

## A Study on Causes of Divorce in Rickshaw Pullers of Sylhet City Having Depression

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DOI: [10.36347/sajb.2022.v10i11.004](https://doi.org/10.36347/sajb.2022.v10i11.004)

| Received: 16.09.2022 | Accepted: 22.10.2022 | Published: 09.11.2022

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### Abstract

### Original Research Article

**Introduction:** Causes of divorce may range from factors as diverse as the personal psychological characteristics of one or both spouses to the stresses of economic hardship and community disintegration. From a larger perspective, the role of divorce in modern societies and its relatively high incidence both flow from the same complex factors that have made good marriages so much more central to people's happiness than through most of the past and deterioration of a marital relationship so much more distressing. **Methods:** This study adopted a cross-sectional design, in Sylhet city, from 2019 to 2020 and it was mainly quantitative. However, qualitative data were collected from policymakers, i.e. the responsible person in Sylhet city, and discussion and documents. Quantitative data were collected from rickshaw pullers who were divorced by their wives from different areas in Sylhet city. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection from rickshaw pullers. **Result:** The mean age was found  $36.25 \pm SD$  years. The majority 39(48.8%) rickshaw pullers had primary education. All rickshaw pullers were in low-income group status. Out of the total study population, 47(58.8%) had  $\leq 10$  hours of working time, and 33(41.3%) had  $>10$  hours of working time. As multiple responses were accepted, there were rickshaw pullers who reported many types of misconduct from passengers and police. Almost all rickshaw pullers reported that the passengers belittled them. This was closely followed by "scolded" 86.3%, "paid unjust fare" 68.8%, and 48.8% of rickshaw pullers had "quarrel over fare" with passengers. It was evident that 36.3% and 40.0% of rickshaw pullers were "physically assaulted" and compel sitting, holding their ear by the passengers and police respectively. The majority 60(75.0%) of wives divorced their husbands due to domestic violence, 56(70.0%) due to too much conflict and arguing, 52(65.0%) due to substance abuse, 50(62.5%) due to lack of commitment, 48(60.0%) due to financial problems, 48(60.0%) due to physical assault, 44(55.0%) due to infidelity and 36(45.0%) due to marrying too young. **Conclusion:** The passengers and cops tortured the same rickshaw driver in separate ways. Domestic violence, excessive tension and bickering, substance misuse, a lack of commitment, financial difficulties, physical assault, infidelity, and marrying too young were the reasons for their divorce.

**Keywords:** Divorce, Depression, Inequality, Torture.

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## INTRODUCTION

Divorce is a right that a man or a woman can exercise on the grounds specified in the law. Sometimes divorce is badly needed because it protects a man or a woman from cruelty, danger, hardship, physical torture,

mental pressure, or from excruciating suffering. But it has many adverse effects on family, society, bride, bride groom and many offspring [1]. A growing literature links divorce to economic inequality. Implicit in this literature is the idea that higher educated individuals are

concentrated in an advantageous life course trajectory of postponed family formation and marital stability. Lower-educated individuals, in contrast, are concentrated in an adverse trajectory of early family formation and divorce [2]. Rickshaw pullers are the most disadvantaged part of the people participating in transportation activities for earning money, though rickshaw pulling is a menial and risky occupation. Despite the activity of the rickshaw pullers either in waiting for passengers/ commodities or in pulling the rickshaw to transport passengers and commodities from one location to another from early morning to late evening or the whole night and even, sometimes, around the clock, they are not in a position to earn the required money to fulfill their basic life needs. Rickshaw pullers and their families are suffering immensely from mental stress as they are the sole breadwinner of the family [3]. Rickshaw pullers are the key to sustaining urban mobility in Sylhet city, yet they are among the most marginalized members of society [4]. Depression is a complex phenomenon and there is no single factor that can explain the cause of depression. The social environment has been identified as one of the major determinants of depression. [5] It includes both social conditions and social relations [6, 7]. Due to economic, social, and cultural causes, the rate of divorce by women in Bangladesh is increasing day by day and it is very alarming [8]. This study was carried out to find the prevalence of divorce and evaluate depression among the participants with various risk factors such as substance abuse and socioeconomic status.

## OBJECTIVE

### General Objective

- To investigate the causes of divorce in Sylhet city rickshaw pullers suffering from depression.

### Specific Objectives

- To see various types of misconduct faced by rickshaw pullers.

## METHODS

This was a cross-sectional study and was conducted in Sylhet city, Bangladesh and was conducted from 2019 to 2020. Qualitative data were collected from policymakers by a semi-structured questionnaire and

quantitative data were collected from rickshaw pullers by a pre-structured questionnaire. Informed written consent was obtained from the participants. Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI), Hamilton Anxiety Scale, and alcohol, smoking, and substance involvement (ASSI) tests were used in this study. The confidentiality of the study participants was assured and maintained throughout the study. Data were processed and analyzed using SPSS software version 23. Ethical clearance was obtained from concerned authority of Sylhet city.

### Inclusion Criteria

- Divorced rickshaw pullers of Sylhet city who had depression.
- Rickshaw pullers who had given consent to participate in the study.

### Exclusion Criteria

- Rickshaw pullers having other jobs besides.
- Rickshaw pullers who did not give consent to participate in the study.

## RESULTS

The mean age was found  $36.25 \pm SD$  years. The majority 39 (48.8%) rickshaw pullers had primary education. All rickshaw pullers were in low-income group status. Out of the total study population, 47(58.8%) had  $\leq 10$  hours of working time, and 33(41.3%) had  $>10$  hours of working time (Table 1). As multiple responses were accepted, there were rickshaw pullers who reported many types of misconduct from passengers and police. Almost all rickshaw pullers reported that the passengers belittled them. This was closely followed by "scolded" 86.3%, "paid unjust fare" 68.8%, and 48.8% of rickshaw pullers had "quarrel over fare" with passengers. It was evident that 36.3% and 40.0% of rickshaw pullers were "physically assaulted" and compel sitting holding their ear by the passengers and police respectively (Table 2). The majority 60(75.0%) of wives divorced their husbands due to domestic violence, 56(70.0%) due to too much conflict and arguing, 52(65.0%) due to substance abuse, 50(62.5%) due to lack of commitment, 48(60.0%) due to financial problems, 48(60.0%) due to physical assault, 44(55.0%) due to infidelity and 36(45.0%) due to marrying too young (Table 3).

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the rickshaw puller (N=80)**

Variables	N	%
Age group (years) mean $\pm$ SD	36.25 $\pm$ 11.26	
<b>Education status</b>		
Illiterate	33	41.2
Primary	39	48.8
Secondary	8	10.0
<b>Socioeconomic status</b>		
Lower	80	100.0
<b>Duration of working per day (hour)</b>		
$\leq 10$	47	58.8
$>10$	33	41.3

**Table 2: Passengers' and police conduct with rickshaw pullers (N=80)**

Type of misconduct	N	%
Belittle/look down upon	71	88.8
Scolded	69	86.3
Paid unjust fare	55	68.8
Quarrel over fare	39	48.8
Physically assaulted	29	36.3
Compel sitting holding ear	32	40.0
Pinch tires	25	31.3

**Table 3: Causes of divorce of women by rickshaw pullers (N=80)**

Causes of divorce	N	%
Financial problems	48	60.0
Substance abuse	52	65.0
Domestic violence	60	75.0
Lack of commitment	50	62.5
Infidelity	44	55.0
Too much conflict and arguing	56	70.0
Marrying too young	36	45.0
Physically assault	48	60.0

## DISCUSSION

This study observed that. The mean age was found  $36.25 \pm SD$  years. The majority 39(48.8%) rickshaw pullers had primary education. All rickshaw pullers were in the low-income group status. Almost sixty percent (58.8%) of rickshaw pullers worked for about  $\leq 10$  hours. The average age of the rickshaw puller was around 38 years, with 53% falling in the 30-44 years old age group and numbers sharply after the age of 45. About 5% of the subjects were of 60 years or more. A negligible proportion was under the age of 20. In general, rickshaw pullers come from very poor origins, both in terms of household human capital assets and physical capital assets [9]. In both respects, rickshaw pullers belong to one of the most deprived social categories. They were mostly uneducated (58%) or semi-educated, having never completed primary-level education (17%). Of the remaining 25%, only 2.5% reported having finished secondary school; all others either completed primary school but did not continue (9.0%) or did not complete secondary education (13%). On average, rickshaw pullers work for nearly 9.5 hours a day; about 60% pull rickshaws for more than 10 hours a day, and only 19% pull for fewer than 8 hours. Among recent joiners, 88% pull rickshaws for more than 10 hours a day, as opposed to 52% of the middle-duration rickshaw pullers and 43% of long-duration ones [9]. In a study, the majority belonged to the age group of 20-39 years with a mean age of  $37.52 \pm SD$  years [10]. Another study observed the average age of the rickshaw pullers was 37 years [11]. Almost all (88.8%) rickshaw pullers reported that the passengers 'belittled' them. This is closely followed by 'scolded' 86.3 percent, and 'paid unjust fare' 68.8 percent. 48.8% of rickshaw pullers had a 'quarrel over fare' with passengers. 36.3% and 40.0% of rickshaw pullers reported that they were 'physically

assaulted' and compel sitting holding their ear by the passengers and police respectively. A similar observation was found in a study from Dhaka city by another author [11]. They found that 94.2% of rickshaw pullers reported that the passengers 'belittled' them. This is closely followed by 'scolded' 92.4 percent, and 'paid unjust fare' 89.5 percent and 63.7 percent rickshaw pullers reported that they were 'physically assaulted by the passengers' and 52.9% compel sitting holding their ears by police. In present study observed that the majority 60(75.0%) women divorce due to domestic violence, 56(70.0%) due to too much conflict and arguing, 52(65.0%) due to substance abuse, 50(62.5%) due to lack of commitment, 48(60.0%) due to financial problems, 48(60.0%) due to physical assault, 44(55.0%) due to infidelity and 36(45.0%) due to marrying too young. In another study, reasons for divorce at the individual level were lack of commitment (75.0%), infidelity (59.6%), too much conflict and arguing (57.7%), followed by marrying too young (45.1%), financial problems (36.7%), substance abuse (34.6%), and domestic violence (23.5%) [12]. According to another study domestic violence was cited by over a quarter of couples as a reason for divorce. When asked to elaborate, some described verbal abuse, while others described physical aggression [13]. Research indicated that commitment and conflict management are related in that commitment helps partners inhibit negative behaviors and engage in more positive behaviors at critical moments [14]. In most cases, the transition affects a couple's sexual relationship [15]. Sexual dissatisfaction may lead to divorce. A study showed that one reason given by young couples for their divorce is loss of sexual attraction and subsequent weakening of their intimate relationship [16]. Lack of communication is another underlying cause of many divorces among young couples; failure to communicate makes it difficult for couples to resolve the financial, sexual, and emotional issues affecting their marriage [17]. Abuse is one of the major contributors to the dissolution of marriage [15]. Economic factors such as poor or negative growth and inflationary tendencies put a strain on young couples who want more with meager resources. Money means different things to different people, so financial issues are often a reason for marital conflict and tend to lead to divorce among young couples [16]. Another study stated that, sexual, emotional, and physical abuse can lead to divorce among young couples, and that a feeling of being unsafe in one's relationship can make it difficult or impossible to continue with the marriage [18].

### Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in a single city with a small sample size for a short duration. So, the results may not represent the whole community.

## CONCLUSION

Divorce is a major driver of cumulative inequality during the life course. This study showed that

the passengers and cops tortured the rickshaw pullers in several ways. Domestic violence, excessive tension and bickering, substance misuse, a lack of commitment, financial difficulties, physical assault, infidelity, and marrying too young were the reasons for their divorce.

#### FUNDING

No funding sources.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

#### ETHICAL APPROVAL

The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Divorce is associated with lowered well-being, fewer social network ties, more depression, and worse health practices. These factors appeared to explain the association with longevity. Moreover, parental divorce in childhood is associated with poor mental health and less education for the children of those rickshaw pullers. So, policymakers should emphasize addressing economic inequalities, poverty, due rights, and other causes that accelerate the divorce of the rickshaw pullers.

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