

Variation in proportion of separated and divorced population in India by age gender and geographical region

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Abstract

One of the most important transition in demographic trends in the twentieth century is observed in changing marriage patterns and increasing rates of divorce. In most of the developed countries dissolution of marriage has shown an increasing trend. Europe has been experiencing two to five times higher divorce rates than in the 1960s and there has been a marked trend of increasing universal divorce rates seen in Europe since 1970s (Sobotka, 2008). Divorce and non-marriages are becoming commonplace in many parts of Asia. In many of the East Asian countries marriage rates have decreased and divorce rates have reached levels as high as those of OECD countries. In China, although marriage rates have remained more or less stable, divorce rates have risen over three times over the past two decades. The South Asian countries are an exception to this trend, where marriage continues to be relatively early and divorce rates are relatively low.

There is a rising trend of marriage dissolution in India over the last two decades, with rapid increases witnessed after 1999-2001. The probabilities of divorce and separation rose to over three times from 1987 to 2008 (Dommaraju, June 2016). This rise roughly coincides with the opening of the economy and higher degree of integration with the global economy, along with structural changes such as diminishing state control over media and employment, and liberalization in the fields of individual and social lives.

Keywords: marriage, divorce, OECD

1. Introduction

Marriage, as a universal concept is viewed as an important social event which marks the inception of a person's marital union. Marriage imparts greater sense of support both emotional and economic and facilitates greater degree of involvement in multiple social roles (Burton, 1998) Studies reveal that married individuals have higher level of physical and mental well-being as compared to individuals who are single, divorced or separated (Horowitz, 1997). With development being a global phenomenon, the past few centuries have witnessed massive impact in family dynamics influencing family patterns at a worldwide scale, including changes in marriage practices, such as, divorce and remarriage, delayed marriages, incidence of live-in relationships and same-sex marriage, movements towards partner's choice etc.

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2016) [1]. This rise roughly coincides with the opening of the economy and higher degree of integration with the global economy, along with structural changes such as diminishing state control over media and employment, and liberalization in the fields of individual and social lives.

2. Background

Edward Westermarck defines marriage as "the durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation", in his book "History of Human Marriage". Indian culture regards marriage as an indissoluble bond of life, where wife worship her husband as a god. As a fundamental right under article 21, our constitution mentions Right to Marry as a component of Right to Life. It states that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.

Men and women have right to marry and to found a family, they are entitled to equal right as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Family is fundamental group unit of society hence marriage is the process for formation of society.

In India there are broadly three types of marriages:-

- 1. Polygamy** - Polygamy is the practice of having more than one wife. In India it is being practiced among the Nagas, Gonds and Baigas community. Polygamy is permitted in Islam, but Hindu Marriage Act 1955, take it as an offence.
- 2. Polyandry** - polyandry is the practice of having more than one husband. It is practiced in the Tiyan, the Toda, the Kote, the Khasa the Ladaki Bota and Nairs of Kerala.
- 3. Monogamy** - Form of marriage in which one man marries one woman. This is the most widespread form of marriage found. It is considered to be true and best type of marriage.

2.1 Dissolution of marriage

Hindu marriage act recognize the following fault ground for divorce: adultery, cruelty, conversion, unsoundness of mind, virulent and incurable leprosy, new religious ordered etc, agreed party has to take one of the above fault ground and prove it in court to get divorce. Dissolution of marriage is a legal process of terminating the marital rights and responsibility of partners.

Broadly dissolution can be done in two ways:

1. **Divorce** - In divorce the marriage is ended by a court order.
2. **Separation** - it can be informal or legal. In informal one partners live apart without the recognition by law, but in legal separation a written agreement or court order is involve.

2.2 LAW

As India is a secular country every religion has its own marriage and dissolution laws. According to vedas there is no such concept in Hinduism. For Christian provision are under Christian Marriage Act and Indian Divorce Act. Parse's have provision in Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936. Marriage and divorce in governed by Mohammedan law. As regard to divorce, Muslim wife have a much restricted right to dissolve her marriage. Dissolution under following forms:

- Talaq-i-Tafwid - on taking another wife by a person, first wife have right to divorce.
- Mubarat - divorce on mutual consent.

Law gives some Right to partners under while in marriage or on separation. Hindi marriage act divides marriage into three class- viol, voidable, and valid and provides provision of minimum age.

Special marriage act helps solemnization of special marriage by furnishing foiling information at time of marriage like minimum age, spouse living, no party of unsound mind, record of prohibited relationship etc.

Uniform Civil Code under article 44 of Indian constitution advocates for common sets of rules and law without any discrimination for all religion. Every religion has different set of personal law, which deals with cases of inheritance, adaptation, marriage, divorce etc.

However, this different code creates a situation of conflict and keeps followers of different religion unequal and leave judiciary with herculean task of deciding the matter. This unequal treatment does not goes with the spirit of constitution. It encompasses Family Law, Property Law, Domicile, Access and Possession for e.g. Wife can legitimately demand for half of matrimonial property after divorce.

2.3 Data collection

Registration of marriage and dissolution is not compulsory in personal laws for Hindu and Muslims however state government have introduced legislation making register of marriage compulsory, these efforts are limited to marriage and do not apply for divorce and separation. Courts usually have records on number of cases filed and information on seeking a divorce. Data on this basis suggests that divorce granted has increased over the recent years have increased, these numbers often provide a misleading accounts of trends as number on divorce filed doesn't necessary means divorce is granted. Census collects information on current marital status of all household members as part of household schedule census tables are published for each district and state but micro-data are not released.

Questionnaire from ever married about currently widowed, separated, divorced or deserted, time period of current marital status forms the basis of the analysis. Women from distant and sparsely populated area are sometime not included in survey; as a result there is some randomness in data collected.

Conjugal stability can be affected by childlessness and lack of son. A married woman identity status, power and self-worth are tied to her reproductive fruitfulness (bharadwaj, 2013)). No desire to perform marital obligation and with thus attitude partners were living separately, reduction in social stigma attached to divorce, wife as wage earner are now and sharing the economical burden cause in contradictory to Normative expectation of household work, this race conflict and domestic disharmony including quarrels between husband and wife, ill treatment by husband and quarrel with in-laws, barrenness of wife, immoral conduct of wife, spouse's inability to fulfill material obligation due to disease etc are several other causes of dissolution.

3. Stylized Facts and Relation to Literature

3.1 Stylized Fact 1

Marked evidence of spatial variation of marriage dissolution percentages across the districts of India for both male, female and total population with a clear North-South division

Regional variation in terms of marriage dissolution has been observed for both male and female for all age groups. The North-Eastern region records the highest percentage of divorced and separated females (1.562%) as well as total population (1.120%), followed by the Southern region, with relatively high percentage of dissolution for both the categories. The Northern and Central regions record comparatively lower percentages of marriage dissolution for both male and female population, with the former having the lowest percentage of divorced and separated total population for all ages(0.543%). Highest percentage of male marriage dissolution is observed in the Western region (0.794%) which remarkably drops down in the Eastern region (0.373%), being the lowest across all the regions. A distinct North-South division is evident in the map in terms of marriage dissolution for population across all ages, with the Southern and South-Western regions recording a relatively higher rate of marriage dissolution as compared to the North, where the lowest percentage of marriage dissolution is observed.

In Relation to Literature

Regional variations in terms of demographic behavior is observed across geographical regions. A clear North-South divide exists in terms of demographic performance. The northern region shows higher marital fertility, lower child sex ratio, low female autonomy, low age at marriages etc. in contradiction to the southern region (Preston, 1979) The kinship pattern in southern India is entirely different from that in the North. In the southern region, there exists endogamous marriage systems and cross-cousin marriages that offer greater flexibility in relationship and familiarity of women in their natal family, with higher degree of support (Andrist, 2013) The kinship pattern in the northeast is less rigid and offers greater female autonomy than anywhere else in the northern region (Dikshit, 2014)

3.2 Stylized Fact 2

There exists a sharp spatial difference in terms of percentage marriage dissolution of male vis-à-vis female

across all districts with female marriage dissolution rates being higher than their male counterparts across all regions

Table 1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
p_tsdf	640	1.069382	.9956445	.1345602	9.555061
p_tsdm	640	.6425127	.6204844	.078831	5.822031
p_usdf	631	1.652474	1.499309	.1770592	13.96574
p_usdm	631	.6678188	.647782	.0680072	5.980233
p_rsdf	631	.5985633	.5920954	.0638574	5.558786
p_rsdm	631	.6678188	.647782	.0680072	5.980233

The percentage of divorced and separated female is greater than that of their male counterparts in all regions except for the Northern part, where the difference is trivial. The difference in the percentage of marriage dissolution for male and female population is starkly evident in the Southern(1.435% for female; 0.577% for male) and North-Eastern region(1.562% for female;0.774% for male) with the figures being more than double for the latter as compared to the former. This trend holds for both the rural and urban variants of the districts. The mean of percentage

aggregate female marriage dissolution is higher than that of male for both the urban (1.652% for female; 0.668% for male) and overall district level (1.069% for female; 0.642% for male), while the percentage of rural marriage dissolution (0.598% for female; 0.668s% for male) shows the opposite trend. Similar trend is shown by the variance of percentage marriage dissolution, which is higher for female in both urban and overall district level.

In Relation to Literature

There are no sources in the current document. (Palit, 2014)

3.3 Stylized Fact 3

The difference between urban and rural percentage marriage dissolution in terms of aggregate population as an average is very narrow. However, there exists a moderate divergence between the percentage marriage dissolution of females residing in urban and rural areas, the former being comparatively higher in magnitude. The percentage of male marriage dissolution rate is higher in rural areas, albeit the difference is negligible.

Table 2

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
p_usdp	637	0.895815	0.833952	0.105975	7.880839
p_rsdp	631	0.876966	0.796773	0.091316	7.74395
p_usdm	637	0.62022	0.659981	0.08426	6.482825
p_rsdm	631	0.667819	0.647782	0.068007	5.980233
p_usdf	637	1.141501	1.056174	0.126322	9.103215
p_rsdf	631	1.053911	0.988421	0.113202	9.644433
p_usdpA	637	1.558538	1.139561	0	20
p_rsdpA	631	1.359777	0.802489	0	8.657113
p_usdmA	637	2.621763	1.871755	0	21.42857
p_rsdmA	631	2.232786	1.269838	0	14.28571
p_usdfA	637	1.230396	1.209151	0	25
p_rsdfA	631	1.111462	0.787705	0	8.610855
p_usdpB	637	0.942789	0.858193	0.090518	8.202332
p_rsdpB	631	0.921133	0.808613	0.085229	7.605433
p_usdmB	637	0.632221	0.675364	0.085653	6.710065
p_rsdmB	631	0.671039	0.632025	0.065535	5.249842
p_usdfB	637	1.216739	1.101639	0.051467	9.490866
p_rsdfB	631	1.134114	1.04409	0.104539	9.876523
p_usdpC	637	0.674818	0.868294	0.037524	8.853755
p_rsdpC	631	0.68629	0.847502	0.07571	8.257621
p_usdmC	637	0.505501	0.742968	0	7.407407
p_usdfC	637	0.903146	2.209516	0	50
p_rsdfC	631	0.775442	0.91133	0.084721	8.826336

The percentage of aggregate urban marriage dissolution rate (0.89%) is higher than the rural rate (0.87%), but by a very thin margin. The correlation-coefficient between degree of urbanisation and percentage of aggregate population marriage dissolution is negligible ($r=0.128$), which further implicates the lack in divergence between urban and rural aggregate marriage dissolution rates. The percentage of male marriage dissolution is relatively higher in case of rural areas (0.668%) as compared to those in urban areas (0.620%), although this varies across different age-groups; the percentage of male marriage dissolution for the age group less than 19 shows opposite trend, where the percentage is actually higher in urban areas (2.622% for urban areas; 2.233% for rural areas). The difference in the percentage gets accentuated in case of aggregate female

marriage dissolution rates in rural and urban areas, with urban rates being higher than the rural rates (1.141% for urban areas; 1.054% for rural areas). A higher percentage of urban marriage dissolution is observed for females across all age groups, along with higher variation, as compared to the rural counterparts.

3.4 Stylized Fact 4

The age-wise mean of aggregate percentage marriage dissolution is higher for females than that of males. The age patterns show increasing levels of marriage dissolution by age for females, peaking at ages 40–44. Men in the age-group 15–19 have a notably higher level of marriage dissolution, reflecting the instability of early marriages for men.

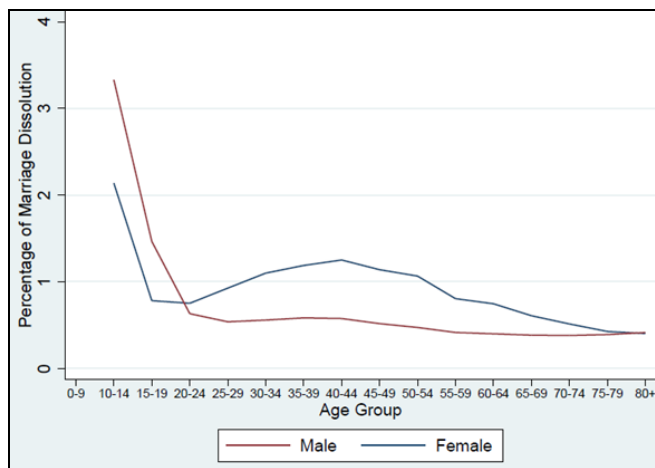


Fig 1

Table 3

age_group	P_SDM	P_SDF
0-9		
14-Oct	3.329285	2.137844
15-19	1.465057	0.781689
20-24	0.631692	0.781689
25-29	0.53808	0.926294
30-34	0.557899	1.099432
35-39	0.583086	1.187731
40-44	0.575739	1.251145
45-49	0.516842	1.139125
50-54	0.482625	1.065659
55-59	0.414841	0.804968
60-64	0.399525	0.746144
65-69	0.383701	0.608288
70-74	0.390726	0.426523
75-79	0.390726	0.426523
80+	0.414526	0.403614

The percentage of marriage dissolution for females first rises with age, reaches its maximum at the age-group 40-44 and then declines for higher age-groups; whereas the marriage dissolution rate for males exhibit a more-or-less downward trend with respect to age. For males in most age groups, setting aside the pattern at very young ages, where it records the highest rate of marriage dissolution at the age-group 15-19 (1.465%), the age pattern shows no marked peaks between 25–29 and 45–49. The percentage marriage dissolution for females is very high for the age-groups 35-39 (1.188%) and 40-44 (1.251%) as compared to that of males in the respective age-groups (0.583% for age-group 35-39; 0.576% for age group 40-44). Instability of early marriages among males is clearly indicated by very high percentage of marriage dissolution in the age-group 15-19 (1.465%), which drops drastically in the next higher age-group (0.632% for age-group 20-24) and declines gradually as age rises. The percentage of marriage dissolution for females is higher than that of males for all age-groups, except for the age-group 15-19, and records a higher aggregate marriage dissolution rate than that of males (0.923% for females; 0.737% for males), however with much lower variation as compared to their male counterparts (std. dev. for male 0.433 ; std. dev. for male 0.765).

In relation to Literature

Age plays a characteristic role in determination of marriage dissolution rates. Age at marriage significantly influences the risk of marriage dissolution. Couples marrying at

younger ages have higher chances of divorce than those marrying late (Balakrishnan *et al*, 1987). Studies reveal that females married before attaining age fifteen, face higher risk of marriage dissolution than those married at their later ages i.e. sixteen times more likely for marriage dissolution for women belonging to higher age groups (Dommaraju, 2016) Possibility of marriage dissolution increases significantly as the age gap between husband and wives rises, e.g. when husband is more than ten year older than wife and vice versa (Cherlin, 1977)

4. Discussion

Present study attempts to understand the variation of marriage dissolution rates for both male, female and aggregate total population over different age-groups, area of residence and geographical region, covering all the districts of India.

Regional analysis of marriage dissolution rates across different geographical regions depicts significant variations for both the sexes across different age-groups. There is a clear indication of the existence of a North-South division in terms of marriage dissolution rates, with southern states recording higher percentages of marriage dissolution as compared to their northern counterpart. This can be attributed to the differences in kinship patterns, cultural status and marriage systems that are largely disparate across the regions. However, the distribution of marriage dissolution for youth female population largely deviates from the trend, with very less concentration in the southern region indicating a higher mean age at marriage in the southern states. The north-eastern region records the highest percentage of marriage dissolution, which can be partly explained in terms matrilineal systems, tribal customs and women having more control over assets and incomes.

Age at marriage also significantly influences the rate of marriage dissolution. The study reveals a downward trend of male marriage dissolution rates with age, with the highest percentage recorded for the age-group 15-19. This indicates instability of early marriages for men which gets increasingly stable at higher ages. For women, the middle age-group records the highest rate of marriage dissolution peaking at ages 40-44.

The study also reveals a surprisingly narrow difference in average marriage dissolution rates in rural and urban India across all districts.

The percentage of marriage dissolution in India in terms of aggregate population is low as compared to other Asian countries, but there has been a rising trend of divorce and separation starting from a low base. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the issues of marriage dissolution and its impact on individual well-being and society.

5. References

1. Dommaraju, 2016.
2. Balakrishnan al, 1987.