

DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1133

Citation: Hezarjaribi, J., Entezari, A., & Niyyati, M. (2017). Divorce Trends in Iran between 2004-2013. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(4), 1108-1122. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1133>

Divorce Trends in Iran between 2004-2013

Jafar Hezarjaribi¹, Ali Entezari²,
Maryam Niyyati^{3*}

Abstract

This study investigates divorce trend in populated cities of Iran by relying on the inferential statistics. For this purpose, the mean divorce is descriptively and intuitively compared in five big cities including Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad and Tabriz in the past ten years (2004-2013). This research is descriptive in terms of methodology. The data collection method is done through the National Organization for Civil Registration of Iran and also the Statistical Centre of Iran. According to the obtained results, the overall mean divorce has been growing in five most populous cities of Iran, Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashhad and Shiraz, during the years 2004-2013. Tehran has had the higher percentage of divorce than other surveyed cities in the past ten years, and the highest frequency is recorded for 2012 with 34.96 divorces compared to the marriages. Mashhad, Isfahan, Tabriz and Shiraz have had the highest rates of divorce than marriage after Tehran in terms of mean. The lowest mean divorce belongs to Shiraz with a mean of 13.16.

Keywords: Divorce, Divorce trend, Divorce rates, Iran divorce rates, Marriage.

¹ Professor, Faculty Member, Department of Social Sciences, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran. Iran.

² Associate Professor, Faculty member, Department of Social Science, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran. Iran.

³ Corresponding Author, PhD student in Cultural Sociology, Department of Social Science, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran. Iran.

Introduction

The divorce is one of the hardest and most complex live events. It bears many difficulties for both sides as well as other family members. Its complicated nature is hard to resolve for researchers who are seeking to investigate and analyze the factors and effects of this phenomenon.

The divorce is one of the most important phenomena affecting the individuals' life and personal and social identity. The evaluation of this phenomenon indicates different dimensions of its impact on the family. The social need to survival and sustainability of family has underlain the sanctification of family in communities throughout the history. The direct consequence of family sanctification and its attempt to retain it in any way and at any price has led to the increased ugliness of divorce. However, the social realities indicate that due to the empowerment in women in various economic, social, and educational fields and also the individuality growth and their independence have undermined the continuation of marital life in them. On the other hand, the growth of divorce rate and increased number of divorced women create a greater crisis in the society as the negative attitude towards these women due to the existing cultural context and ignoring their individuality and independence (Shokat, 2006).

According to the conservative approaches to family, this entity has experienced extensive and profound structural, functional and meaning changes during the recent century. These changes have been caused by different change-causing elements (Mahmoudpour, 2009). The growing trend of changes in the field of family issues has attracted numerous scholars (Enayatzadeh, 2009). Meanwhile, the divorce as a phenomenon, which was recently a sign of family frailty and frightening issue, has become relatively selective and optional for couples (Segalen, 2001). The divorce has numerous consequences for people in society and can be a source of numerous social harm such as the sexual deviations, suicide, running away, stealing, addiction, beggary, vagrancy, and so on (Rahmatollahi, 2007). The divorce leads to the individual, familial and social collapse and has more negative effects for women than men (Musai, 2011). Furthermore, it has adverse effects on the body of society in addition to people (Schramm, 2006). The family is an entity wherein the intensity, depth, and extend of relationships and interactions are better than anywhere else. The divorce rate is increasing in Iran day by day. If a society leads towards the increased divorce, it will certainly lead to on the verge of crisis (Medadi, 2001).

Problem Statement and Importance

The divorce is one of the social issues which have been extremely important and have had complex dimensions in recent times. Divorce is one of those social issues which are mainly associated with social and cultural turmoil. Various studies have clearly indicated the crime-causing nature of divorce and its impact on the escalation of social deviations and the correlation between divorce and other social deviations. Therefore, divorce is a social issue as a precursor to other social deviations. Nowadays, divorce is not a rare event any longer. The family and community deal with this phenomenon with greater tolerance and it is not a disaster in many cases, but is as a step to prevent disaster.

Nowadays, the divorce is not considered as a pain like before and it is considered as a treatment in most of the cases. In recent years, the family structure has been changed in Iranian society and the divorce rate increased each year. According to national statistics in the field, 1 of every 4 marriages leads to divorce. Due to the importance of divorce, this research seeks to assess and compare the divorce rate in five major cities of Iran (Tehran, Isfahan, Mashhad, Tabriz and Shiraz) in the last ten years.

Materials and Methods

This study has descriptive type and its data is collected by documentary method. The theoretical and practical background utilizes the library studies and information tools such as Internet; and the necessary statistics for evaluating the trend of divorce five most populous cities of Iran (Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Shiraz and Mashhad) in the past decade including the number of registered official divorces and marriages in the National Organization for Civil Registration (NOCR). The data have been extracted from the NOCR website (<http://www.sabteahval.ir>). The divorce rate is compared in various cities according to the percentage of divorce towards the marriage in each city. The statistical method in this research is carried out in both descriptive and inferential statistics. The frequency and percentage in the form of plots the tables are used in descriptive statistics, and the ANOVA of independent groups is used in inferential statistics according to the normality of groups, and also Kruskal-Wallis test is applied for ranking the groups, and all above-mentioned processes are done by SPSS software.

Theoretical framework

In most of the studies, the divorce is considered as an example of "social issues" because the divorce is usually considered as a sign of collapse in marriage. In public debates, the divorce

is usually something which should be prevented (Jost and Robinson, 1991) and this is usually done by reducing the attractiveness of divorce for those involved in it.

Jost and Robinson (1991) have argued that the divorce is a sign of changed nuclear family and its movement towards the post-nuclear family. This concept refers to the usual cycle of marriage, divorce and remarriage and this cycle is increasing day by day.

The families may reach the divorce from various ways and suffer from the consequences and feelings associated with divorce in different forms. Most of the people ask why the divorce is increasing, and numerous ones believe that this means a decline in the importance of family.

Gibson (1994) believes that in general the divorce rate has remained reasonably stable and will not have too much increase or decrease in the future. According to him, this apparent constant of divorce suggests a series of changes. Some of these major changes are as follows: Increased unemployment which has a strong correlation with divorce; the child adaptation to parental separation and socialization as it has become more and more as an ordinary event; the individualistic characteristics; and the growing acceptance of divorce and single parents in the community (Gibson, 1994)

Due to the multidimensional nature of divorce and the multiple explaining theories and approaches, the theoretical framework for this article has a sociological approach, and several theories are raised to explain the current status of Iranian society especially in big cities of Iran in the field of divorce.

1- Modernization theory

According to this theory, the peripheral countries are culturally changed in the process of modernization which is affected by the transition from the traditional order. The division, splitting and weakening are created among the correlative factors of traditional society in the process of modernization. Under these conditions, the people seem separated atoms which seek to maximize their personal profit; in other words, the personal interests prioritize the collective interests and thus the individual ideas and values will be changed in line with domination of secularism, materialism and individualism. These conditions can be detrimental to social order and undermine the essential minimum existence of collectivist orientations for any community.

At the same time, a transition and turmoil occur in the family. Therefore, the cultural space is changed from family-centered to person-centered axis and marriage, from entity-centered to relationship-centered, and the family is changed significantly based on the structural and cultural changes in passing from traditional to modern society. In this regard, the

inconsistency and non-coordination in individual and social systems with changing conditions underlie several social problems in the family (Gibson, 1994).

Therefore, the increased rate of divorce especially in big and populated cities and its consequences can be investigated as a social problem. A phenomenon is changed to a social problem when it creates difficult conditions and includes the tribulation and suffering for a significant number of people (Lozik, 2004).

2- Value conflict theory

The problems arise in societies where are changing from specific social and economic conditions to other situation and conditions, and they are the results of collision of modernity and stability to ancient traditions and intensified conflict between the generations. At this critical stage, the moral elements and social values are changed more than anything else. Most of the previous worthless topics take steps in the range of contemporary modern and accepted elements, and numerous desirable social elements leave the realm of social values. Under such these circumstances, the prevailing forces of society will be replaced by new forces and the value system of society will be in disarray.

This situation can be observed in the system of family values, however, since the speed of movement of each culture is not similar to the economy movement and technological innovations, the generations which are subject to such rapid social changes, cannot have the popular criteria for duty, dedication and the same values. In these circumstances, the conflict is created within the family and the dispute and divorce increased (Samavati, 1995).

Saroukhani (1993) considers the divorce as a unique network of factors: Several factors come together and provide a complicated network. The factors which affect the divorce can be classified into several sectors including the socio-cultural, economic, ethical, psychological, sexual and physiological causes.

The socio-cultural factors include the couples' education difference, couples' differences of thought and knowledge, marriage purpose, type of mate-selection and so on.

The economic factors include the inappropriate economic circumstances, class difference, the low household income, the lack of fund, inflation, poverty, unemployment husband, the rising cost of living and low standard of life, the women's employment.

The moral factors include the husband or wife's moral corruption, moral disagreement, misconduct, leaving the family life, wantonness and so on.

The psychological factors include the genetic factors, the personality and psychological characteristics, and mental disorders and norms of couples' rejection, the feeling of hatred and couples' end of love and concern, and so on.

The sexual factors include the existence of inappropriate sexual habits in men, the husband's sexual deviation, the poor sexual performance and male or female sterilization and so on.

The physiological and environmental factors include the couples' age difference, the childless, the male or female continuous illness, early marriage, couples' hometown, the number of children and so on.

The family is widely experiencing the divorce in today's world. However, this does not mean that the family had not confronted with this phenomenon in the past, but, the divorce is changed in nature like all other phenomena.

According to the sociologists, the change of divorce into a social issue requires changing from a personal involvement to a social non-construct, and it is considered as a social problem when it exceeds a certain limit and with unconventional frequency. Therefore, the divorce is not a personal problem any longer, but it is a multi-step process which not only affects the relationship between the family members, but also has adverse social effects which ultimately damage the whole body of society and make serious, deep and irreparable problems.

Research findings

A – Description of results

Figure 1 separately shows the divorce statistics in 5 populous cities of Iran during the last ten years (2004-2013), so that it can be intuitively found that the highest and lowest frequency of divorce in each province belongs to which year.

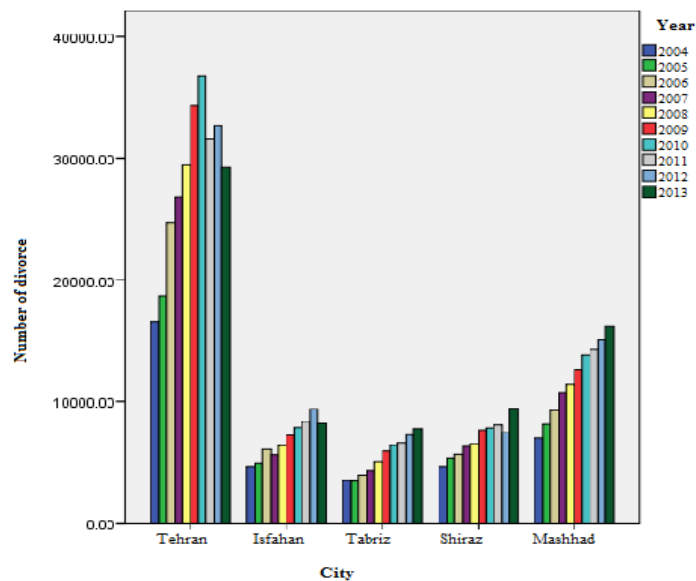


Figure 1: Bar graph of divorce frequency in big cities in the last ten years

A quite upward trend is seen in the divorce rate of Mashhad during the past decade. Tehran had the highest rate of divorce (36777) in 2010 and the lowest frequency (16567) in 2004; Isfahan had the highest divorce (9399) in 2012 and the lowest divorce (4684) in 2004. Tabriz, Mashhad and Shiraz also had the highest number of divorces in 2013 and these frequencies were 7772, 16224 and 9438 respectively. Furthermore, the lowest number of divorces in Mashhad and Shiraz equal to 7001 and 4680 belong to 2004; and 3454 in Tabriz in 2005. The divorce can be compared in different cities according to its "number", but there is a more accurate index which measures the percentage of registered divorce in each city compared to marriages. Therefore, Table 1 represents the percentage of divorce compare to the registered marriages in National Organization for Civil Registration (NOCR) during the last ten years for five populous cities of Iran. <http://www.sabteahval.ir>

Table 1: Percentage of divorce during the last ten years for five populous cities

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Mean divorce percentage
City											
Tehran	17.15	18.43	21.47	21.93	23.00	26.58	30.39	31.07	34.96	31.55	25.65
Isfahan	10.74	10.34	12.84	11.20	11.63	13.90	15.32	16.51	20.02	18.75	14.13
Tabriz	8.61	7.97	9.13	9.28	10.37	12.57	13.66	14.48	15.55	17.49	13.57
Shiraz	10.32	10.75	11.30	11.53	10.66	12.46	14.41	15.00	15.19	20.01	13.16
Mashhad	10.68	11.05	12.72	13.97	14.18	16.10	17.13	17.56	19.20	22.63	15.52

The lowest mean divorce belongs to Shiraz city with a mean of 13.16, and the highest mean belongs to Tehran with the mean of 25.65 in the past decade. Figure 2 shows the divorce percentage in five populous cities of Iran during the last ten years and they can be intuitively compared together.

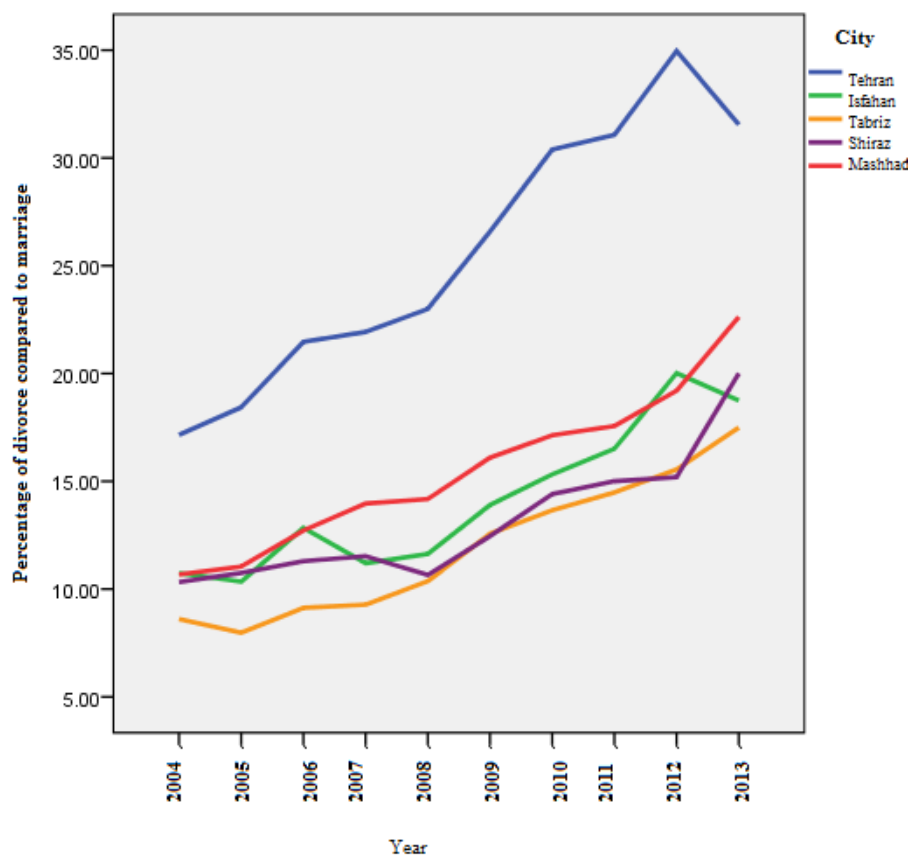


Figure 2: The trend of divorce percentage in populous cities during the last ten years

According to the figure and table above, it is found that Tehran has the highest percentage of divorce than the marriage than other cities in the last ten years. The divorce rates in Tehran over the last ten years are 17.15%, 18.43%, 21.47%, 21.93%, 23.00%, 26.58%, 30.39%, 31.07%, 34.96% and 31.55%, respectively, and the highest percentage belongs to 2012 with 34.96% of divorce compared to marriage. Mashhad, Isfahan, Tabriz and Shiraz have the highest divorce percentage than the marriage after Tehran. The mean percentage of divorce than the marriage in five cities can be intuitively seen in pie chart (Figure 3).

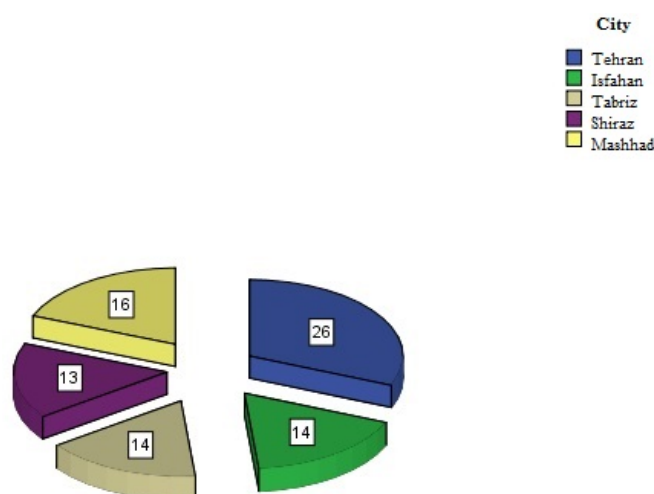


Figure 3: Pie chart of divorce percentage for five cities in the last ten years

Tehran has the highest percentage of divorce (with the mean of 25.65) and then Mashhad, Isfahan, Tabriz and finally Shiraz.

B- Analysis of results

The analysis of variance is utilized according to the normal data distribution in order to find out whether the mean divorces are statistically different in five most populous cities of Iran during the last ten years. Furthermore, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used for investigating the normality, and the results of investigating the normality are summarized in Table 2 according to this test.

Table 2: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality of groups

		Tehran	Isfahan	Tabriz	Shiraz	Mashhad
N		10	10	10	10	10
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	28086.00	6878.6000	5426.2000	6901.7000	11862.1000
	Std. Deviation	6548.6449	1575.34781	1589.92815	1452.11800	3080.24871
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.171	.135	.160	.151	.136
	Positive	.125	.123	.160	.110	.100
	Negative	-.171	-.135	-.131	-.151	-.136
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.540	.426	.507	.477	.431
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.933	.993	.959	.977	.992
a. Test distribution is Normal.						
b. Calculated from data.						

As shown, since the significant value of information in all cities, which are the comparative groups, is higher than 0.05, the normality of these groups is not rejected; and with regard to the accepted normality of data, the ANOVA is used to compare the ratios of divorce in big cities, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of analysis of variance for equality of mean divorce in populous cities

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1216.889	4	304.222	18.262	.000
Within Groups	749.656	45	16.659		
Total	1966.545	49			

According to the test statistic (F) and the significant value, which is less than 0.05, the equality of mean divorce percentage to marriage is not approved in five cities in the last ten years. Kruskal-Wallis test is utilized to rank the importance of big cities in frequency of divorce because Kruskal-Wallis test considers the importance of mean ranks, and the results of this test are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Ranking the divorce in populous cities

	City	N	Mean Rank
Rate	Tehran	10	44.10
	Isfahan	10	22.70
	Tabriz	10	14.70
	Shiraz	10	19.00
	Mashhad	10	27.00
	Total	50	

The chi-square test is utilized to find out whether the rank mean difference is significant or not; the result of this test is presented in Table 4. According to the test statistic and the significant value, which is less than 0.05, the statistical mean ranks of five cities differ from each other.

Table 5: Kruskal-Wallis test

	Rate
Chi-square	24.232
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Variable: City	

As shown in the table above and according to the result of Kruskal-Wallis test, five studied cities have no equal importance for the percentage of divorce compared to the marriage because the statistic of test is obtained equal to 24.23 and the significant value less than 0.05. Given that five groups (city) are studied, the degree of freedom is equal to 4. The more the mean rank of each city (as studied groups), the more importance of city in terms of divorce percentage compared to the marriage. In this study, Tehran with the mean rank of 44.10, Mashhad with the mean rank of 27.00, Isfahan with the mean rank of 22.70, Shiraz with the mean rank of 19.00, and Tabriz with the mean rank of 14.70 are important respectively, these results are shown in Table 4.

Conclusion

The divorce has long been in all human societies and the divorce history dates from the history of marriage, but the divorce term has no past ugliness as time passes and according to the current statistics. The new industrial society is a society which is divorce-causing in terms of structure. The social mobility is maximal in such this society, the stability of relations is reduced, and the human communications are vulnerable. Generally, the existing studies are about investigating one or more dimensions of marital life. A lot of studies are conducted on

the marriage satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Western countries and especially the United States, and they have been increased significantly since the 1990s and covered different factors such as the psychological variables, demographic procedures, the parental duties, physical health, psychological damage or a combination of them. The failure to communicate is the most common problem which unhappy couples have reported. If the couples do not discuss the issues with each other and do not achieve a positive solution on which both of them have agreed, the lack of intimacy expression can lead to the tension in the relationship or ending it. Numerous studies have been conducted in this research regard. All couples are experiencing some levels of conflict. The couples' lack of knowledge or inability to solve the conflict will reduce the stability of relationship and increase the termination of relationship. The economic pressures and problems such as the unemployment and lack of income, low income, lack of job stability, etc. may cause stress, hostility, darkness of marital relations and eventually the divorce. The need for joint leisure is a basic requirement for all couples. The neglect of this issue may lead to the lack of marital satisfaction. There are numerous factors affecting the couples' separation and finally the divorce and it is endless because the marriage involves two people who have unique personalities and different cultural backgrounds in a common life. Perhaps the main reason of divorce is the marriage couples' too much previous or current expectations of the other side.

This research does not investigate these issues, but it should be noted that these conditions are more in big cities than the small ones. The urbanization is a prerequisite for modernization and the urban lifestyle has special requirements. The social control is less in city and the divorce is less problematic and people consider it as a personal choice. On the other hand, the media and information and communication technologies can enhance the way people think and knowledge. Along with these changes, the women education and participation in social areas are increased every day and they have become more independent, and also Iran is in transition from population transfer stages; and the fertility and mortality are reduced; the age of marriage risen, and the expectations of marital life increase; the freedom in selecting the spouse enhanced, and thus the Iranian family is inevitably affected by these changes and naturally this leads to the increased ratio of divorce to marriage and the net rate of divorce in the country. This issue affects both the fertility and the texture of family. Iran will have the single-parent families and phenomena such as the stepfather, stepmother and step sisters and brothers and this will lead to quantitative and qualitative growth of this phenomenon in society as one of the serious social issues in the country, and this status indicates the major changes in the institutional structure of family. It should be noted that the existing statistics show only the formal divorce, but there no valid official statistics about the emotional divorce among the couples and it seems that the need for pre-marital planning and

counseling will be more in the future in order to reduce the psychological and social consequences of this issue.

This study investigated divorce statistics in big cities of Iran. According to conducted studies, the mean divorce was increasing in five most populous cities of Iran, Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashhad and Shiraz, during the recent years (2004-2013). Tehran has the highest divorce frequency, and Shiraz has the lowest percentage of divorce frequency. Its peak of percentage was equal to 34.96% in 2012. Mashhad, Isfahan, Tabriz and Shiraz have the highest rates of divorce than marriage after Tehran. The study of divorce needs a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach. The development shows only a dimension of issue, and the study of other dimensions and factors requires the investigation of religious and cultural values and norms and this needs in-depth and qualitative studies.

References

- Enayatollah, Leila (2009). *Investigating the perception and experience of divorce among the Kurdish women in Saqqez city*. Master's thesis. University of Tehran.
- Fatehizadeh, Maryamossadat (2005). Investigating the influence of family factors on reduction of divorce rate in Yazd, Ardakan and Maybod cities. *The educational and psychological studies*, 6(1), 117-136.
- Gibson, Howard (1994). *No-Fault Divorce in Pennsylvania: A Guide to the Law with Forms for Filing Your Own Divorce*. Pennsylvania: Full Court Press.
- Jost, K. & Robinson, M. (1991). Children and Divorce. *Congressional Quarterly Researcher*, 1, 349-368.
- Lozik, Danilin (2004). *A new approach to analysis of social problems*. Translated by Saeed Moeinfar. Tehran: Amirkabir Publications.
- Mahmoudian, Hossein (2010). Investigating the relationship between the divorce and social economic development in cities of Iran in 2006. *Quarterly Journal of social security studies*.
- Mahmoudpour, Ahmad (2009). Semantic reconstruction of family changes by underlying theory: A case study on Mangur and Gorek States. *Quarterly Journal of Family Study*, 5(3), 315.
- Medadi, M. (2001). *Investigating the causes of couples' divorce (social-economic perspective) in Arak city*. Master's thesis. Social, Welfare and Rehabilitation University.

Meshki, Mehdi (2011). Investigating the status and factors associated with divorce from the perspective of divorced couples in Gonabad city during 2008-2009. *Quarterly Journal of Gonabad University of Medical Sciences and Health Services*, 17(1).

Musai, Maysam (2011). The Relationship between Divorce and Economic-Social Variables in Iran. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 89-93.

National Organization for Civil Registration (NOCR), (<http://www.sabteahval.ir>)

Qureyshi, Fardin (2014). Understanding the causes of divorce from the perspective of men and women subject to divorce and divorced. *The strategic studies of social security and order*, Spring and Summer, 3(1).

Rahmatollahi, M. (2007). Pathology of marriage in Isfahan city and providing a model for pathology of marital life. *Journal of Isfahan University*, 92-96.

Samavati, Majid (1995). *Social pathology in Iran: sociology of deviances*. Tabriz: Nobel Publications.

Saroukhani, Bagher (1997). *Divorce research on identifying the reality and its factors*. Tehran: Tehran University Press.

Schramm, David G. (2006). Individual and Social Costs of Divorce in Utah. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 27(1), 133-151.

Segalen, Martine (2001). *Historical sociology of family* (3rd ed.). Translated by Hamid Elyasi. Tehran: Markaz Publications.

Seyfzadeh, Ali (2013). The Role of Violence in the Rate of Divorce among Women. *Journal of Women and Society*, 4(3), 125-149.

Sherkat, Shahla (2006). *The ways of dealing with effects and consequences of divorce for women in Tehran*. Master's thesis. Tehran University.

Yaghoubi, Kajal (2011). Investigating and comparing the aggression in children of divorced and normal parents. *Psychological studies*, 7.