

Divorce Trends in Women: A Study of Sukkur City

Hamida Narijo, Muhammad Abdullah Avais, Hajra Naz

Abstract

Islam is the religion of nature. It supports married life. It is tough to dissolve the marriage from the Islamic point of view. In eastern society, especially in Pakistan, the majority of women depend on male members of families i: e father, brother, or husband. The family system in our traditional society is powerful, and people are bound by some hidden or unwritten customs, traditions, and culture. If in said culture, a woman seeks a divorce, it is very alarming and a sign of societal deviation; this could be due to early age marriages, mismatch marriages, age and education differences and non-availability of marriage counselors, unawareness towards marital duties. The present research examines how marriage dissolutions are occurring in Sukkur city, Sindh, Pakistan. For the current study, 50 women were selected through purposive sampling from Sukkur, who had dissolved their marriage through family court. According to data, 52%, respondents belonged to a nuclear family system, and 78% from the urban region. The result shows that 58% marriages were dissolved within 3 to 5 years. A large proportionate of respondents, 54%, were employed at the time of separation, and 54% of respondents initiated separation decisions their selves.

Moreover, 34% of respondents initiated separation decisions due to financial issues. As the divorce rate is rising in our traditional society, therefore this problem needs to be researched and highlighted. So this vital institution may be saved. The dissolution of marriage not only affects spouses, couples but also on children and their respective families.

Keywords: Women; Economic Conditions; Social Status; Divorce (Khula); Sukkur

Introduction

For man, "Home" is considered the best shelter on earth. A home provides mental as well as physical and spiritual protection to every human. In Islam, marriage between husband and wife is a religious and legal arrangement. This agreement leaves both parties with some liabilities.

As the needs of other spouses have been improved and social insecurity means that the divorce ratio is rising in our society. Divorce involves canceling the legal, social, or responsibility of this partnership and ending marital relations (Mattoo & Ashai, 2012).



According to Islamic Sharia, the husband divorces, but when a bride initiates a breakup, it is called "Khula," and a bride must return a dower (if she received already otherwise gives up) (Ahmad, 2003; Carroll, 1996). It is common knowledge that women seek to save their marital lives because of family and societal pressures. Yet they claim divorce or try to end their union, because of many reasons, such as age differences, deprivation, family conflict, social status, etc. Although Islam protects the rights of women, common women have less access to their rights in our conventional society.

Islam grants women the right to divorce, but in Pakistan, common people, in particular, are opposed to giving the bride's parents this right. Parents regulate marriage in many countries and especially in Pakistan. A decade ago, it was difficult to find news about marriage dissolution because of low access to media. Now, however, the situation is different. Several legal notifications can be read through the media about the demise of the marriage. It's tough for a woman to seek a divorce in Pakistan. Many women petition the court to end the marriage due to male dominance in our society. Especially women in our community don't like going to the courts or police stations. Therefore, outside police and courts, they seek to resolve their clashes.

The fact that women can consult court for marriage dissolution is also very challenging and painful. No, doubt the majority of women are well aware of the future problems after the demise of the marriage. But the initiated divorce process due to current apathetic marital tie. Eventually, they endanger life and consult the family courts. This research explores, therefore, the conditions under which women try to dissolve their marital relationship, through family courts.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this ongoing study is to find out various causes that lead to the dissolution of marriages by women and to investigate the root causes of divorce.

Review of Related Studies

Thompson & Walker (1989) propounded that women track their affiliation more closely as compared to men. Consequently, they seek to talk to their parents about their marital problems as soon as possible. Gottman (2014) argued that men do not try to discuss issues with each other. Women, therefore, are more likely than men to seek a divorce (Albrecht, Bahr, & Goodman, 1983; Goode, 1965). Voydanoff (1990) said that both learning and income could contribute to the success of marital life. Education thus helps them in discussing or debating on their problems and issues. Bumpass, Martin, & Sweet (1991)) documented that young couples have a higher marriage and divorce risk than older couples. Parveen (2010) propounded that marital life requires care and quiet attitude, but that when couples are incapable of expressing concern about family issues, this contributes to family life problems that lead to marriage dissolution. Ezeukwu (1988) pointed out that extramarital affairs are one of the common issues contributing to married life instability.

Study Universe

There is no significant material available on the divorce trends of women in Pakistan and especially in the context of Sukkur city. Therefore, to find out the magnitude of the issue through a purposive sampling technique, 50 women were interviewed in Sukkur city, who dissolved their marriages by the family court from Summer 2007 to winter 2013.

Research Design

The research is exploratory, and it was conducted with the help of quantitative research methods. It is unique due to first-hand information of 50 women, who dissolved their marriages due to different undeniable/bearable circumstances.

Results & Discussions

Figure I: Family Structure

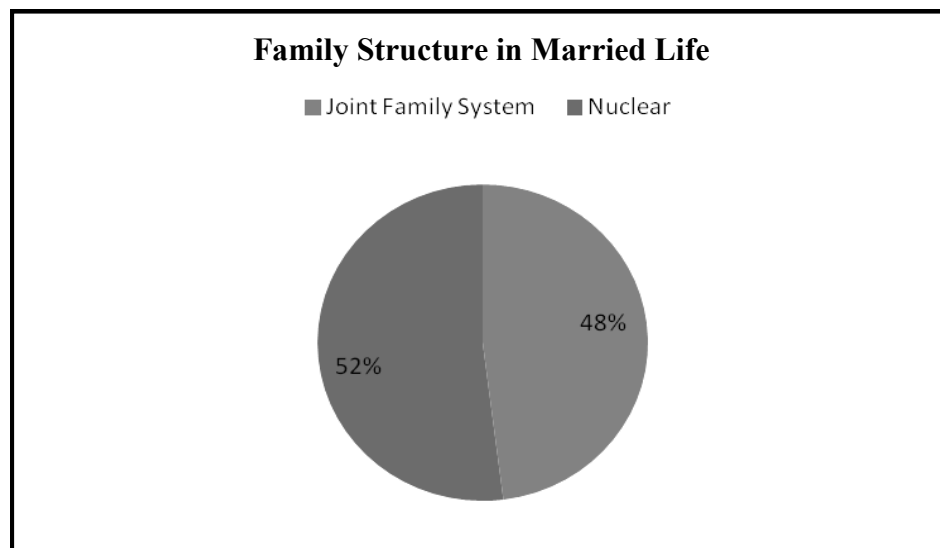
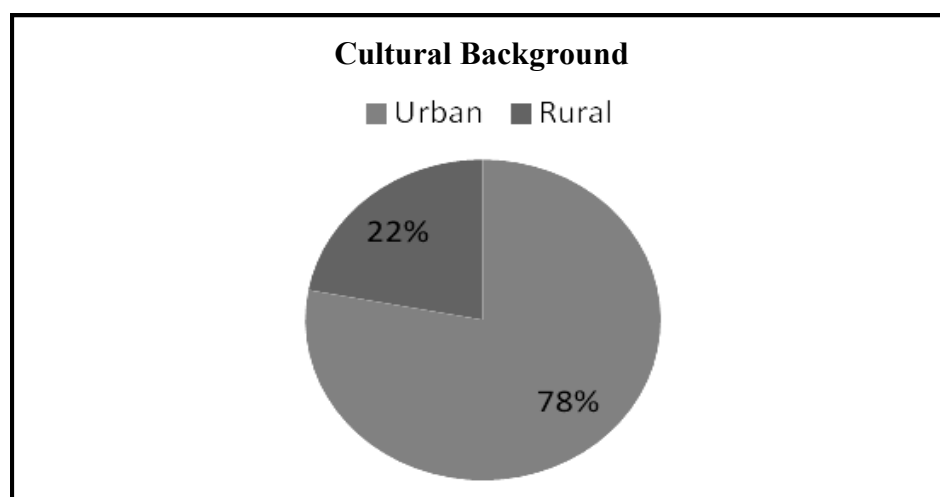


Figure I is showing that the marriage breakdown in the joint familial structure is slightly low, 52 percent of the respondents are nuclear, and 48 percent are family members. In Sindh, most of the couples live in rural areas compared with urban areas with their spouses. Some of them live alone in the nuclear family system and are themselves. Therefore, because any older person is inaccessible, they are less able to solve their problems. Thus financial instability and lack of patience are the most common in couples. Due to this factor, the couples go their separate ways. Different studies reported that divorce is an end to an unfortunate marriage (Abdol Rahimi, Shakarbigi, & Naderi, 2012; Navid, 2011).

Figure II: Cultural Background

The cultural history of the respondents is shown in Figure II. It indicates that 78 percent of respondents are urban, while 22 percent are rural participants. Another factor contributing to divorce or impacting matrimonial harmony is the cultural and ethnic history of partners. Locoh and Thirit (1995) have established a control link between endogamy and marriage dissolution. Because marriages are better in a particular group or norms activity due to their social ties (Adegoke, 2010).

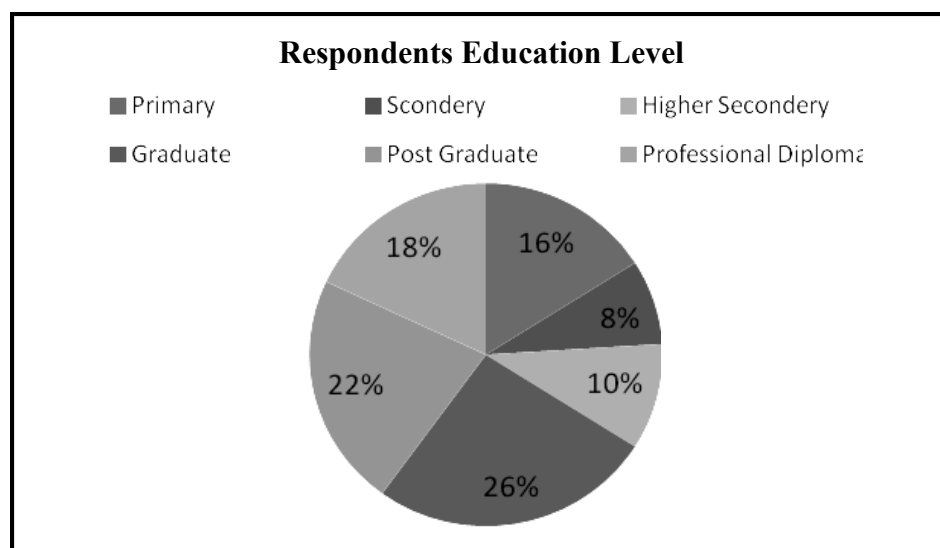
Figure III: Respondents Education

Figure III indicates that 26% of those surveyed were graduates, 22% were post-graduates, 18% were professionals, 16% were primary school students, 8% were college

students, and 10% were secondary school educators. Isiugo-Abanihe (1998) noted that a connection exists between women's education and divorce. The male partner believes women superior over them due to the effects of schooling. A divorce analysis in Ethiopia found that uneducated women with a literature curriculum, compared to women in primary education, have little risk of divorce. Further, in contrast to primary educated females, secondary and higher school women have a 0.63 times higher risk of divorce (Tilson & Larsen, 2000).

Figure IV: Marriage Dissolution after Years

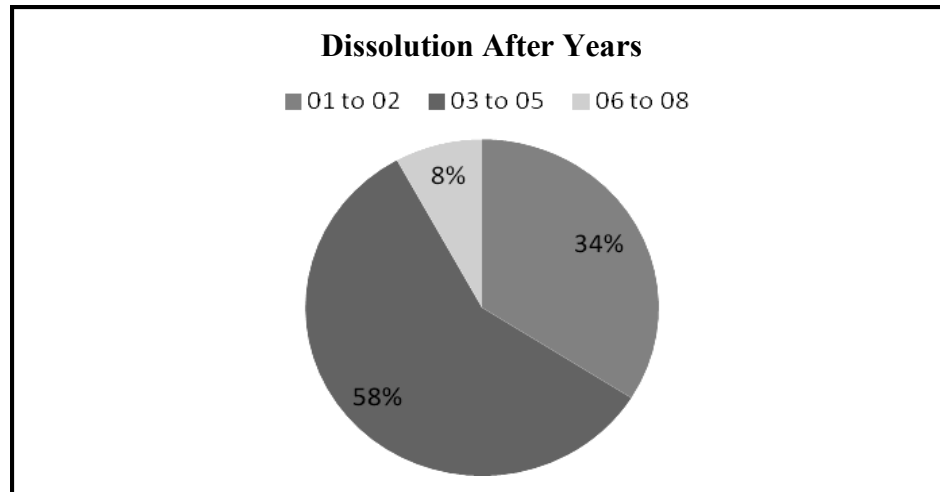
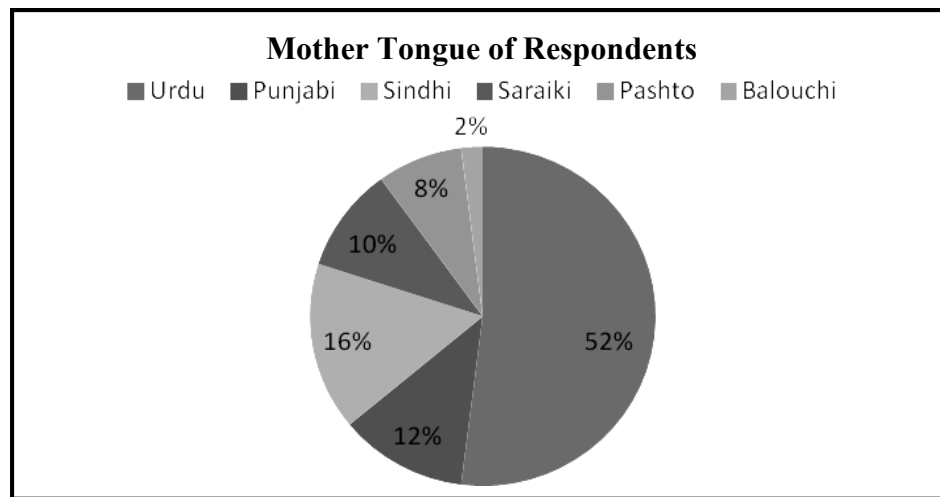


Figure IV indicates that 58 percent of marriages were dissolved within 03 – 05 years and 34 percent dissolved within 01-02 years after marriage. While after 06-08 years, the dissolution rate decreased to 08%. The result shows that the probability of divorce by marriage is not always consistent.

Härkönen (2015) argued that few marriages end earlier after marriage and are likely to occur in their first marriage year. In the course of marital life, marital satisfaction usually falls, and couples have an increased risk of separation between fourth to seventh years of their marital life (Umberson, Williams, Powers, Chen, & Campbell, 2005). Therefore, young people or teenagers have a lack of experience and maturity to deal with issues of marital life (Ambert, 2009). There are times in which the difference between education and social status places partners with different values. No doubt, it leads to a lack of harmony in marital life.

Figure V: Mother Tongue

Source: Primary Data

The mother tongue status of respondents shows in Figure V. It shows that 52% of respondents who spoke Urdu, 16% Sindhi, 12% Punjabi, 02% Balouchi, 10% Saraiki, and 8% were Pashto.

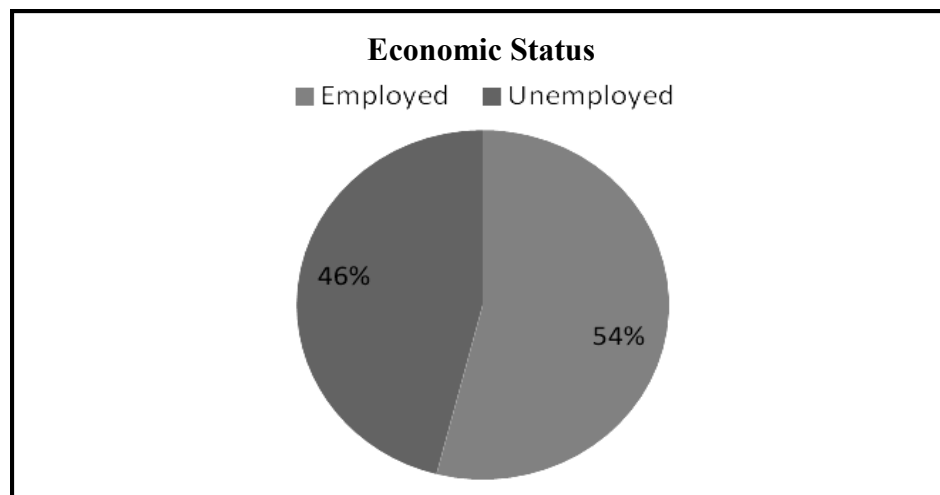
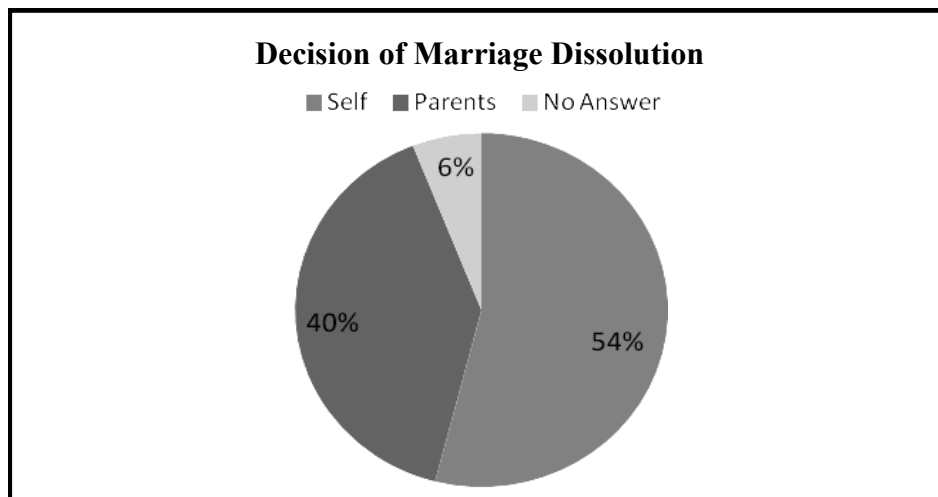
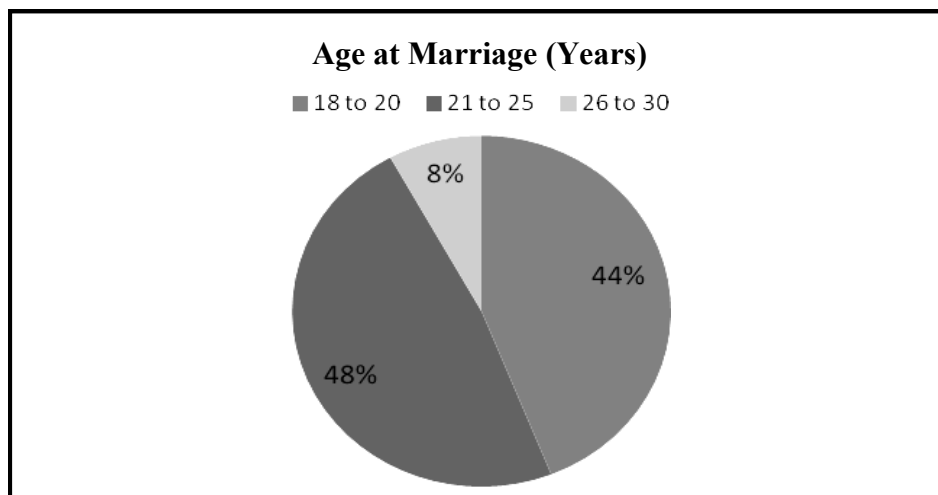
Figure VI: Economic Status at Time of Marriage

Figure VI indicates that 54% of women were working and 46% unemployed at the time of marriage. The results suggest that marriage breakdown in working women is higher as compared to non-working women. Financial independence for women is the key factor in Pakistan that leads to a slightly high rate of marriage breakup (Parveen, 2010).

Figure VII: Who Initiated Divorce

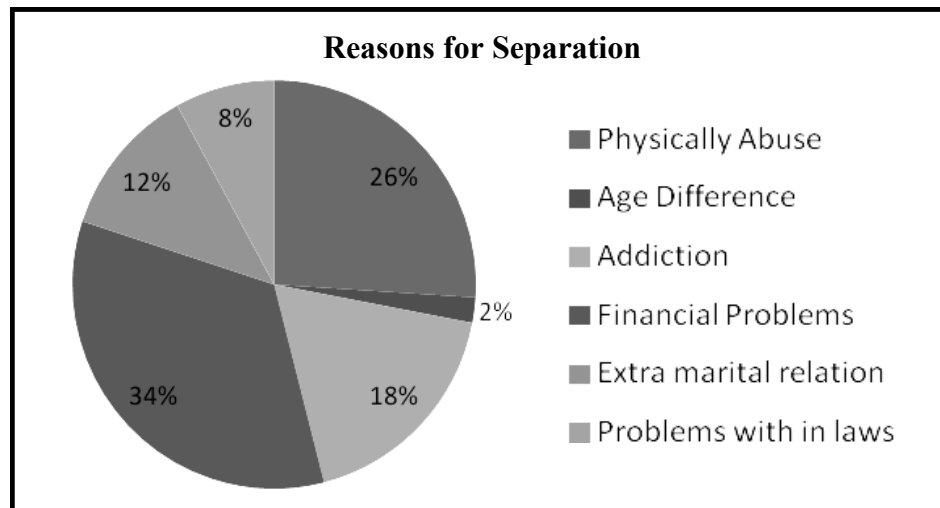
It shows, in Figure VII, that 54% have initiated their own divorce decision, 40% informed their parents of this decision, and 06% did not answer. The divorce decision has been undertaken by 54 percent of respondents and promotes the increased responsibilities of women for children and family work, so they tend more to leave the unsatisfactory relation (Thompson & Walker, 1989). The findings of this research strengthen the results of Black, Eastwood, Sprenkle, & Smith (1991) that the majority of women initiate the decision to end a marriage.

Figure: VIII: Age at Time of Marriage

The age of the respondents at the time of marriage is shown in Figure VIII. According to data, 48% of respondents were between the age of 21-25 at the time of marriage. While 44% of respondents were between the age of 18-20 years, and only 08% of respondents were between 26-30 years of age group.

Kurdak (1993) explains that it is noteworthy that new couples usually are not experienced in expressing their emotional needs, feelings, and beliefs, and these complications become the worst day by day and lead up to discordancy. Thornton (1985) argued that the two reliable forecasts of divorce are aging, and age, at the time of marriage.

Figure IX: Reasons for Separation



The explanations for women's divorce are illustrated in Figure IX. According to data 34% marriages end up because of financial problems in the household, 26% because of physical abuse, 18% because of male-partner addiction, 12% because of marital disputes, 08% because of legal problems, 02% because of the disparity in marriage between the two partners. Burn (1984) propounded that financial issues play a significant role in dissolving marriages. Dissolving a marriage is the culmination of a long history of unhappiness, which offers one or both partners a legal solution to the intolerable solution (Umoh & Adeyemi, 2005).

Conclusion

The results of the ongoing research will helpful for social scientists, academicians, and policymakers to understand the causes behind the decision of marriage dissolution from the sociological point of view i.e., family problems., financial issues, and extramarital relations of husbands. The couples from the nuclear family system with urban background have more risk of separation. Similarly, most of the marriages were dissolved between 03-05 years of marriage. Early marriages and financial instability in a family are influential factors that lead to marriage dissolution. The research finding suggested that parents should avoid socio-cultural and economic mismatches within participating families. It is the duty of social activists as well as religious leaders to steer the couples regarding loyalty in marital life and problem-solving techniques. Psychologists and

Sociologists, as well as marriage counselors, must introduce marriage counseling to control divorce rates, and the government can introduce premarital counseling centers to educate the couples/families.

References

- **Abdol Rahimi, S., Shakarbigi, A., & Naderi, G. (2012).** Phenomena Effects of Divorce on Families and Society. *J Basic Appl Sci Res*, 2(5), 4639-4647.
- **Adegoke, T. (2010).** Socio-cultural factors as determinants of divorce rates among women of reproductive age in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. *Studies of Tribes and Tribals*, 8(2), 107-114.
- **Ahmad, F. (2003).** Understanding the Islamic law of divorce. *Journal of the Indian Law Institute*, 45(3/4), 484-508.
- **Albrecht, S. L., Bahr, H. M., & Goodman, K. L. (1983).** Divorce and remarriage: Problems, adaptations, and adjustments: Greenwood Pub Group.
- **Ambert, A.-M. (2009).** Divorce: Facts, causes, and consequences. Ottawa: Vanier Institute of the Family.
- **Carroll, L. (1996).** Qur'an 2 229" A Charter Granted to the Wife"? Judicial Khul' in Pakistan. *Islamic Law and Society*, 91-126.
- **Goode, W. J. (1965).** Women in divorce (Vol. 91234): New York: Free Press; London: Collier-Macmillan.
- **Mattoo, N. H., & Ashai, Y. (2012).** A study on impact of divorce upon the attitude and social relations of women in Srinagar district. *Studies on Home and Community Science*, 6(2), 113-120.
- **Navid, Y. (2011).** The Development of a Divorce, the Research, Khorasan. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 5(11), 1168-1172.
- **Parveen, H. S. (2010).** Surge of divorce in muslim world. *Jama Masjid: Al-Qalam*.
- **Thompson, L., & Walker, A. J. (1989).** Gender in families: Women and men in marriage, work, and parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 845-871.
- **Tilson, D., & Larsen, U. (2000).** Divorce in Ethiopia: The impact of early marriage and childlessness. *Journal of biosocial science*, 32(3), 355-372.
- **Umberson, D., Williams, K., Powers, D. A., Chen, M. D., & Campbell, A. M. (2005).** As good as it gets? A life course perspective on marital quality. *Social Forces*, 84(1), 493-511.
- **Umoh, S., & Adeyemi, H. (2005).** Causes of divorce as perceived by students of tertiary Institutions in Kwara State.