is also an important determinant of divorce in Pakistan.

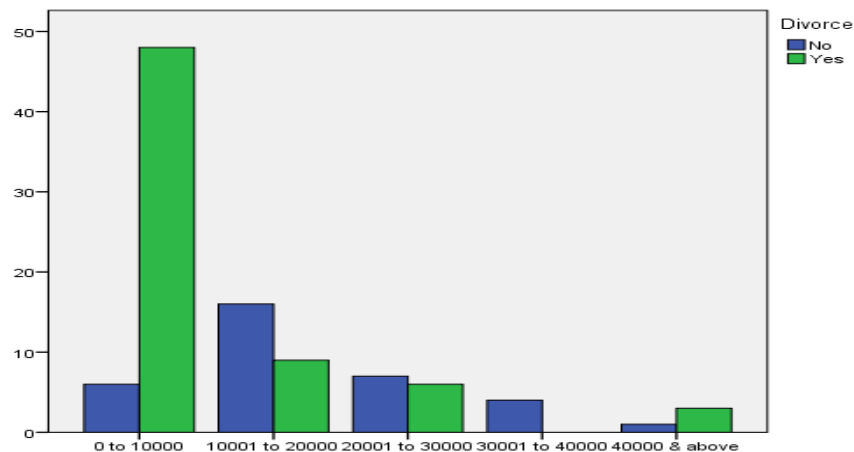
Figure 3: Education of Husbands



#### 4.4 Income of husbands

Graph 4 shows that 48 percent husbands having low income up to Rs. 10000 have failed to manage their marital relations. On the other hand, there is 9 percent breakup seen among the families having husband's income ranging between Rs. 10000 to Rs. 20000 and this breakup of family ratio is falling as income of husbands are increasing. It shows that income has great influence on divorce. When person has low income and fail to meet basic necessities of life then it may lead to problems in house and in most of the cases leads to divorce as well.

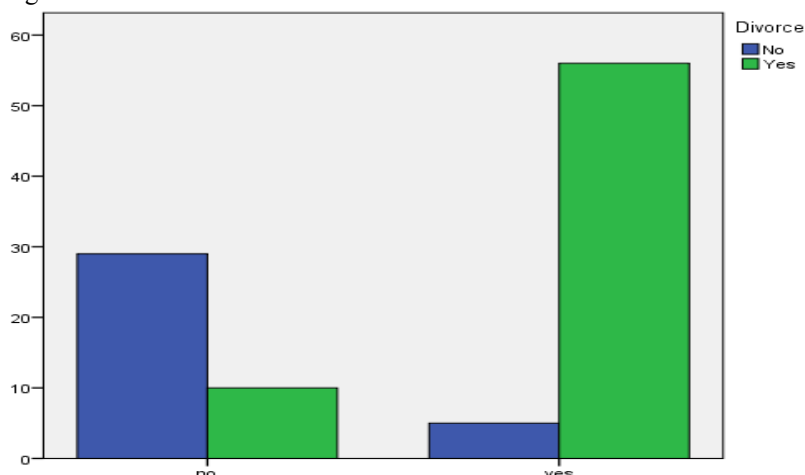
Figure 4: Income of Husbands



#### 4.5 Use of Drugs by Husbands

Graph 5 presents that the ratio of divorce is higher among the families in which husbands are addicted of using Drugs in daily life in Multan district. Breakups of families are about 56 percent in which husbands are addicted of using drugs. It is a major issue in our society, people who use drugs they lost their temporary memory and their mind become ineligible to handle their matters when they are in the state of addict. Usually in Pakistan, the drugs are impure and they have several side effects on human bodies.

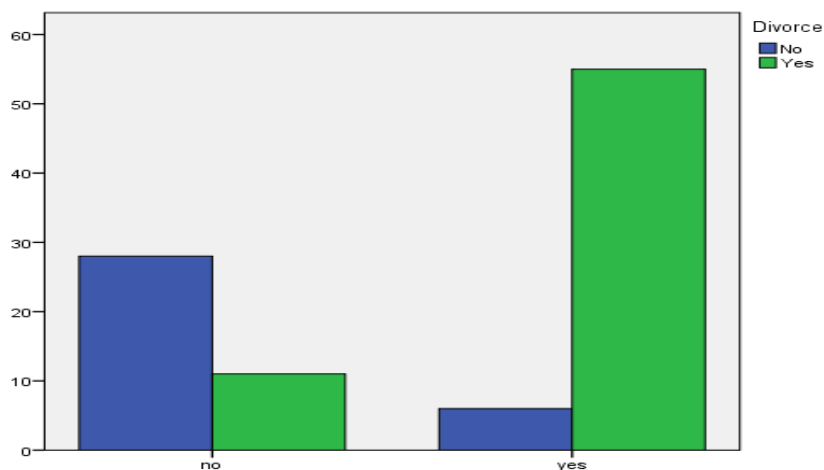
Figure 5: Use of Drugs



#### 4.6 Bata System

Exchange marriage is known as Bata. This system is much stronger in Pakistan usually in rural areas. Mostly sisters sacrifice for their brothers for the marriages and they are married to their brother's brother – in – law even without their willingness. In the data set, 55 percent women are divorced due to this Bata system and 11 percent women are divorced instead of this system.

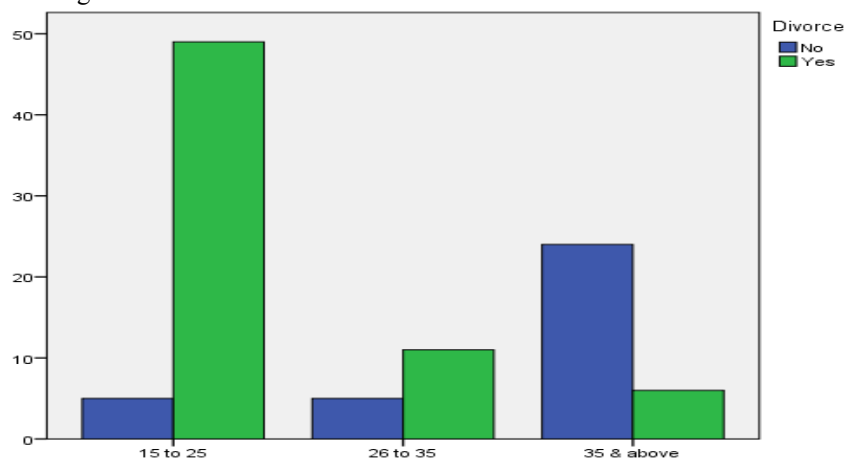
Figure 6: Bata System



#### 4.7 Age at Marriage

There is another major issue in rural and agricultural areas of Pakistan like parents settle their daughter's marriage in early ages like in 15 years or 16 years and in some cases it is less than 15 years as well. At this age, they are less educated and they are unable to understand the family related issues. If sample is analyzed so it is clear that 49 percent women are divorced who are married between age of 15 and 25. 11 percent women are divorced who are married between age of 26 and 35. Similarly, women married after 35 years are having less divorce percentage i.e. only 6 percent.

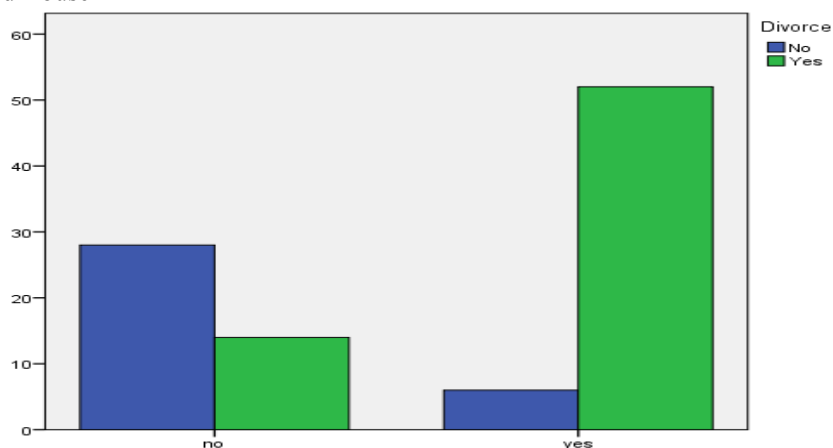
Figure 7: Age at Marriage



#### 4.8 Husband Abuse

Husband abuse is very common in Pakistani society. Usually, it is result of some other factors like financial issues and drug use etc. Approximately, 52 percent of the women are divorced in the sample due to husband abuse.

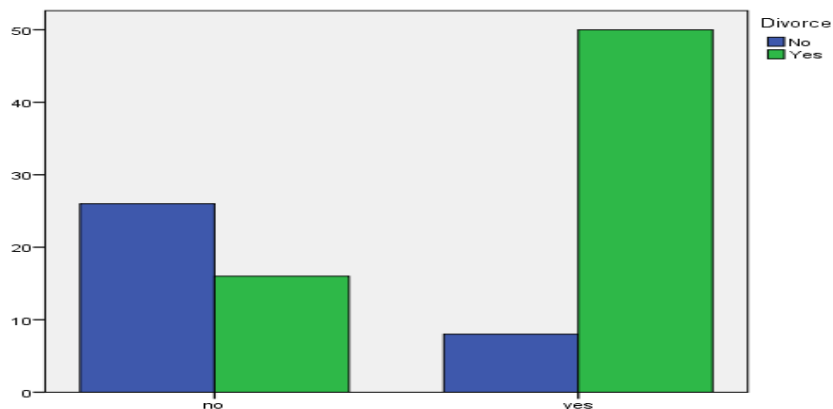
Figure 8: Husband Abuse



#### 4.9 Son's Wish

Families usually wish for sons instead of daughters because they need their heirs for the wealth. But it is a natural and not in the hands of anybody. So in some cases this wish may leads to situation of divorce. About, 50 percent of the women got divorced due to a wish of son by their in – laws.

Figure 9: Son's Wish



### 5. Concluding Remarks

The current study is aimed at investigating the social and economic factors that affect divorce in Pakistan. For

that purpose, primary data is collected from around 1000 women through simple random sampling technique from urban and rural areas of Multan district. Questions are asked through structured interview method. Analysis of the study is based on graphical analysis. The study concludes various social and economic causes of divorce among women like Education of Respondent, Arranged Marriage, Education of Husband, Income of Husband, Use of Drugs by Husband, Bata System, Age at Marriage, Husband Abuse and Son's Wish.

This study has an important message for policy makers that for consistency of life, couples need to realize each other in all aspect of life. If there will be equality in the society and there should be protection of the life and dignity it will be a better suitable for men and women to survive in marital relations. Islam ensures protection of life, honor, dignity and equality of women & men and balanced mode in all aspects of life. A glance over the rights of women in a Muslim society indicates that Islam does not discriminate male and female on the basis of gender.

To control this social issue government must take some steps. Government should announce and make a policy in which minimum age of female and male at the time of marriage should be described. On the other hand, government should try to improve overall education level in the country. In this way, they will be more capable to handle the matters.

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