

# The Survey of Divorce Incidence in Divorce Applicants in Tehran

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## Abstract

**Objective:** To study the qualification of divorce main factors so that it would be clarified proper consultation-intervention solutions to decrease it by counseling methods in the courts and counseling clinics. The divorce is categorized as the most tragic of social phenomenon, the damages and problems of which undergone by the couple and their families before and after divorce and the effective factors of this phenomenon incidence have been studied for many years. Divorce has different factors and it can never clarify a specific one as the main factor of divorce.

**Materials and methods:** This survey studied the divorce creating factors in divorce applicants in Tehran Family courts (Shahid Mahalati-Vanak) during 2010-2011. The applicants of sampling group were including 300 referred ones from the courts, and the research method was descriptive and cross-sectional accomplishing by structured interview. Findings were shown as frequency and percent.

**Results:** The results showed that the important factors of divorce request are including in order of psychic factors (93.3%), social and cultural factors (87.3%), sexual factors (88%), economical factors (80.3%), and violence (84.3%), and it may be multi-factors as well.

**Conclusion:** In addition to recommendation for more study in these fields, the results of this survey suggest to apply the necessary programming in teaching and counseling before the marriage as well as the necessity of informing the couple in receiving professional consults in time of problem incidence and proceeding for divorce in order to prevent from divorce incidence.

**Keywords:** Divorce, Family, Psychology, Violence, and Sexual Dysfunctions, psychological

## Introduction

Family is a social structure, organization, group, and

a small society forming the first coherent unit of social system from the viewpoint of sociologists, and the most important responsibility of which is to secure social unity and solidarity. From the view point of Jean Bodin "Family is a natural society which is a root for the rest of them and also it is the initial creating unit for government and country (1). Divorce is one of the family and social crises, in most cases cause unbalances in the family and as a stressful factor demolish the stability of the family

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and damage the health psychic of member of the family (2). Most of the researchers believe that the infelicitous reflections of this sad crisis are increasingly growing, and attacking the individual and social life (3).

Sociologists are trying to study the process of appearing this phenomenon in the social levels especially social pathologists are viewing at divorce as one of the emerging factors in social obliquity (4) Psychologists believe the phenomenon of divorce is a kind of emotional rupture between couple or at least one of them. (5), this emotional rupture is absolutely sad and it is definitely along with different damages and losses for couple. Divorce is not only an individual and complicated phenomenon, but also considered as a social phenomenon, that's why it may be the basis of various crises as well (6).

Nowadays, due to various factors such as rapid social, economical, and cultural changes, the family structure has undergone many rough changes, as far as the statistics indicate that 2.3 of marriages lead to divorce in US (7). In one of the researches accomplished by the researchers of Wiskancen University, the rate of divorce at the first marriages reaches to 67%, in other words, out of 3 marriages 2 of them lead to divorce (8). However, the rate of divorce is low in Germany, it is estimated that at least 1.3 of marriages would be remained without solving the problems and most of the couple would stay in a constant relation with no satisfaction (9).

In Iran, marriage quarrel and divorce are considered as critical problems of the society, as in a research, divorce was ranked in the list of 10 stressful events (10). To study the existing statistic has indicated a growing process of divorce in the country, as the figures among 10000 people have been increasing from 6.3 to 9.4 within 1996-2001 (11).

The recent statistic data in Iran regarding divorce indicates the growing rate in it. According to the public relation of General Department for Registration of documents, the numbers of deposition, irrevocable, and revocable divorces to be shown an increase in order of 17, 17, 32% during the first 6 months of 2002 comparing with the same durations in last year. Regarding the rate of registered marriages and divorces, the comparison of statistics of Judiciary bar in 2003 indicates that the numbers of marriage were only 1161 cases more than divorce during 2003 (12). According to Keyhan Niya's report (1996), Iran has been introduced as the forth country of the world from the viewpoint of divorce rate. This

rapid and growing increase in divorce rate made the social analysts get concerned. On the other hand, there are various negative results of divorce such as imperiling psychic health of couple and their children, the increase in rate of car accident leading to death, growing incidence in physical disease, suicide, violence, and couple's murder and the risk of depression, seclusion, health problems and descending educational functions for the children. The high rate of statistics in divorce would bring up the importance and necessity for psychological interventional programming in order to decrease the destroyer effects of marriage incompatibility and the rate of divorce. To accomplish such interventions particularly at times the couple haven't felt absolute dissatisfaction and they are in the preliminary steps of incompatibility are considered as a necessary affair (13). However the aforesaid interventions could be successful while they are designed correctly and according to the requirements. Therefore, identifying the factors of separation and divorce could be led to clear up the authorities' subjective framework in order to repel this infelicitous social process as well as to plan for counseling before marriage and preventing from divorce which finally results in preventing from social damages and the stability of the family.

With consideration to divorce complex and its effects on the whole member of society, the purpose of this present survey is to recognize the causes resulting in couple divorce petitions in Tehran in 2007.

## **Materials and methods**

### **Participants**

The statistics society of this survey was covering all divorce applicants who referred to Tehran family courts (Shahid Mahalati -Vanak) during 2006-2007; they were in a larger survey designed for the purpose of interventional counseling role in preventing divorce. The sampling method in this survey was continual sampling, so the people referring to the court and were ready for cooperation to be studied that totally the volume of sampling was forming with 300 individuals.

### **Method of Performance**

This is a descriptive survey which was performed as cross-section. During this survey, interviewer attended in the court and interviewed with divorce applicants two days per week. All applicants were invited to interview and those who were interested in

cooperating and were qualified for the survey had been interviewing. With regard to applicants' willing for cooperation and time of interview averagely about 3 or 4 applicants to be interviewed per day.

### Measures

Tools for this survey included questionnaire with demographic specification and structured interview. Demographic questionnaire included questions about education, occupation, marriage duration, economical situation, numbers of children, type of marriage, degree of family support and some sexual problems. By looking up in library sources and through internet, the probable reasons of divorce were specified in Iran and organized as a list. The aforesaid list was considered and corrected by 5 professors, and then it was edited as a constructed interview by one of the counseling psychology professors.

### Data Analysis

In this survey, data has been shown as frequency, percent, average and standard deviation.

### Ethic Notes

At the meantime, it was telling to all applicants of the survey that none of data and their secondary information was exposed and whenever they wanted they could leave the interview and survey, and in case of interest in taking divorce counseling, Tehran Psychiatry Institute and Clinic is ready to accept them on free.

### Results

In this survey, 300 divorce applicants were studied whose range of age was 15-62 with the average of 31.04% and standard deviation of 8.34%, the marriage durations of 1-40 years with the average of 9.08% and standard deviation of 7.64%. The demographic specifications of divorce applicants are shown in table no. 1.

Also the highest rate in divorce petitions is seen in women (90%) in group of diploma (75.1%), in housekeepers (72.7%), in employed level (41.3%) and in the illiterate families (78.3%), and for those who much supported by their family(41%), also in tenant (49.7%) with average economical situation (49.7%) and the inhabitants of Tehran southern area (40.3%). The least rate of divorce is observed in families with more children (7.6%) and the last standing children of family.

As it is shown in table no. 2, the highest factors of divorce are related to absence of compatibility and

understanding (85%), Absence of securing psychic needs (81%), violence (68.7%), and Sexual problems (66.7%).

**Table 1:** Frequency of divorce applicants separating with demographic variants in 2006 (300 applicants)

Name of Variant		Numbers	Percent
Sex	Female	270	90
	Male	30	10
Education	Diploma or lower	225	75.1
	Higher than diploma	75	24.9
Female occupation	Housekeeper	218	72.2
	Employed	82	27.3
Economical situation	Low	91	30.3
	Average	149	49.7
	High	60	20
Numbers of children	Without children	122	40.7
	1-2 children	155	51.7
	More than 3 children	23	7.6

According to accomplished examination in this study, the probability of divorce is 10.3% for the people having prior separation. The spouses of 18.3% of women applicants have legal and judicial problems and the highest rate of divorce has seen in traditional marriages (table 3). Moreover, 88% of divorce applicants have sexual problems and 25% of whom have second marriage or concubine. 41.3% of divorce applicants have sexual passion problem, 13.3% sexual weakness, 8.7% sexual functions problem, and 5.6% suffer with orgasm problem.

### Discussion

This survey examined the factors of divorce in Tehran family courts in 2006-2007. With regard to the obtained results, 90% of the divorce applicants (270 individuals) were covered by women and only 10% (30 individuals) were men. According to the examinations of the statistics section of judiciary bar in 2003, through thousands of files regarding marriage incompatibility and divorce application, the most divorce petitions were brought up by women against husbands, and more than 90% of divorce applicants were the young women who referred to the courts due to absence of understanding with their husband, home violence, financial poverty, and addiction of their spouses (13). Moreover, Rehani's report (2002) regarding considering of divorce factors in Gonabad showed that in most of units 45.7% of

**Table 2:** Frequency distribution of divorce factors in applicants in 2006 (300 applicants)

Factor	number	Percent	Factor	number	Percent
Psychic factors collection	298	96.3	Sexual factors collection	264	88.0
Absence of compatibility and understanding	255	85.0	Sexual problem	200	66.7
Absence of securing psychic needs	243	81.0	Absence of securing sexual needs	170	56.7
Personality problems	143	47.7	Libel and defamation	149	49.7
Immorality	140	46.7	Illegal relations (unrestrained)	111	37.0
Psychic problems	120	40.0	Betrayal (adultery)	103	34.3
Parsimony	107	35.7	Economical factors collection	241	80.3
Absence of condescend	86	28.7	Absence of securing welfare needs	173	57.7
Problems with children	66	22.0	Economical problems	172	57.3
Absence of responsibility	26	8.7	Absence of maintenance	152	50.7
Fanaticism	12	4.0	Husband's job problem	146	48.7
Cultural-Social factors collection	262	87.3	Violence factors collection	253	84.3
Family interventions	167	55.7	Psychic violence	206	68.7
Cultural differences	117	39.0	Ill-treatment	148	49.3
Educational diversity	110	36.7	Physical violence	134	44.7
Social difference	103	34.3	Demolition of properties	90	30.0
Age differences	82	27.3	Body factors collection	44	14.7
Woman's occupying	32	10.7	Infertility	25	8.3
Family interventions	26	8.7	Physical disease	20	6.7
Renewed marriage	75	25.0	Addiction factors collection	117	39.0
Temporary marriage (concubine)	47	15.7	Opium addicted	109	36.3
Second marriage	31	10.3	Alcohol	39	13.0

divorce applicants were women and the least of 15.3% were both couple requested for divorce (14).

However the right of divorce is with the men in Iran, in most of the surveys accomplished in the field of divorce including this present survey, the majority of divorce applicants are covered by the women. To find the roots of this problem needs the specialized examinations about the factors and roots of the problem.

According to the census data in 2006 in Tehran province, 17.3% of the applicants had university educations (15), and also the results showed that the rate of divorce petitions in people having diploma or lower were more than other level of educations. The results in Ghotbi and colleagues' study indicated that the level of education had a relation with the length of life duration and education levels of divorced women were more than men (16). In addition, the results of reports showed that as much as the level of couple's educations to be higher, their reactions would be along with more proper feelings to the various life situations and they would be more able to solve the family problems as well. Educations have main roles in protecting and duration of family. It seems that literacy acts as an informing factor and

illiteracy or the borders near provide the highest rate of divorce (17- 23).

Goo (1985) believed that the marriage satisfaction depends on various factors, however the crises happens if the woman's occupation would be one of the priority for wife and husband. Wife and husband's occupations to work or study make more understandings between them and consequently provide the stability of their life (24). The result of present survey showed the most rate of divorce applicants are observed within housekeepers (72.7%) comparing with employed women. Our survey is in accord with Mirahmadi and his colleagues' findings. They reported that most of the women being about to get divorced are housekeepers (61.9%), it might seem to be noteworthy for the sociologists that the independency in women causes the increase in marriage satisfaction (17, 25- 31). It is possible to interpret the aforesaid result in other way as well. The women's occupations considering the increase in families' incomes make the economical and welfare problems decrease, particularly these incomes are made by women and in most cases are within the families' jurisdiction. As a result, assuming the cultural problems to be solved, the divorce petitions

have been less in families, the women of which are employed.

Some researchers believe that comparing other problems, economical problems damage less the marriage relations (32- 37), however another researches show that economical poverty is considered as one of the main reason for divorce. Instability in the poor level of society is more than other levels. In other words, as much as the formation level of a society goes down, the rate of divorce is growing increasingly (19, 24, 38- 40). According to the latest report of Central Bank, the average income of Iranian urban family has been 5,543,000.00 Rials per month (41). The result of this study showed the greatest level of people referring to family courts have been from the average economical and social level of the society (49.7%).

Moreover, the result of this survey signified that the divorce frequency is observing more in birth middle standing and in people who are much supported financially and spiritually and in illiterate families. Saberi and colleagues (1998) in a study showed that the level of education can be an important variable in improvement or criticalness of the family function. In other words, as much as the education level of couple and families to be higher, their reactions to the life situation would be better (Shirzad, 2004). Therefore, it can be asserted that divorce is more observed in illiterate or less-illiterate families due to their cultural poverty.

The result of present and other studies showed that generally the most important anticipated factors for divorce are low education, illiteracy particularly in women, housekeeping, husband's unemployment, economical situations and the numbers of children or absence of child (42-46).

Moral discord or absence of moral agreement between wife and husband makes the common life changes to the heart-rending hell. Good understanding and compatibility does have an effective role in stability of union in marriage (17). The financial problems and economical or non economical pressures can be tolerable under the patronage of this understanding. In Haghdoost and colleagues' research (1996) which proceeded to consider the viewpoints of 300 students of country Medical Science University regarding the effective factors in marriage, generous disposition or devotion was introduced as one of the four specifications of ideal spouse. It has to be a proper place for mutual trust and love in common life and the requisite for

this place is to have positive view toward each other (47). With considering the divorce factors in this study, the results showed that absence of understanding and compatibility are the important factors of this study.

Various researches show that absence of understanding and disagreement lead to divorce incidence in families. Considering the family discord and divorce factors in families referring to Shiraz counseling centers, the absence of understanding was introduced in 16.16% of cases as a factor of problem incidence. Moreover, the results showed that under the absence of understanding circumstance, the probability of divorce is 47% and reconciliation 31% (48). In the research done by Sattari in 2005, the results signified that violence, economical factors, unemployment, couple cultural differences, sexual weakness, sexual deviation, addiction, absence of one couple, the commission of crime, and becoming imprisoned, and absence of maintenance are the main factors of divorce. (49), and in Sepehriyan's research in 2000, it was reported that divorce petitions were 83% due to behavioral and moral incompatibility and 10% because of illness, psychiatry illness at least in one of couple. Moral incompatibility can be due to psychological factor as well (50-54).

Amato and Rojers examined the effective variables on divorce incidence in a longitudinal study. The results showed that 20% of couple reported the problems of marriage were due to husband's nervousness; however the husbands totally reported that their marriage problems occurred because of tormenting feelings, criticizing, immorality and jealousy of their wives. The women believed that generally the jealousy and tormenting behavior of their husbands were the main factors of marriage problems. They categorized body misuse as a factor of marriage problem having negative effects on the relation more than others (55-58). Violence has been a very effective factor of divorce in this study as well.

The another most important factor of divorce indicating with high rate of 88% and 25 % in this study is the sexual problem which has the decisive effect on divorce and marriage problems incidence. These problems can be considered in two groups of sexual betrayal (sexual relations out of family) and sexual diseases. One of the most significant problems which have been brought up by the couple referring for therapy has been sexual relations out of family (56). A non-satisfaction sexual relation might

have harmful effect on couple's reactions. It might be possible a defective circulation to happen, in which discord of marriage interferes with successful sexual function, and sexual abnormality makes the increase in marriage incompatibility incidence accordingly. Henry and Miller have specified the sexual problem with the frequency of 23.8% is the most prevalent of marriage problems among middle-aged couple (59-64). Rahmatelahi has pointed to the sexual problems in 91% of damaged marriages (65). The results of present study showed that sexual problems (66.7%) particularly disordering in sexual desire and motivation (41.3%) are the most important factors of divorce incidence. Concerning the obtained results about 2.3 % of divorce applicants suffer from sexual problems or disorders. Therefore, it might have injurious effects on other fields occurring any of sexual problems. It is obvious that sexual relation satisfaction has a close relevance with general relation of couple.

Comparing methods of spouse choice with divorce incidence, the results showed that it was 62.3% traditional, 29% with acquaintance before marriage, and 8.7% with family compulsion. Incorrect choice and absence of paying primary attention in choosing the spouse, prior acquaintance and non-sense enamoring of love have been the most important factors of divorce incidence in the country. The studies have indicated that after 100 months of common life, the occurrence of divorce has been about 99% in those who pointed the imposed marriage as one of the outstanding factors leading to divorce and it has been 22% in those who this factor didn't have any effect on their divorce. Method of acquaintance and imposed marriage has had a meaningful statistics relation with the average of common life duration (16). In another study, the imposed marriage has only allocated 0.7% of divorce petition to itself. Absence of interest and imposed marriage which are so much related to each other, are totally forming about 5% of divorce factors, these findings conform to Larsson and Helman's findings (1994) implying the destructive role of imposed marriage on marriage relations (66-71). According to the present and other findings, the highest rate of divorce petitions have been observed in imposed marriages.

As a general various factors can damage a marriage, the influencing intensity of which has been evaluated differently in various studies. The important action is that to find the factors which can

be interfered in order to prevent from divorce incidence by changing them. In this case, it would be possible to decrease the dangerous factors of divorce incidence in the society by informing the couple and their families about effective factors in choosing proper spouse, and their correct reactions toward each others. Particularly in order to decrease families break up, the importance of psychology counseling before marriage, during the marriage life, and in divorce applicants, which is in fact one of the major purposes of this study and it would be reported in a separate report accordingly, should be taken into consideration.

### **Recommendations and limitations**

According to obtained results of this survey, it is recommended the families to create more moral and mental familiarity conditions for girls and boys before marriage, so that they would be able to somehow prevent from divorce incidence through knowing each other better. With regard to the high rate of divorce petitions in women and concerning the existing laws, it maybe possible through more examinations the researchers of judicial area could recognize the divorce factors more precisely and help for the improvement of supportive rules. The most important limitations of divorce researching area are the absence of cooperating of related constitutions and lawyers of justice in accessing data and submitting report.

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