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DIFFERENTIAL NUPTIALITY PATTERNS IN BANGLADESH

by

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Bangladesh Fertility Survey/WFS

Dacca, Bangladesh

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DECLARATION

Except where otherwise indicated this thesis is my own work.

(M. Shahidullah)

May, 1979

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to study differential female nuptiality patterns in Bangladesh using data from the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey. This survey was the first of its kind in Bangladesh to collect elaborate information on marriage, dissolution and remarriage. Prior to this study little was known about nuptiality differentials in Bangladesh.

Age at marriage is increasing in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh. Education levels have the greatest effect on age at marriage, and religion and level of education have maximum impact on marriage dissolution. Age at marriage and probability of early marriage disruption are inversely related in Bangladesh. Some socio-demographic characteristics of the survey population are also examined by using the household information section of the survey questionnaire.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BANGLADESH — THE SETTING

Bangladesh, situated in South Asia, is the eighth most populous country in the world. She achieved her independence in 1971 from the colonial rule of Pakistan after a tremendous sacrifice. She is situated between latitudes 20° 30' North to 27° North and between longitudes 88° East to 93° East approximately. The country is surrounded by India on three sides and on the fourth southern side is the Bay of Bengal (Figure 1.1). Except for some mountainous regions in the east and south east, 90 per cent of the total area of Bangladesh is low land, the alluvial gift of several great river systems that traverse the country to reach the Bay of Bengal (Johnson, 1975:8).

During the summer monsoon (mid-May to mid-October) rains dominate the seasons in Bangladesh. The rainfall is high and falls in the range of 140 centimetres to 200 centimetres. The mean maximum temperature is 31 °C (in July) and mean minimum temperature is 21 °C (in January). These factors make the climate very unpleasant with high relative humidity (86.5 per cent in Chittagong in July) accompanying quite high temperatures (Johnson, 1975:16). Despite the return of sunny skies the uncomfortable hot humid weather persists into October. Because of rain and flooding there is a super-abundance of standing water and this excess moisture helps to maintain an unpleasantly sticky atmosphere. The coastal regions of Bangladesh are subject to damaging cyclones and floods almost every year.

With a population of about 76 million in 1974, compared with 55 million in 1961 on an area of 142,714 square kilometres, Bangladesh

BANGLADESH FERTILITY SURVEY

SCATTER OF SAMPLE POINTS

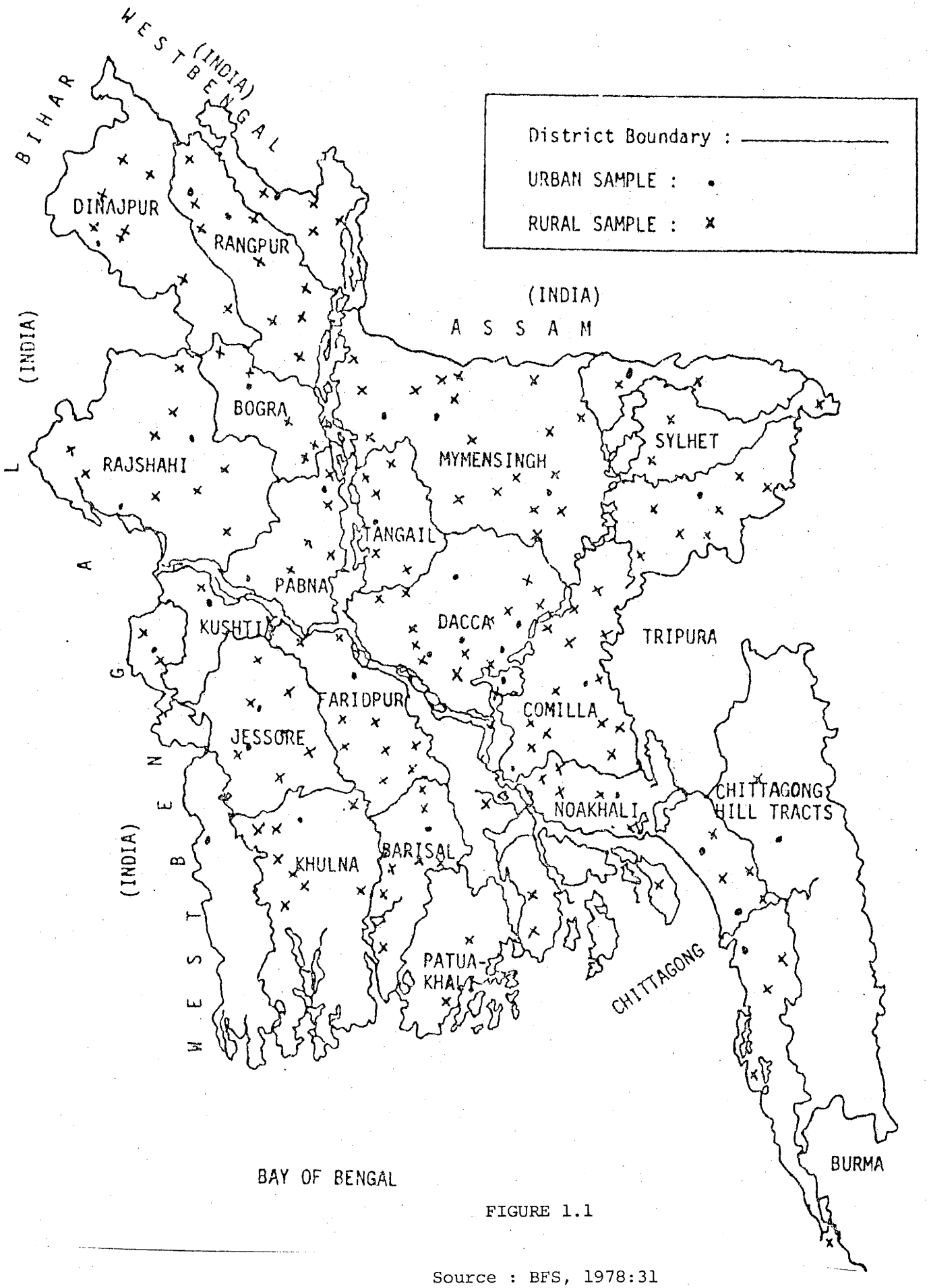

FIGURE 1.1

Source : BFS, 1978:31

is the most densely populated rural nation in the world. She demonstrates the typically broad-based population age pyramid of an under-developed country. About 48 per cent of her population is under 15 years of age which puts a great strain on the economically active section (48.7 per cent) to provide for the children, the aged and the largely unemployed women (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977:13). The custom of *purdah* or veiling of women in the predominantly Muslim society (85 per cent Muslim), discourages women's participation in wage earning activities with their male counterparts (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977:24). Ethnically Bangladesh is homogeneous and 98.8 per cent of the population have Bengali as their mother-tongue (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977:22). According to the 1974 Population Census of Bangladesh 91 per cent of the population live in the rural areas. The economy is significantly dominated by agriculture which contributes over two-thirds of the gross national product and absorbs over three-fourths of the labour force (Chen and Chowdhury, 1975:1).

1.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NUPTIALITY PATTERNS

This study is the first of its kind in Bangladesh to use national sample survey data. Many recent discussions for controlling population growth have included the suggestion that an increase in the minimum age at marriage should be considered as one way of controlling fertility. In the European historical experience nuptiality patterns contributed significantly towards the lower level of fertility (Fernando, 1975:179). Late marriage and widespread celibacy were responsible for lowering the age-specific fertility rates in the population of Western Europe. "In Eastern and Central Europe on the other hand, where marriage occurred earlier and was nearly universal, a somewhat slower fertility transition was achieved through a reduction in marital fertility without any drastic accompanying nuptiality change. Populations of developing countries, however, commonly exhibit nuptiality patterns characterized by a still higher incidence and considerably younger age patterns of marriage than even

the earliest observed schedule from Eastern Europe" (Lesthaeghe, 1971: 415).

In developing countries where population growth rates are hampering economic development plans and frustrating even the minimum standard of living, research on nuptiality patterns may give some clues for the effective planning of the population. It will be interesting to see whether socio-economic factors have any influence on marriage behaviour in Bangladesh (Hajnal, 1954:148).

This study will attempt to estimate variations in

(1) proportion ever marrying,
(2) age at first marriage,
(3) divorce,
(4) widowhood, and
(5) remarriage

of ever-married women aged under 50 by rural-urban and socio-economic characteristics in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh is trying hard to formulate a sound population policy to control the high birth rates in a planned way. This study will fill the gap of available information in so far as nuptiality patterns are concerned.

1.3 SOURCES OF DATA ON NUPTIALITY IN BANGLADESH

Very few studies have been made of nuptiality in Bangladesh. These studies used marital status information from censuses to estimate the mean age at marriage using Hajnal's method (1953:111-136). A direct question on age at marriage was never included in the enumeration schedules used in any of the population censuses of Bangladesh or in any other Bangladeshi survey of national coverage.

The vital registration system in Bangladesh, introduced by the British in 1873, is incomplete and unreliable. In the absence of reliable or complete registration of vital events, retrospective questioning is a useful way of getting current estimates and

historical trends in the major demographic variables (McDonald and Abdurahman, 1974:1). In societies where awareness of time does not carry much significance, it is usually found that responses to questions about events in the past are more accurate when asked in the form of event histories as compared to the alternative period related questions. The present study will be based on the marital history included in the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey. This was the first national demographic survey in Bangladesh. It has been unique in the sense that this is the first survey which included a section on marriage history in the questionnaire. The marriage history questions yielded for the first time a substantial amount of information on nuptiality for a representative sample of ever-married women in Bangladesh. The marriage history section included information on current marital status, number of times married, whether started living together immediately after marriage (only currently married women were asked), age at marriage and information about a maximum of four former marriages (date of marriage, cause of termination and date of termination). The exact wording of the marriage history questions is given in Appendix A. The questionnaire also had information on the respondent's background (that is, childhood-type of residence, age, education and religion), respondent's work history, current (last) husband's background, assets and expenditure.

1.4 REVIEW OF THE EXISTING STUDIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Despite the importance of age at marriage in preparing fertility models and projections, no direct question on age at marriage was included in the enumeration schedule used in the most recent population census of Bangladesh in 1974 or in any other Bangladeshi survey of national scope. The first study of the incidence of marriage in Bangladesh was done by Aird (1956:176-205) in a case study of the fertility levels and differentials in two villages. He also dealt with marriage dissolution. Ahmed (1963:2) estimated age at marriage for Bangladeshi women using 1951 Population Census data on

marital status. The incidence of marriage at a national level was first carried out by Sadiq (1965:229-247). He measured the singulate mean age at marriage, marriage frequencies, marriage probabilities and the time-trend and regional differences in mean age at marriage using marital status data from the population censuses 1931 to 1961. Obaidullah (1966:10-24) studied the extent of marriage and remarriage and the age at first marriage of rural and urban ever-married women according to different educational levels. He used data from the Demographic Survey in East Pakistan (1961-62), which was conducted in four rural and two urban places in the then East Pakistan. Afzal (1967:74-75) studied age at marriage of the Bangladeshi ever-married women based on a sample from the 1961 Population Census of Pakistan. Alam (1968:489-498) estimated the singulate mean age at marriage from the Population Growth Estimation Experiment (1962-65) using data on marital status and sex by single year of age for the year 1964. Sirageldin and others (1975:208) estimated median age at marriage for rural and urban currently married and once married women in Bangladesh using data from the National Impact Survey conducted during 1968-69. A recent study on marriage was the Report on the 1974 Bangladesh Restrospective Survey of Fertility and Mortality (BRSFM, 1977:56-65). The report included singulate mean age at marriage for both males and females, percentage widowed and divorced by age group and by regions, by rural-urban residence, a first marriage model for Bangladeshi females, and also the percentage of ever-married persons with two or more marriages by age group for regions and for rural-urban areas. The survey was conducted in April 1974 and questions on marriage such as current marital status, number of times married, and whether the first spouse was still alive were asked of each eligible male or female respondent. In that survey, interviewers were instructed to ignore young marriages. Most recently, Ruzicka and Chowdhury (1978:15-33) have studied marriage and divorce in rural Bangladesh. This study used data on marriages and divorces recorded by the continuous demographic surveillance system conducted by the Cholera Research Laboratory, Dacca, in 228 adjoining villages with a population of 263,000. Their analysis was based on the records collected during

1975 and 1976. Their study was unique in the sense that in no other area of Bangladesh does a relatively complete and accurate vital registration system exist.

The summary of the results on age at marriage estimated by different researchers is presented in Table 1.1. Most of these researchers used Hajnal's method for estimating age at marriage and as a result their estimates are overstatements because singulate mean age at marriage is affected by values at extreme ages. Only Arid, Obaidullah and Ruzicka and Chowdhury touched on both marriage and dissolution. None of these studies were based on detailed marriage histories and none of them dealt with socio-economic differentials of nuptiality patterns on a national basis.

Table 1.1

Age at Marriage of the Bangladeshi Women as Found by Different Researchers Prior to the Present Study

Source	Year	Mean Age	Median Age
Arid (1956)*	1954	11.4	12.8
Ahmed (1963)	1951	14.4	-
Sadiq (1965)	1951	14.4	-
	1961	13.9**	-
Obaidullah (1966)	1961-62	-	13.0**
Afzal (1967)	1961	14.9**	-
Alam (1968)	1964	14.9	-
Sirageldin et al. (1975)	1968-69	-	13.3
BRSFM (1977)	1974	15.9	-
Ruzicka and Chowdhury (1978)+	1975-76	17.0	-

Notes: * Based on only two villages.
** For rural areas only.
+ Based on registered marriages. Data also contain remarriages.
Data used by Arid, Obaidullah, Ruzicka and Chowdhury do not have national coverage.

1.5 MARRIAGE CUSTOMS IN BANGLADESH

Very few studies have ever been made of marriage customs in Bangladesh (for example, Jahan (1975:10-13)). Ethnically Bangladesh is homogeneous, having only one major ethnic group (99 per cent) known as the Bengalis. Islam is the dominant religion in Bangladesh. About 85 per cent of the population are Muslim and 13 per cent Hindus (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977:24). Adherence to the Muslim codes is very strong among the majority of the population in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, "marriage" means the prescribed legal union between a man and a woman, establishing them in new social roles as husband and wife. Pre-marital cohabitation does not exist and it is looked upon as a social evil.

Because of the predominance of an agrarian economy the Bangladeshi people have a very young age at marriage, a low rate of divorce, and a fairly high rate of remarriage following immature widowhood. In Bangladesh, like other Asian societies, land and other resources are divided among all living sons and marriage and inheritance are the expectation of the entire sibling set, both men and women. In the past, child marriages were common in Bangladesh. Child marriage was prohibited in British India in 1929 of which Bangladesh was a part at that time. With the influence of westernization and recent economic hardship this practice is now almost abolished. In those days the child bride remained with her parents or near relatives until she attained puberty. However, most girls still marry while they are still in their teens. According to the 1974 Population Census Report, only 24 per cent of girls remained unmarried in age group 15-19 while the corresponding figure for males was 92 per cent (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977:19). If any girl can not get married by age 20 she is considered "too old" to ever get married. This belief still exists among the majority of the Bangladeshi people. Parents of girls who can arrange early marriages for their daughters feel very proud in the society.

For the man, age at marriage is not rigidly determined but is usually decided by his ability to independently support a family. It is also determined by his position in the family. If he is the eldest or the only son he will be expected to get married early. Traditionally, the main occupation is cultivation and the eldest son inherits or shares his father's land. Therefore, employment outside the family is not an important criterion for marriage for the son. Usually parents, or in the absence of parents, close elderly relatives of the young man approach him for his consent to a proposed marriage. The young man passes on his opinion through a friend. First preference is given to the man's cousins but marriage outside the family is equally likely. The spouse has to be selected in accordance with the Islamic law. A Muslim man is prohibited from marrying his daughters, his sisters and his aunts on both his father's and mother's side (Levy, 1957:104). He is also forbidden to marry a woman and her daughter nor may he take possession of a woman who is already lawfully married to another man. The *Koran* also forbids marriage between two persons reared at the breast of the same woman. For choosing a bride, beauty, morality and economic condition are important criteria in addition to the social standing of the girl's family. In the case of the boy's family, it is usually preferred that he should be from a well-to-do family or have a good means of income besides his education. Social class still plays an important role in the marriage market in Bangladesh. Because of the recent economic crisis and modernization parents prefer to give their daughters away in marriage to well educated and established young men without giving any major importance to their parents' social position. The dowry system still exists and usually flows from bride to groom. A husband has to give a certain amount of *mehr*[1] to his wife at the time of marriage (Afzal et al., 1971:48). The amount is fixed by taking into consideration the income and social position of the man.

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[1] In Islam, *mehr* is a sum of money which the husband is duty-bound to give to the wife as part of the marriage contract to be kept by the wife in case of divorce.

A match-maker plays a vital role in Bangladeshi marriages. He is the medium of communication between the two parties involved and any query or demand has to be passed through him. On many occasions he has to face attacks and counter attacks from both sides. His is a thankless job, but without a match-maker intervening, marriage negotiation is almost unthinkable in both rural and urban Bangladesh. In most cases the girl's opinion is thought to be of no importance in selection of the bridegroom and setting the date of marriage. Most marriages are arranged and neither the bridegroom nor the bride has any chance of seeing each other before marriage. Often it is a match between two strangers although more recently a small number of marriages are arranged by the couple themselves.

Bangladeshi custom requires older children to marry before younger ones can consider getting married. If in any case a younger girl gets married before her elder sister, the elder sister is thought to be cursed and unsuitable for marriage. The bridebroom does not have to pay compensation in such a case.[1] Ideally, a man has to be about five or six years older than the girl. In rural areas, most of the marriages take place just after the harvest. There are some lunar dates which are more favourable than others for a marriage ceremony and there are a few lunar dates on which marriage is strictly prohibited in Bangladesh. The marriage ceremony usually takes place at the house of the bride's parents or a place decided by them. Friends and relatives of the bridegroom accompany him and the actual ceremony is performed by the *Kazi* (marriage priest) according to Muslim rites. The 1961 Muslim Law Ordinance of Pakistan (including former East Pakistan) requires the following information to be recorded on the form called *Nikah Namma*: (i) year of marriage, (ii) name of the Union/Town Committee, (iii) age of bride and groom, (iv) marital status of the bride at the time of marriage, (v) amount

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[1] In Indonesia (West Java) which is also a predominantly Muslim country, for example, if the girl who has been chosen has an elder sister who is not yet married, the man must pay the bride's parents so that the younger girl can step over her elder sister (McDonald and Abdurahman, 1974:4).

of *mehr* in *rupees*, and (vi) date of marriage according to the Arabic Calendar (Afzal et al., 1971:49).

It is evident that custom is significant in the formalities of marriage in Bangladesh despite the strong influence of religion. Divorce is looked upon as a social evil. The few divorces that do occur are mainly due to infertility, sub-fecundity and adultery. Incompatibility is a frequent underlying cause of many early divorces. In the Bangladeshi society the fecundity of the husband is never challenged. Divorce is strictly governed by the Islamic legal provisions. A husband can divorce his wife merely by uttering the word *talak* three times in the presence of a third person. In the same manner a wife also can divorce her husband. The divorced woman has to wait for 90 days (3 mentrual periods), before she can remarry but the husband can remarry just after the divorce. If a man decides to take back his divorced wife, she has to be remarried temporarily to another man for a period of at least three months and then get divorced from this new husband and remarry the former husband through the Islamic rites. In the case of a divorce initiated by the husband, he has to bear all his divorced wife's essential expenses for a period of three months. In the case of divorce, the husband has sole claim over the children, if any. Remarriage following divorce is permissible by law but a divorced person finds it difficult to find a suitable spouse. A strong social stigma exists in marrying a divorced person. Usually a divorced woman, if she remarries, will marry a divorced or widowed man or an old man who has never married. Although polygyny (up to four wives) is permitted by Islam its practice is very limited in Bangladesh. Present economic hardship and the influence of western ideas discourages multiple marriages. In a few cases where the first wife could not give birth to any issue or son, the husband may take another wife with the hope of getting the desired issue. In rural areas, the polygynous man is usually a large land-holder, whereas in the towns he is often a lowly educated but wealthy trader.

The Hindu marriage system differs from the Muslum marriage system in some respects and marriage usually takes place within a

caste. It may be mentioned that there are four main castes among the Hindus. Marriage arrangements are, however, similar in both the Islamic and Hindu religions in Bangladesh, and are usually influenced by local custom (D'Souza, 1979:18). In a rural sample registration area in Bangladesh, it was found that in 1975 only five per cent of the recorded marriages, Muslim and Hindu alike, were reported as being arranged by the partners themselves (Ruzicka and Chowdhury, 1978:24). This may not be significantly different for the whole of Bangladesh. Hindu marriage is eternal and need not be registered. At the time of marriage, the guardian of the groom or bride has to pay a certain amount of dowry depending upon the social position. It usually flows from bride to groom. Sometimes gifts are given to the bridegroom instead of the dowry but in money value it is not insignificant in amount. Divorces are very rare among the Hindus in India and Bangladesh (D'Souza, 1979:15). Usually separation is the alternative to divorce for the Hindus. If a divorce happens, a man has to bear all necessary expenses of his divorced wife until her death. She still remains claimant of his property. Marriage of a widow was prohibited for many centuries in the Hindu religion. It is still discouraged and thought to be something evil in the society although many social leaders have fought for the cause of remarriage for widows. On the other hand, Hindu widowers can remarry single women. Among the Hindus, polygyny is permissible with the consent of the first wife (Krishnamorthy, 1977:184).

1.6 LEGAL MINIMUM AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE

Social legislation against child marriage was passed in British India (including Bangladesh) for the first time in 1929 (D'Souza, 1979:9). The Child Marriage Restraint Act commonly known as the Sarda Act, named after its sponsor Har Bilas Sarda, came into effect in 1930 (Census of India, 1931:229-30). Under this law, punishments were provided for the solemnization of marriages under 14 years of age for females and under 18 years of age for males, although marriages were not invalidated. The Sarda Act was not welcomed by

either the Muslim or the Hindu community. The time gap between the passing of the Act and its actual enforcement was abused by the people as frequency of child marriages rapidly increased (Census of India, 1931:229-30).

Soon after independence of Pakistan, political leaders and social thinkers began to be aware of the growing population problems. But they had a long wait until the people realized that legal action was needed to raise the minimum age at first marriage. The Muslim Family Law Ordinance was passed in 1961 requiring registration of all Muslim marriages. The Sarda Act was amended raising minimum age of marriage for females from 14 to 16 years and for males from 18 to 21 years. But in actual practice no action was taken for the violation of the ordinance so far as age at marriage was concerned. In the absence of a vital registration system it is difficult to implement the law as there is no way to challenge the age as stated by a person. The Bangladesh Population Council has recommended that a proposal should be developed in due course to raise the age at marriage giving due consideration to the existing socio-economic conditions of the country (Population Control and Family Planning Division, 1976:15). Its recommended age at marriage for females is 18 to 25 years and for males, 20 to 28 years.

1.7 THE PRESENT STUDY

1.7.1 Scope of the Present Study

This study will concentrate separately on the nuptiality patterns of the rural ever-married females and urban ever-married females. Household[1] information will be used to study socio-demographic characteristics of the survey population. Current

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[1] Bangladesh Fertility Survey definition of Household: A group of persons usually living and eating together in a structure or dwelling. A household may also be found within a shop, office, mosque, or a boat, in a tent as long as its members sleep and eat together (BFS, 1978:26).

marriage patterns, socio-economic differentials, marriage dissolutions, and remarriages will be based on relevant data provided by the respondents.

1.7.2 Data for the Present Study

The original tape of the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey contained the following eight data files:

file 02: Household Information,
file 11: Respondent's Background,
file 21: Marriage History,
file 31: Probing for Respondent's Fecundity,
file 32: Pregnancy History,
file 61: Work History,
file 71: Current (Last) Husband's Background, and
file 91: Assets and Expenditure.

From these files (excluding 02 and 31), a file containing information on marriage patterns and socio-economic differentials was made. Details of the file are given in Appendix B.

1.7.3 Organization of the Thesis

The study is presented in five chapters. Chapter II deals with marriage patterns. In Chapter III socio-economic differentials in age at first marriage are described in detail. Marriage dissolutions and remarriages are discussed in Chapter IV. Finally, Chapter V consists of a summary of findings and concluding remarks.

1.8 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY POPULATION

1.8.1 Introduction

A brief description of the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey

is given in Appendix C. In all interviews of 4,439 rural and 1,426 urban households were successfully completed. From these households, 5,024 ever-married rural women and 1,489 ever-married urban women were successfully interviewed. In this section some of the characteristics of the survey population will be examined.

1.8.2 Reported Age and Sex Structure of the Survey Population

Information about sex and age was collected from the head of the household for each member. Historical or local important events were used by the interviewers to get a good estimate of age. Although every effort was made to get maximum possible accuracy in age reporting, it must be recognized that in Bangladesh people are often unable to report their exact ages (Hashmi, 1963:27-29). Hence, the age data may be treated as only an estimate of the true age distribution of the survey population.

The age-sex composition of the survey population is shown in broad age-groups in Table 1.2. The data reveal a very young age structure of the population. About 47.0 per cent of the population both in rural and urban areas are under 15 years of age. Only about three per cent of the people are above the age of 65. Hence only 49.4 per cent of the population are in the economically active category. The Bangladesh Population Census of 1974 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977:13) and the 1974 Bangladesh Retrospective Survey of Fertility and Mortality (BRSFM, 1977:53) reported 48.0 and 46.7 per cent of the population respectively under 15 years of age. Both rural and urban areas have almost the same proportion of young children.

No attempt has been made to evaluate the age data of the survey population. However, it seems that age group 0-4 has been under-reported as is often found in most developing countries where people do not have a precise idea about their exact age. In general, the survey age distribution seems to be consistent with that of the

Table 1.2

Percentage Distribution of Age and Sex of the Survey Population by Broad Age Groups and Current Residence

Current Residence	Age Groups							
	0-14		15-44		45-64		65+	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Rural	47.3	47.5	37.9	39.9	10.5	10.1	4.3	2.5
Urban	45.7	48.8	41.6	39.9	9.9	9.1	2.8	2.2
Bangladesh*	47.5	48.5	37.0	38.1	11.8	10.3	3.7	3.0

Notes: M - Males
F - Females
* 1974 Population Census.

Sources: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (1977:13).

1974 Bangladesh Population Census (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977:13).

1.8.3 Sex Composition

Sex ratios for rural and urban Bangladesh by age groups are shown in Table 1.3. The sex-ratio is the most widely used measure of sex composition and is defined as the number of males per 100 females. The overall sex ratio is more than 100 for both rural and urban Bangladesh. This indicates that in both rural and urban areas males outnumber females and this is true for almost every age group. It is interesting to note that the overall sex ratio for the rural areas is the same in both the 1974 Population Census and 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey but that there is a big difference in the urban areas. It seems that females were under-enumerated in the urban areas in the 1974 National Population Census. The under-enumeration of the total population in the 1974 Population Census found by a post-

Table 1.3

Age Specific Sex Ratio by Current Residence

Age Group	Sex Ratio: Males per 100 Females			
	BFS 1976		Census 1974	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
0- 4	103	107	99	101
5- 9	103	101	101	101
10-14	105	98	119	110
15-24	93	99	102	136
25-34	100	130	91	158
35-49	111	127	113	173
50-64	110	120	119	163
65+	172	143	137	134
All	106	109	106	129

Sources: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey; Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (1977:73).

enumeration check was 19.3 per cent for the four major cities and 6.5 per cent for the rest of the country (Rabbani et al., 1976:3). Because of extensive training of efficient female interviewers, under-enumeration was minimal in the survey.

1.8.4 Household Size

In rural Bangladesh a household may consist of one or more structural units (group of rooms or a single room) located within a compound whereas in the urban areas a household consists of only one structural unit. The average sizes of households as shown in Table 1.4 for rural and urban Bangladesh are 6.3 and 6.6 respectively. Usually it is expected that the urban household size should be less than that of the rural one because of greater numbers of nuclear

Table 1.4

Percentage Distribution of Households by Number of Members and Current Residence

Household Size	Rural		Urban	
	%	N	%	N
1-3	18.0	810	17.0	245
4-5	29.0	1,271	25.0	348
6-7	26.0	1,144	25.0	353
8+	27.0	1,212	33.0	471
Total Households	100.0	4,437	100.0	1,417
Total Population		27,738		9,326
Average Household Size		6.3		6.6

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

families in the urban areas. The higher average household size in the urban areas may be due to the presence of close relatives who stay there for the purpose of study or while looking for jobs. It may also be partly explained by the ambiguity of the definition of a household in the urban areas. Single or two-person households seem to be very uncommon in Bangladesh being only two and five per cent in rural and urban areas respectively. This may be due to the universal marriage system which induces people to form a household and eventually to have children. Formation of a household before marriage is very rare in Bangladesh.

1.8.5 Household Types

The distribution of households by type as shown in Table 1.5 indicates that a married couple with children is the most common type

Table 1.5

Percentage Distribution of Households by Types and Current Residence

Household Types	Rural		Urban	
	%	N	%	N
Single Person Household	0.7	31	5.1	72
Husband and Wife Only	4.4	194	4.1	58
Husband, Wife and Children	63.0	2,797	60.2	853
Husband, Wife, Children, and Others	12.9	572	13.1	186
Husband, Wife, Others, No Children Present	3.9	173	4.2	59
Husband, More than One Wife, Children and Others	1.1	48	1.2	17
Other Households	14.0	622	12.1	172
Total	100.0	4,437	100.0	1,417

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

of living unit both in rural and urban Bangladesh. The "other households" category is the next most common type of living arrangement in the rural areas. For the urban areas, "couple, children, and others" category is second most common. The number of extended families seems to be small which is a deviation from the general thinking about Bangladeshi families. It may also be that some of the "extended" families have been included in the category of "others". This probably can be explained by the definition of household which includes people living together and eating together but excludes people who live together but do not eat together or eat together but do not live together. In the Bangladeshi society the second definition (people who live together but do not eat together) may be more common. However, it may also be due to the gradual extinction of extended

families due to recent economic hardship which does not allow bread-earners to undertake additional responsibilities (author's personal opinion). Table 1.5 also shows that polygyny is still present in both rural and urban Bangladesh. The percentage of polygynous households are 1.1 per cent and 1.2 per cent for rural and urban areas respectively. The 1974 Population Census of Bangladesh reports a ratio of 1.01 married females for one married male which also supports the presence of small amount of polygyny in Bangladesh (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977:18).

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE PATTERNS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will deal with trends in proportion married, indexes of nuptiality, age at marriage of wife, and age difference of current (last) husband and once married wife by current residence.[1] Trends in proportion married will be based on household marital status information which is classified by age to show the extent to which women of given ages are married or have failed to marry. This information throws light on the degree to which adult females spend their mature years as married women.

One of the most important demographic characteristics of a marriage is the age at marriage of the bride and the groom. Age at marriage is related to fertility, the duration of married life, and the stability of marriage. According to Shryock and Siegel (1971:562) age at marriage is inversely related to fertility so long as marriage occurs within the childbearing period and not before it.

Marriage patterns vary from country to country under the influence of social factors (Bourgeis-Pichat, 1967:160-63). Since the upper age limit of the fecund period is biologically determined, age at marriage is the main factor which controls the potential reproductive span of women. Various studies (Coale and Tye, 1961: 631-46; Agarwala, 1965; Sadiq, 1967; United Nations, 1961; Population Growth Estimation, 1966) have demonstrated that overall

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[1] In the Bangladesh Fertility Survey an urban area was defined as the concentration of population of at least 5,000 persons in a continuous collection of houses where the community sense is developed (BFS, 1978:96).

fertility can decline by raising the age at marriage.

In Bangladesh, where total fertility is high (BRSFM, 1977: 72), the population young (Table 1.2), and practice of contraception negligible (BFS, 1978:108) age at marriage of women is one of the major determinants of fertility. It identifies the start of the period of exposure to risk of conception of a woman, especially in a society where incidence of premarital conception is insignificant.

2.2 TRENDS IN PROPORTION MARRIED

Bangladeshi marriage patterns are characterized by universality of marriage, early age at marriage, and a short span of time during which most first marriages take place as is evident from Table 2.1. A comparison of the proportion of never married females at age 15-19 over time reveals that this proportion has been rising and the rise has been rapid among the urban females. Almost all the females married by the age of 25-29.

The percentage never married in the age group 45-49 indicates the degree of permanent "celibacy" present in a society ("celibacy" means the state of never having been married). It is obvious from Table 2.1 that celibacy is virtually absent in Bangladesh. Celibacy seems to be a European phenomenon (Smith, 1976:34) as it is rare throughout most of Asia (Mertens, 1965; Dixon, 1971). The Bangladeshi society does not permit it because it is considered to be disgraceful if someone does not marry. There exist very few women who cannot marry because they are physically handicapped or mentally retarded. In the Bangladeshi context, economic factor does not seem to be a major factor in preventing marriage.

At any given point in time the proportion currently married seems to be very high in Bangladesh (Table 2.2). It does not vary between the urban and the rural areas. It seems that most of the women remain in the married state during the reproductive period which contributes to the higher risk of fertility in Bangladesh.

Table 2.1

The Percentage of Women Who were Never Married (NM), at the Time of the 1951, 1961 and 1974 Censuses and 1976 BFS by Age at That Time

Age of Women	Census 1951	Census 1961		Census 1974		BFS 1976	
	NM	Rural NM	Urban NM	Rural NM	Urban NM	Rural NM	Urban NM
10-14	74	66	86	90	95	88	93
15-19	11	7	27	22	45	26	41
20-24	3	1	3	3	10	3	10
25-29	1	0	1	1	2	1	3
45-49	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Note: BFS = Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Sources: 1951 figures are from the Office of the Census Commissioner, 1962: Bulletin No. 3; 1961 figures were computed from Office of the Census Commissioner, 1962:4; 1974 figures were computed from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977: 93-94; and the 1976 figures were computed from the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey household information.

Table 2.2

Percentage of Wommen Currently Married, Aged 10-49 Years at Different Points of Time in Bangladesh

Source	Rural	Urban
Census 1961	80	79
Census 1974	87	86
BFS 1976	82	82

Source: 1961 figures were computed from Office of the Census Commissioner, Karachi:4; 1974 figures were computed from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1977:93-94; and the 1976 figures were computed from the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey household information.

2.3 INDEXES OF NUPTIALITY

From the per cent single at each age in the household information, the following nuptiality indexes have been computed:

(1) Hajnal's Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM),

(2) Coale's Index of Proportion Married (Im), and

(3) Coale's Three Nuptiality Parameters: Ao, K and C.

Table 2.3 gives Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) in different years using Hajnal's (1953:111-136) method. Rural-urban differences in age at marriage exist for all the years. The 1951 Population Census does not seem to show the expected lower age at marriage than later years. This is due to the independence of Pakistan from British India when many people migrated in and out of former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) (M.R. Khan, 1972) and when there was dislocation in every aspect of society and the economy. As a result people had to postpone their marriages at least for a few years. Hajnal's method overestimates the age at marriage as it is affected by values at extreme ages. Jain (1969:662-684) suggested that a region like the Indian sub-continent, where tempo of marriage is high, should use age 25 years for females and 35 years for males as the termination ages in order to get a better estimate of the SMAM.

Coale's Im is an index of the proportion married among women in the childbearing ages. It indicates the extent to which marriage is contributing to the achievement of the highest potential fertility in question (Coale, 1969:5). It shows the number of births that would occur if currently married women experienced the standard schedule (Hutterite schedule 1921-30) of fertility relative to the number of births that would occur if all women currently married and non-married experienced these fertility rates. Symbolically,

$$Im = \frac{\Sigma\ MiHi}{\Sigma\ WiHi}$$

where Mi and Wi are number of currently married women and total women respectively, in age groups i (15-19 through 45-49), and where the

Table 2.3

Singulate Mean Age at Marriage for Females of Bangladesh

Source	Bangladesh	Rural	Urban
Census 1951	14.5	-	-
Census 1961	13.9	13.7	16.0
Census 1974	15.9	15.9	17.6
BFS 1976	-	15.9	17.4

Note: Termination age was assumed to be 50 years.

Sources: 1961 and 1974 figures are from Rabbani et al. (1976:12), 1951 and 1976 figures were computed from Table 2.1.

Hi's are the standard schedule of extremely high marital fertility (usually Hutterite fertility). Im has a theoretical range from zero (no one currently married in the 15 to 50 age range) to unity (every one in that age range currently married).

The Im index for different types of residence in Bangladesh is shown in Table 2.4. An Im index of 0.86 for the rural areas implies that only 14 per cent of the potential fertility was not realized because not every one was married in the 15-49 age range. Thus, the Im index translates a set of proportions married into an index of its implication for fertility. It suggests that differential marriage patterns and hence differential fertility exist between the rural and the urban areas of Bangladesh.

Coale (1971:196) observed that with appropriate rescaling of origin, horizontal scale and vertical scale, diverse schedules of percentages ever-married by age have an essentially common pattern. His empirically derived curve of the percentages ever-married (the complement of the percentage single) by age has a double exponential form with three parameters: Ao, K and C. The Ao parameter indicates the age at which the curve of the per cents ever-married begins to

Table 2.4

Selected Female Nuptiality Parameters by Place of Residence

Place of Residence	Nuptiality Parameters					
	Im*	Ao	K	C	SMAM	Median
Rural	0.86	11.00	0.44	1.00	16.00	15.42
Urban	0.75	11.04	0.54	0.99	17.18	16.46
Other Urban	0.76	11.00	0.53	0.98	17.02	16.32
Capital City	0.74	12.20	0.55	1.00	18.27	17.54

Notes: Urban area was split into "other urban" and capital city.

* Hutterite schedule of fertility was used as the standard.

Ao: origin or age at which most of the marriages begin to take place.

K: tempo or speed with which marriages occur.

C: Proportion ultimately ever-married.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

depart substantially from zero. The K parameter indexes the tempo or speed with which the curve rises to its ultimate level. Expressed in relation to a standard tempo (the population of Sweden in the period 1965-69), K approaches or even exceeds unity when the shift from single to married takes place slowly, whereas a low value of K indicates an abrupt rise in the ever-married curve. Finally, C is the proportion ever-married when first marriages have effectively ceased and is thus the ultimate (by age 50) proportion ever-married. Thus each of the three parameters has a unique substantive interpretation. In practice, it has been found that Ao varies from 11 to 18 years, K from about 0.25 (indicating a very short time scale and a very steep rise in the proportion ever-married by age) to about 1.75 (indicating a very slow tempo). In some populations, C is found to be very close to unity, whereas in others such as Ireland it is as low as 0.75 (Lesthaeghe, 1971:416). In a population with given Ao and K, mean (SMAM) and

median age at marriage of that population can be computed (Trussell, 1976:228) as:

$$SMAM = Ao + 11.37\ K$$

$$\text{Median Age} = Ao + 10.04\ K$$

where 11.37 and 10.04 are mean and median of the standard population (Swedish Population). It is obvious from the above formulae that for a given SMAM or median, an increase in one component implies reduction in the other.

Selected nuptiality parameters (Ao, K, C) for Bangladesh by place of residence have been computed by applying Coale's model and are shown in Table 2.4. Details of computation are shown in Appendix D. The capital city (Dacca) seems to have the latest age at first marriage and slowest tempo or speed with which the women become married. It suggests that urban size has influenced the age at which most marriages take place and also the tempo. Comparing Ao, K and C with the findings of BRSFM (1977:61) for 1951, 1961 and 1974 and with those of Kabir's (1978:Tables 4 and 5) for 1965 and 1975, it seems that changes in marriage patterns in Bangladesh have taken place during the last fifteen years (Table 2.5). It may be mentioned that their findings were for the whole of Bangladesh. All the findings suggest that the initial age at which marriage takes place has risen and at the same time they are being distributed over a wider range. Another interesting finding is that C value has not changed much, suggesting that marriage is still universal in Bangladesh.

From the data on proportion of single and ever-married in each age group, models of first marriage rates by single years of age for both rural and urban Bangladeshi females have been constructed (by applying Coale's model) and are shown in Table 2.6 and Table 2.7. It is evident from the tables that nuptiality in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh is characterized by an early start, a rapid rise to a maximum risk of marriage, and nearly 100 per cent participation in the marriage pool. It seems that rural and urban differentials exist; urban first marriages start a little bit later and the tempo is slightly slower than that in the rural areas.

Table 2.5

Values of Ao, K and C as Determined by Other Researchers

Source	Year	Values of Ao	K	C
BRSFM 1977	1951	10.6	0.31	0.998
	1961	10.0	0.33	0.999
	1974	11.9	0.40	0.996
Kabir 1978	1965	11.0	0.36	0.990
	1975	11.4	0.43	0.999

Notes: Ao, K and C for 1951, 1961 and 1974 computed from census data; 1965 computed from PGE 1962-65 and 1975 computed from the 1976 BFS data.

Sources: BRSFM, 1977:61; Kabir, 1978:Tables 4 and 5.

2.4 MEDIAN AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE

A thorough analysis of age at marriage requires the observation of a birth cohort throughout its entire life span. With these observations one is able to compute

(a) the percentage of women who never marry at all, and

(b) of those who do marry, the mean age (or median age) at which they marry.

There are methods for taking mortality into consideration when making such calculations. A survey cannot provide data beyond the date of interview and it provides information only about the surviving members of the various cohorts.

However, methods do exist for coping with these restrictions of available data. One of these summary measures of period data as mentioned earlier is the Singulate Mean Age at Marriage, which assumes constant nuptiality pattern experience by various age cohorts. On the

Table 2.6

Construction of First Marriage Frequency Distribution (in Single Years) for Women, Estimated from the Coale's Standard Nuptiality Schedule — Rural Bangladesh

Age A	(1) (A-Ao)/K = Xs Ao = 11.0 K = 0.44	(2) Gs(Xs)	(3) CG(Xs) C = 1.0	(4) First Marriage Frequency Distribution
12	2.27	0.0196	0.0196	0.0196
13	4.55	0.1009	0.1009	0.0813
14	6.82	0.2516	0.2516	0.1507
15	9.09	0.4276	0.4276	0.1760
16	11.36	0.5871	0.5871	0.1595
17	13.64	0.7102	0.7102	0.1231
18	15.91	0.7995	0.7995	0.0893
19	18.18	0.8625	0.8625	0.0630
20	20.45	0.9066	0.9066	0.0441
21	22.73	0.9370	0.9370	0.0304
22	25.00	0.9571	0.9571	0.0201
23	27.27	0.9706	0.9706	0.0135
24	29.55	0.9809	0.9809	0.0103
25	31.82	0.9885	0.9885	0.0076
26	34.09	0.9936	0.9936	0.0051
27	36.36	0.9968	0.9968	0.0032
28	38.64	0.9990	0.9990	0.0022

Notes: The standard schedules were based on Swedish data during 1965-69.
A - Actual Age, Ao - Origin, K - tempo or speed, C - proportion ultimately ever-married. Ao, K and C were estimated using Appendix D.
Xs = Age on the standard schedule.
Gs(Xs) = standard proportion ever-married at age Xs.
C = proportion ultimately ever-married.
First Marriage Frequency = differences in column CG(Xs).

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 2.7

Construction of First Marriage Frequency Distribution (in Single Years) for Women, Estimated from the Coale's Standard Nuptiality Schedule - Urban Bangladesh

Age A	(1) (A-Ao)/K = Xs Ao = 11.04 K = 0.54	(2) Gs(Xs)	(3) CG(Xs) C = 0.988	(4) First Marriage Frequency Distribution
12	1.78	0.0116	0.0114	0.0114
13	3.63	0.0585	0.0578	0.0464
14	5.48	0.1560	0.1541	0.0963
15	7.33	0.2907	0.2872	0.1331
16	9.19	0.4291	0.4239	0.1367
17	11.04	0.5665	0.5597	0.1358
18	12.89	0.6738	0.6657	0.1060
19	14.74	0.7572	0.7481	0.0824
20	16.59	0.8209	0.8110	0.0629
21	18.44	0.8684	0.8579	0.0469
22	20.30	0.9042	0.8933	0.0354
23	22.15	0.9304	0.9192	0.0259
24	24.00	0.9493	0.9379	0.0187
25	25.85	0.9627	0.9511	0.0132
26	27.70	0.9728	0.9611	0.0100
27	29.56	0.9810	0.9692	0.0081
28	31.41	0.9873	0.9755	0.0063

Notes: The standard schedules were based on Swedish data during 1965-69.
A - Actual Age, Ao - origin, K - tempo or speed, C - proportion ultimately ever-married. Ao, K and C were estimated using Appendix D.
Xs = Age on the standard schedule.
Gs(Xs) = standard proportion ever-married at age Xs.
C = proportion ultimately ever-married.
First Marriage Frequency = differences in column CG(Xs).

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

other hand, the median age at marriage calculated from the respondents' actual age at marriage takes into account the changes in the nuptiality patterns expressed by real cohorts; and therefore it is a better index.

The median age is that age by which 50 per cent of the women have their first marriage. Advantages of the median are:

(i) unlike the mean, the small residue of women who never marry will not affect the calculations,

(ii) the small number of late marriages in the 30's and 40's will not carry the same weight as in a mean.

Throughout the present study median will be used as a measure of age at marriage.

The median itself is not sufficient to index some other salient features of nuptiality. So an alternative measure will also be employed which uses the reported dates of marriage in the individual questionnaire and indicates trends across cohorts. This involves the selection of a pivotal age (age at which most of the women get married). In this case age 15 will be the pivotal age, and restricts attention to those women who married before that age and are currently older than the pivotal age. In this way, comparisons are restricted to women who had the same exposure to the statistical risk of first marriage.

In this study, "marriage" means marriage with or without consummation. The question on the interval between marriage and its consummation was asked only for the currently married women and reliability even for these estimates is questionable (BFS, 1978:69-70). From the household information, it has been found that out of 16,615 marriages, only 48 marriages were in the "not consummated" (not *Akth*) category. The reported average interval between marriage contract and consummation of marriage is only 0.4 years. It is to be noted that the Muslim religion permits a girl to be married irrespective of her age but consummation should wait until she has reached menarche. But

it seems that most of the Bangladeshi parents are not aware of this when they give their daughters in marriage because usually the child brides go immediately to live with their husbands. In only a few cases do child wives stay with their parents or with female in-laws up to the first menstruation.

Quartiles of age at marriage for age cohorts for both rural and urban women are presented in Table 2.8. Overall, 75 per cent of rural and urban women get married by age 14.6 years and 15.9 years respectively. Age groups 30-34 and above show the traditional age at marriage in the rural areas, among whom 25 per cent married for the first time by age 10.5, 50 per cent by age 12.7 and 75 per cent by age 14.6. Age at first marriage for the younger age groups seems to be higher than that of the older age groups.

Table 2.8

Age by Which 25, 50 and 75 per cent of Women Had Ever-Married by Current Age and Current Residence in Bangladesh

Current Age	Age by Which Given Per Cent Had Ever Married					
	Rural			Urban		
	25%	50%	75%	25%	50%	75%
15-19	12.5	13.9	15.1	12.7	14.3	15.5
20-24	12.1	13.6	16.1	12.7	15.0	19.1
25-29	11.9	13.6	15.3	12.6	15.7	17.7
30-34	10.8	12.8	14.4	11.9	13.8	15.9
35-39	10.7	12.7	14.8	11.3	13.8	16.7
40-44	10.8	12.6	14.6	11.8	13.0	16.3
45-49	9.7	12.6	14.5	11.6	14.2	17.8
15-49	11.3	12.9	14.6	12.2	13.9	15.9

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 2.9 gives the percentage distribution of age at first marriage for females who were younger than 15 years of age at first marriage. Out of 4,871 ever-married women in the age group 15-49 in the rural areas, 80 per cent of them married before age 15. In the urban areas, out of 1,459 ever-married women in the age group 15-49, 66 per cent of them married before age 15. Of the 3,903 rural women, 18.2 per cent married before age 10. An average of 15.1 per cent married per year of age during age 10-12. During age 13-14, an average of 18.3 per cent married per year of age. The median age, by which half of these women were married was 12.1.

Among the rural women, some trends may be observed. A marked rise has occurred in the percentage marrying at ages 13-14 from 29.6 per cent for the oldest cohort (45-49) to 53.2 per cent for the youngest cohort (15-19).

Of the 968 urban women, 15.4 per cent of them married before age ten. The percentages marrying per year of age for the age intervals 10-12 and 13-14 are 13.8 and 21.6 respectively. There is evidence of rise in age at marriage among urban women. The most noticeable change being in the percentage marrying at ages 13-14 from 34.6 per cent for the oldest cohort (45-49) to 57.2 per cent for the women currently aged 15-19.

2.5 AGE DIFFERENCE OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

Age difference between a husband and his wife is supposed to be primarily a social variable rather than a demographic variable (McDonald and Abdurahman, 1974:14). Krishnamoorthy (1977:118) in his enquiry into the effect of the disequilibrium in sex ratio on marriage in India found that seven per cent more men than women preferred about four years of age difference between husband and wife, husband being older. He also found that non-availability of marriage partners did not arise for small changes in sex ratio in a society, since by changing the age difference between a husband and his wife suitably, every individual in that society could get a marriage partner. This

Table 2.9

Percentage Distribution According to Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 15-49 Who were Married Before 15 Years of Age by Current Residence

Current Age	Age at First Marriage			N	Median Age at First Marriage
	Under 10	10-12	13-14		
Rural					
15-19	11.8	34.9	53.3	(667)	13.1
20-24	15.6	47.5	36.9	(769)	12.2
25-29	14.9	47.9	37.2	(710)	12.2
30-34	19.1	47.3	33.6	(538)	11.9
35-39	22.0	48.6	29.4	(440)	11.7
40-44	21.6	52.6	25.8	(411)	11.6
45-49	31.8	38.6	29.6	(368)	11.6
15-49	18.2	45.2	36.6	(3,903)	12.1
Urban					
15-19	8.2	34.6	57.2	(159)	13.3
20-24	13.7	44.1	42.2	(211)	12.5
25-29	13.9	42.5	43.6	(165)	12.6
30-34	16.1	40.1	43.8	(137)	12.5
35-39	25.7	40.7	33.6	(113)	11.8
40-44	12.4	49.5	38.1	(105)	12.3
45-49	25.7	39.7	34.6	(78)	11.8
15-49	15.4	41.5	43.1	(968)	12.5

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

also holds true in Bangladesh because no abrupt change in sex ratio has been observed during the last two decades and pattern of age difference between a husband and his wife is almost similar to that of India (D'Souza, 1979:16).

In a traditional society like Bangladesh, increase in age at marriage of a woman may decrease the age gap between the spouses if the age at marriage of the husband does not increase. Table 2.10 shows the percentage distribution and the mean age difference of current (last) husbands and only once married wives at the first marriage of the wives for both rural and urban areas. The median difference in age seems to be ten years in both rural and urban areas. Ruzicka and Chowdhury (1978:24) also found the same difference in a rural sample registration area of Bangladesh. One woman in two women in the rural as well as urban areas married a man ten or more years older than herself (Table 2.10). As mentioned earlier, there exists a strong social stigma against marrying older girls in Bangladesh. If a girl exceeds 20 years of age she is considered to be too old to get married. It may be due to this reason that there is an age limit to the women's eligibility for marriage. Even men in their forties prefer girls around age 20 as the maximum age for their marriage partners.

There is a trend towards a slight decline in the age difference between a husband and his wife, especially among the younger females, in both rural and urban areas as shown in Table 2.11. Concentration in age difference is shifting towards 5-9 years from 10 years or more. It may also be observed that there is a movement away from marriage where the husband is of the same age or younger than his wife.

The difference in age of husband and wife is greatly influenced by the age of first marriage of the wife. A girl marrying under ten years of age is most likely to marry a man who is ten or more years older than herself so that he can also act as her guardian as is evident from Table 2.12. This is true in both rural and urban

Table 2.10

Percentage Distribution and Mean of the Age Difference Between Current (Last) Husband and Only Once Married Wife at the First Marriage of the Wife

Husband's Age in Relation to Wife's Age	Rural %	Urban %
5 Years or More Younger	0.4	0.8
1-4 Years Younger	0.1	0.1
Same Age	0.2	0.4
1-4 Years Older	7.7	7.9
5-9 Years Older	38.9	39.6
10-14 Years Older	33.0	32.4
15 Years or More Older	19.7	18.8
Mean Difference in Age	10.7	10.6
N	(4,031)	(1,248)

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

areas. But girls marrying at age 20 or above tend to have partners who are closer in age to them. Another interesting feature of the Bangladeshi marriage is that if a husband takes a second wife, in most cases she will be much younger than the first one and might have never been married before. This usually happens because the husband wants to have children which the present wife has failed to bear, and thus ensures it by marrying a younger girl. It also leads to the wider gap in age between a husband and his wife.

Although age at first marriage of the wife is rising, age difference between a husband and his wife has remained almost stable during the last 25 years as shown in Table 2.13. It suggests that age at marriage of the husband is also steadily rising. Urban age difference, which is usually expected to be lower, seems slightly

Table 2.11

Percentage Distribution and Mean of the Age Difference of Current (Last) Husband and Only Once Married Wife and the (First) Marriage of the Wife by Current Age and Current Residence of the Wife

Current Age of Wife	Current (Last) Husband's Age in Relation to Wife's Age				N	Mean Difference in Age
	Same or Less	1-4 Years Older	5-9 Years Older	10 or More Years Older		
Rural						
15-19	0.9	10.3	47.8	41.0	(804)	9.3
20-24	0.3	8.6	41.5	49.5	(870)	10.1
25-34	0.6	6.6	38.1	54.7	(1,219)	10.9
35-49	1.0	5.3	29.9	63.7	(994)	12.1
15-49	0.7	7.5	38.8	53.0	(3,887)	10.6
Urban						
15-19	0.9	10.1	45.4	43.6	(218)	9.8
20-24	0.0	8.1	47.6	44.3	(296)	10.1
25-34	1.5	7.7	36.6	54.2	(402)	10.8
35-49	2.6	6.6	30.5	60.3	(305)	11.5
15-49	1.3	7.9	39.3	51.5	(1,221)	10.5

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 2.12

Percentage Distribution and Mean of the Age Difference of Current Husband and Only Once Married Wife by Age at (First) Marriage of the Wife and by Current Residence

Age at Marriage of the Wife	Current Husband's Age in Relation to Wife's Age				N	Mean Difference in Age
	Same or Less	1-4 Years Older	5-9 Years Older	10 or More Years Older		
Rural						
Under 10	1.8	5.8	32.2	60.2	(397)	11.7
10-14	0.5	6.7	38.9	53.8	(2,804)	10.7
15-17	0.6	11.2	41.6	46.7	(717)	10.2
18-19	1.3	16.3	41.3	41.3	(80)	9.9
20 and over	3.0	21.2	54.5	21.2	(33)	7.4
All	1.4	12.2	41.7	44.7	(4,031)	10.0
Urban						
Under 10	3.4	4.6	32.2	59.8	(87)	11.9
10-14	1.2	5.5	38.7	54.5	(723)	10.9
15-17	0.9	10.4	42.4	46.2	(316)	10.1
18-19	0.0	13.3	43.3	43.3	(60)	9.5
20 and over	1.6	20.9	43.5	33.8	(62)	8.4
All	1.4	10.9	40.1	47.6	(1,248)	10.2

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 2.13

Age Difference Between Husband and Wife at First Marriage: 1976 BFS and Other Data

Source	Age Difference at Marriage
Census 1951	8.0
Census 1961	9.0
Census 1974	8.1
BRSFM 1974	8.4
CRL 1975	8.6
1976	7.9
BFS 1976	
Rural	8.0
Urban	8.4

Note: BFS - Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Sources: CRL 1975 and 1976 are from Ruzicka and Chowdhury (1978:23); Censuses 1951-1974 and BRSFM 1974 are from D'Souza (1979:18); BFS 1976 were computed from the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey Household Information.

higher. Rural-urban inter-marriages may be the cause of this difference.

The percentage distribution and average age difference of current (last) husbands and only once married wives by age at marriage of the husbands is presented in Table 2.14. It seems that the younger husbands marry wives not very much younger than themselves. It is expected that the age difference between the husband and wife will be lower if the husband is younger at the time of marriage. But with the increasing age of the husband at marriage the age difference increases rapidly. Husbands whose age at marriage was 50 years or above have average age difference of 20 years with their wives in both rural and urban areas. Ruzicka and Chowdhury (1978:23), in the CRL's rural

Table 2.14

Percentage Distribution of the Age Difference of Current (Last) Husband and Only Once Married Wife by Age at Marriage of the Husband and Current Residence

Husband's Age at Marriage	Current Husband's Age in Relation to Wife's Age				Mean Difference in Age	N
	Same or Less	1-4 Years Older	5-9 Years Older	10 or More Years Older		
Rural						
Under 20	1.2	11.9	45.8	41.2	7.7	(1,827)
20-24	0.5	5.7	42.2	51.7	10.1	(635)
25-29	0.4	5.2	34.7	59.8	10.9	(522)
30-34	0.0	3.5	24.6	71.9	12.3	(398)
35-39	0.0	3.1	31.6	65.4	12.3	(358)
40-49	0.0	0.6	8.4	91.0	14.6	(441)
50 and over	0.0	0.0	3.2	96.8	20.1	(189)
Urban						
Under 20	2.3	11.6	49.3	36.8	7.6	(606)
20-24	0.0	5.7	36.4	57.9	10.4	(209)
25-29	1.5	3.7	31.9	63.0	11.6	(135)
30-34	0.0	4.7	23.4	71.9	12.2	(128)
35-39	0.0	5.3	30.9	63.8	12.7	(94)
40-49	0.0	0.0	13.3	86.7	14.9	(120)
50 and over	0.0	0.0	4.0	96.0	21.6	(50)

Note: N - Number of Ever-Married Women.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

registration area found that there existed more than 20 years difference between a husband and his wife irrespective of his former marital status provided that he married at 40 years or over.

An examination of the influence of educational level on age difference of husband and wife indicates that both rural and urban illiterate spouses have the same pattern of age difference except that the urban percentage in the category of the difference "same or less" seems to be higher than the corresponding rural percentage (Table 2.15). For those spouses who had higher levels of education (Class VI or above) urban distribution is more spread than the rural distribution. On the whole, there is a discernible difference in the pattern of age difference between the two extreme educational levels for both rural and urban women.

Table 2.15

Percentage Distribution of the Age Difference of Current (Last) Husband and Only Once Married Wife at Marriage of the Wife on the Basis of Their Schooling and Current Residence

	Current (Last) Husband's Age in Relation to Wife's Age				N
	Same or Less	1-4 Years Older	5-9 Years Older	10 or More Years Older	
Rural					
No Schooling of Both Husband and Wife	0.8	7.3	36.6	55.3	(1,912)
Highest Level* of Schooling of Both Husband and Wife	0.6	10.1	50.3	38.9	(159)
Urban					
No Schooling of Both Husband and Wife	1.9	6.1	37.4	54.4	(374)
Highest Level* of Schooling of Both Husband and Wife	0.4	12.6	44.4	42.7	(239)

Note: * Class VI and above.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

CHAPTER III

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENTIALS OF AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will deal with the effects of socio-economic characteristics on (median) age at first marriage of the ever-married women in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh. It has been found almost universally that persons belonging to different socio-economic groups have different age at marriage (Bogue, 1969:642). It will be interesting to see how far this statement is true in the case of the Bangladeshi women. The study of socio-economic differentials of age at marriage is very important because it helps in understanding the mechanisms which determine age at marriage and thus helps in formulating a viable population policy. It is usually assumed that the population of Bangladesh is homogeneous within rural and urban strata. This study of the socio-economic differentials will help in understanding whether there is any differential emerging in age at marriage, and may be used as a bench-mark to evaluate future change in age at marriage in both rural and urban Bangladesh.

The socio-economic differentials which will be examined are:

(1) place of residence of wife during her childhood,
(2) religion of wife,
(3) education of husband and wife,
(4) work status of wife before first marriage, and
(5) current (last) husband's occupation.

Among these differentials, religion of wife, education of husband and wife, and current (last) husband's occupation are current or most recent status. It is assumed that the status has not changed much

since first marriage of the respondents. This description of the differentials will be limited to the median age at first marriage of the ever-married women currently aged 20-49, calculated within sub-groups of the socio-economic variables. At the end of this chapter socio-economic differentials for women who married before the age 20 and who were currently older than the pivotal age 20 will be examined to see whether they have different patterns from all the women aged 20-49 (including them). There were 3,953 ever-married women in the age-group 20-49 in the rural areas and 1,222 such women in the urban areas.

3.2 PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF WIFE DURING HER CHILDHOOD

In demography, "residence" means the type of community, ranging from the rural to the urban, in which people live (Kammeyer, 1971:49). Differences exist in the ways of life in rural and urban places — differences in the culture — which have important implication for almost every aspect of human behaviour including demographic behaviour. Place of residence during childhood has an influence on the future behaviour of a person because this is the time when he/she gets the first and permanent impressions about his/her surroundings. In the present study, place of residence during childhood is based upon the response to the question:

> "What kind of area would you say (this/that) was when you were growing up, say to age 12? Was it a village, a town, or a city?"

According to the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey data, 98.2 per cent (3,883) of the ever-married rural women aged 20-49 had a rural background and 1.7 per cent (67) had an urban background. In the urban areas, 68 per cent (832) of the ever-married women aged 20-49 had a rural background and 31.8 per cent (388) had an urban background. From this it can be said that most of the women now in the urban areas had spent their childhood period in the rural areas.

Table 3.1

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 20-49 by Their Residence During Childhood, Current (Last) Husband's Residence During Childhood and Current Residence

Residence During Childhood	Current Residence			
	Rural	N	Urban	N
Wife's				
Rural	12.9	(3,883)	13.5	(832)
Urban	14.2	(67)	14.5	(388)
Husband's				
Rural	13.1	(3,906)	13.8	(878)
Urban	14.7	(47)	14.5	(344)

Note: N - Number of Ever-Married Women.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

It is apparent from Table 3.1 that age at marriage is highest for those urban women who had urban childhood residence. Rural women with the rural background have the lowest age at marriage. Median age at marriage for rural women with a rural background is 12.9 years and for urban women with an urban background it is 14.5 years. Wives in rural and urban areas, whose husbands have an urban background, have the highest age at marriage. However, it may be noticed that rural-urban differences in age at marriage for place of residence during childhood is not substantial.

3.3 RELIGION OF WIFE

The religious composition of a society is considered to be of immense importance because religions tend to be institutional embodiments of values, and values often influence demographic

processes (Kammeyer, 1971:47). Religion has a great hold on the people of Bangladesh. To an average Bangladeshi, whether Muslim or Hindu, religion is a thing with which he/she grows and lives, and which conditions his/her actions, at least the important ones in his/her life. It plays an important role in deciding the age at which a girl is considered fit for marriage. Since different religions do not have the same views on marriages, one would expect significant difference in the median age at marriage among various religious groups. This section is devoted to an investigation into median age at marriage of the ever-married women (age group 20-49) of Muslims and non-Muslims (Hindu, Buddhist and Christian) in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh.

According to the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey data, 82.3 per cent (3,253) of the ever-married rural women were Muslim and 17.7 per cent (700) were non-Muslim (Table 3.2). In the urban areas, 83.8 per cent (1,025) of the women were muslim and 13.0 per cent (159) were non-Muslim. It has been mentioned in Chapter I that about 14 per cent of the total population of Bangladesh are Hindus. So the differential of the non-Muslims will mainly represent the characteristics of the Hindus.

The religious differential for age at first marriage does not seem to be very high. Non-Muslims have a slightly higher age at marriage in all the age groups. Younger females of both religions have higher age at marriage (except for urban non-Muslims). Rural-urban differential exists for both Muslims and non-Muslims in age at marriage. In the rural areas, age at marriage for the Muslim women is 12.7 years and for the non-Muslims it is 13 years. In the urban areas, median age at marriage for the Muslims is 13.6 years and for the non-Muslims it is 14.8 years. The difference in age at marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims may be due to higher education among the non-Muslims. It may be mentioned here that Muslim and Hindu, the two major religions in Bangladesh, favour early age at marriage. Their common view is that a girl should be married as soon as she reaches puberty, or in other words, before her virginity is at stake.

Table 3.2

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 20-49 by Wife's Religion, Current Age and Current Residence

Religion of Wife by Current Age	Current Residence			
	Rural	N	Urban	N
Muslim				
20-24	13.1	(838)	14.1	(302)
25-34	12.7	(1,223)	13.8	(398)
35-49	12.1	(1,192)	13.1	(325)
20-49	12.7	(3,253)	13.6	(1,025)
Non-Muslim*				
20-24	13.5	(175)	14.6	(42)
25-34	12.8	(265)	15.4	(38)
35-49	12.7	(260)	14.1	(79)
20-49	13.0	(700)	14.8	(159)

Notes: * Non-Muslim includes Hindus, Christians and Buddhists but excludes "others".
N is the number of ever-married women.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Religious, social and psychological attitudes and tendencies make early marriage a rule and obligation on the Bangladeshi parents (Kapadia, 1966:146).

3.4 EDUCATION OF WIFE AND HUSBAND

According to Dandeker (1971:146) education provides opportunities for personal advancement, awareness of social mobility, and higher non-familial aspiration. It also provides a new outlook, freedom from tradition, willingness to analyse institutions, values

and patterns of behaviour and greater rationalism. It also serves as a measure of social status in Bangladesh as in most other Asian countries (Welty, 1963:121; Yusuf, 1966:95). The percentage of educated women in Bangladesh is very low but it is expected that their nuptiality behaviour will be substantially different from the rest of the society. It has been found in Sri Lanka that by merely increasing the percentage and level of education, age at marriage can be greatly increased (WFS, 1978:62). Basic literacy and very low levels of educational attainment, however, may not be sufficient to have any substantial effect on females' age at marriage.

According to the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey data, 79.9 per cent (3,159) of the ever-married women aged 20-49 have had no schooling in the rural areas, 15.9 per cent (630) attended up to the primary level (up to class five) and only 2.8 per cent (111) attended up to higher levels (class six and above) as shown in Table 3.3. In the urban areas 60.5 per cent (739) of the ever-married women aged 20-49 had had no schooling, 20 per cent (244) attended up to primary level and 16.9 per cent (207) have attended up to higher level.

Age at marriage rises gradually with increased level of education, with the median reaching 16.5 years for women in the urban areas who had obtained at least six years of schooling as shown in Table 3.3 and Table 3.4. For the same level of education, urban age at marriage is higher than in the rural areas. The measures by age group and education show that the increase in age at marriage over time is highly associated with an upward trend in the levels of education. Within an educational group, differences in age at marriage are insignificant (Table 3.3). Religious education of wife or husband does not seem to have substantial effect in lowering age at marriage (Table 3.4). It is also noticed from the table that the husband's education does not seem to have a different effect from that of the wife's education on age at marriage. Husbands in the urban areas, who attended up to university have their wives' age at marriage as high as 19.5 years. It is quite likely that the best educated husbands marry the best educated wives which means a delay in marriage.

Table 3.3

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women by Educational Level, Current Age and Current Residence

Wife's Education by Current Age	Current Residence			
	Rural	(N)	Urban	(N)
No Schooling				
20-24	12.2	(745)	13.1	(191)
25-34	12.6	(1,176)	13.2	(267)
35-49	12.4	(1,238)	12.9	(281)
20-49	12.6	(3,159)	13.1	(739)
Primary (1-5)*				
20-24	13.7	(207)	14.2	(63)
25-34	13.6	(254)	14.4	(108)
35-49	13.2	(169)	13.4	(73)
20-49	13.5	(630)	14.1	(244)
Higher (6+)				
20-24	14.7	(51)	16.5)	(80)
25-34	14.5	(42)	16.6	(89)
35-49	14.6	(18)	16.3	(38)
20-49	14.6	(111)	16.5	(207)

Note: * Religious education (Madrasha) excluded.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

But it may be mentioned here that usually girls are discouraged from continuing their education beyond primary level in the rural areas. If they are allowed further education, it is believed that the custom of *purdah* (seclusion) is violated.

It is revealed that age at marriage of a wife is lowest if both husband and wife have had no schooling as shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.4

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 20-49 by Wife's and Husband's Education and Current Residence

Level of Education	Current Residence			
	Rural	(N)	Urban	(N)
Wife's Education				
Madrasha	12.2	(27)	12.8	(13)
No Schooling	12.6	(3,159)	13.1	(739)
Primary	13.5	(630)	14.1	(244)
Higher (6 and above)	14.6	(111)	16.5	(207)
Husband's Education				
Madrasha	13.9	(42)	12.4	(8)
No Schooling	12.3	(2,228)	12.7	(467)
Primary	12.7	(932)	13.6	(262)
Secondary (6-10)	13.2	(589)	14.3	(283)
Higher (11+)*	14.8	(102)	15.8	(168)
College	-	-	15.7	(129)
University	-	-	19.5	(39)

Note: * Higher education level was further broken down into college and university education for only urban husbands.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Age at marriage increases with the increase in level of education of both husband and wife. Among urban couples of "no schooling" and "highest schooling" categories, four years of difference in age at marriage exist but for the rural areas it is only about 2.5 years. As long as the wife has no education, her age at marriage appears to be low, irrespective of her husband's education (Table 3.5).

Irrespective of religion, age at marriage increases with the

Table 3.5

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 20-49 by Husband's and Wife's Education and Current Residence

Level of Education	Current Residence			
	Rural	(N)	Urban	(N)
Husband's No Schooling and Wife's No Schooling	12.3	(2,077)	12.6	(425)
Husband's No Schooling and Wife's Primary	13.1	(130)	14.2	(29)
Husband's Primary and Wife's No Schooling	12.4	(719)	13.4	(180)
Husband's Primary and Wife's Primary	13.5	(192)	14.1	(71)
Husband's High School and Wife's No Schooling	12.5	(287)	13.8	(106)
Husband's High School and Wife's Primary	13.7	(233)	14.1	(106)
Husband's High School and Wife's Higher	14.2	(51)	15.6	(61)
Husband's Higher and Wife's Primary	14.4	(48)	14.3	(31)
Husband's Higher and Wife's Higher	14.9	(42)	16.9	(129)

Note: High School = Secondary.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

level of education as shown in Table 3.6. It can also be noticed that non-Muslims have higher age at marriage for every educational level (except for no schooling category). Urban age at marriage is higher for each educational level of the Muslims and non-Muslims.

Place of residence during childhood and level of education seem to be positively associated with age at marriage of the ever-married women. Women with urban backgrounds and higher levels of

Table 3.6

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 20-49 by Education, Religion and Current Residence

Religion and Education	Current Residence			
	Rural	(N)	Urban	(N)
Muslim				
No Schooling	12.6	(2,613)	13.0	(636)
Primary	13.4	(516)	13.6	(192)
Higher	14.4	(77)	16.2	(170)
Non-Muslim				
No Schooling	12.7	(545)	13.3	(103)
Primary	14.1	(114)	15.8	(52)
Higher	15.5	(34)	17.9	(37)

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

education have the highest median age at marriage (17.9 years) as is shown in Table 3.7. Women with rural backgrounds and currently living in the rural areas have the lowest age at marriage which is 12.6 years. In this table, also, it is found that within a given background (rural/urban), age at marriage increases with the level of education. It appears that influence of education on age at marriage is much greater than that of place of residence during childhood or religion.

3.5 WORK STATUS OF WIFE BEFORE FIRST MARRIAGE

The involvement of women in modern pursuits is often said to be a significant determinant of family building behaviour because it creates new goals and opportunities for women generally unavailable to them in the traditional system (Smith, 1976:44). Papanek (1971:518), in her observations on seclusion and modern occupations for women of

Table 3.7

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 20-49 by Level of Education, Residence During Childhood and Current Residence

Characteristics	Current Residence			
	Rural	(N)	Urban	(N)
Rural Background				
No Schooling	12.6	(3,122)	12.9	(49)
Primary	13.5	(613)	13.9	(175)
Higher	14.5	(96)	15.6	(91)
Urban Background				
No Schooling	12.6	(35)	13.7	(191)
Primary	14.3	(16)	14.4	(68)
Higher	16.2	(15)	17.1	(115)

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Pakistan (including former East Pakistan), said that *purdah* (seclusion) was related to status, the division of labour, inter-person dependency, social distance, and the maintenance of moral standards as specified by the society. Bangladeshi society wants them to stay in the home and do household activities. Even today, the Bangladeshi people consider it disgraceful to send their wives outside the home violating the strict *purdah* system and working with men in order to earn their own livelihood. Against this background, an examination of work status before first marriage of wife and its effect on age at marriage in both rural and urban areas of Bangaldesh, is done in this section.

In the Bangladesh Fertility Survey, "work" was defined as work aside from doing household work for cash or kind such as taking up jobs, work on contract basis, part-time work, small business or work on a farm.

In the rural areas, only 2.5 per cent (97) of women worked before their first marriage. From this distribution, it is evident that very few women work outside the home for money both in rural and urban Bangladesh. In the rural areas, the main type of work for the illiterate women is the processing of paddy. In the urban areas, they work mainly as household servants, looking after children, washing clothes or preparing meals. Few educated women also work outside the home and they prefer teaching as a profession.

Overall, women who worked before first marriage have later age at marriage in both rural and urban areas (Table 3.8). Median age at first marriage of these women is 13.5 years for the rural areas and 15.5 years for the urban areas. For the same status of work, a rural-urban differential exists. It is interesting to note that women up to the age of 34 in the rural areas, who did not work before first marriage, have a later age at marriage than those women who worked before marriage. It suggests that only specific kinds of work under certain conditions can have an impact on age at marriage. However, differences found in age at marriage because of work status may be spurious due to the small cell sizes. McDonald and Abdurahman (1974: 11) also found in an Indonesian study that in the rural areas women who worked before marriage married earlier, presumably rural work being very largely in agriculture or in household activity. Smith (1975:76), in a Filipino study, observed that employment by one's own family in a rural household activity had little impact on age at marriage.

3.6 CURRENT (LAST) HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION

In a developing country like Bangladesh, husband's occupation is closely linked with the social status of women. It is expected that wives whose husbands have "trades, services and administrative" jobs will have later age at marriage. It may also be that they are better educated themselves.

Table 3.8

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 20-49
by Work Status of Wife Before First Marriage, Current Age and Current Residence

Work Status	Current Age							
	20-24	(N)	25-34	(N)	35-49	(N)	20-49	(N)
Rural								
Never Worked	13.2	(990)	12.7	(1,443)	12.2	(1,420)	12.6	(3,853)
Worked Before First Marriage	12.6	(23)	10.0	(44)	13.6	(30)	13.5	(97)
Urban								
Never Worked	14.1	(332)	14.7	(453)	13.2	(391)	13.9	(1,176)
Worked Before First Marriage	17.3	(12)	14.7	(20)	14.5	(11)	15.5	(53)

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Median age at first marriage of the ever-married women aged 20-49 by occupation of current (last) husband and current residence is shown in Table 3.9. Of the husbands in the rural areas, 16.6 per cent (657) are classified as "trades, services and administrative" workers, 38.1 per cent (1,506) as cultivators on their own land, 9.4 per cent (371) as share croppers, 12.0 per cent (474) as landless agricultural labourers; 12.5 per cent (493) were unclassified or unemployed, and 11.4 per cent (452) were listed in the "other" category. In the urban areas, most of the husbands were in the "trades, services and administrative" category (47.5 per cent), with only 13 per cent working in the agricultural sector. In the urban areas, "trades, services and administrative" category consists of a good number of white collar workers and in the rural areas it consists of mostly petty traders and hawkers.

Table 3.9

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 20-49 by Occupation of Current (Last) Husband and Current Residence

Husband's Occupation	Current Residence			
	Rural	(N)	Urban	(N)
Trades, Services and administrative*	13.4	(657)	14.5	(580)
Cultivators — Own Land	12.4	(1,506)	12.7	(104)
Cultivators — Share Croppers	12.4	(371)	-	(16)
Landless Agricultural Labourers	12.5	(474)	13.6	(39)
Unclassified or Unemployed	12.5	(493)	12.4	(163)
Others**	12.9	(452)	13.6	(320)

Notes: * includes professional, technical, clerical, service, sales, trades, administrator and executive.
** includes farm managers, supervisors, production and related workers.
- Not computed because of small numbers.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Women whose husbands have "white collar" occupations seem to have the highest age at marriage both in the rural and urban areas.

Within occupational groups, a rural/urban differential exists. The main difference in age at marriage seems to be between the non-agricultural and the agricultural sectors, with the later group showing lower age at marriage. It is interesting to note that within the agricultural sector, there is no difference in age at marriage between land-owning cultivators and share-croppers; the landless agricultural labourers have slightly higher age at marriage within this sector. Within occupational groups, younger women seem to have slightly higher age at marriage which may be due to the fact that they are better educated than their older counterparts (Table 3.10). Driver (1963:66) also found in a similar situation in Central India that women whose husbands belonged to the agricultural sector had lower age at marriage and age at marriage was higher among younger women in the same occupation.

In Table 3.11 and Table 3.12 socio-economic differentials are analysed for those women who married before age 20, and who are currently older than the pivotal age (20 years). In this way, comparisons are limited to women who had the same exposure to the risk of first marriage. It is evident from these tables that rural/urban differentials exist in age at marriage for each socio-economic characteristic. Level of education seems to have a substantial effect on age at marriage because the younger cohort, which has received more schooling, has a higher age at marriage. Within each educational category younger women have a higher age at marriage in rural areas, but no such difference is apparent in urban areas.

These women aged 20 and over have the same type of differentials as the all ever-married women in the age group 20-49.

Table 3.10

Median Age at First Marriage of Ever-Married Women Aged 20-49 by Occupation of Current (Last) Husband and by Current Age of Wife and Current Residence

Husband's Occupation	Current Age					
	20-24	(N)	25-34	(N)	35-49	(N)
Rural						
Trades, Services and Administrative	13.6	(179)	13.6	(252)	12.9	(219)
Cultivators — Own Land	13.0	(333)	12.4	(531)	12.1	(642)
Cultivators — Share Croppers	13.0	(95)	12.4	(140)	12.1	(136)
Landless Agricultural Labourers	13.0	(120)	12.6	(177)	12.0	(177)
Unclassified or Unemployed	13.1	(134)	12.3	(202)	12.0	(157)
Others	13.1	(152)	13.0	(186)	12.5	(121)
Urban						
Trades, Services and Administrative	15.0	(151)	13.5	(234)	13.8	(195)
Cultivators — Own Land	12.9	(25)	12.7	(32)	12.5	(47)
Cultivators — Share Croppers	-	(2)	-	(6)	-	(8)
Landless Agricultural Labourers	-	(14)	-	(10)	-	(15)
Unclassified or Unemployed	12.5	(55)	13.8	(61)	11.9	(47)
Others	13.8	(97)	14.0	(131)	12.9	(92)

Note: - Note computed because of small numbers.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 3.11

Median Age at First Marriage of Those Women Who Married Before Age 20, by Socio-Economic Characteristics and Rural Residence

	Childhood Type of Residence			
	Rural	(N)	Urban	(N)
A	13.1	(979)	14.7	(19)
B	12.6	(3,891)	13.9	(66)

	Level of Education					
	No Schooling	(N)	Primary	(N)	Higher	(N)
A	12.7	(738)	13.8	(205)	14.4	(45)
B	12.3	(3,124)	13.5	(621)	14.3	(102)

	Religion			
	Muslim	(N)	Non-Muslim	(N)
A	13.1	(830)	13.3	(168)
B	12.5	(3,215)	12.9	(685)

	Work Status Before First Marriage			
	Never Worked	(N)	Worked	(N)
A	13.1	(975)	12.6	(23)
B	12.6	(3,801)	13.1	(96)

Notes: A: For women with current age 20-24.
B: For women with current age 20-49.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 3.12

Median Age at First Marriage of Those Women Who Married Before Age 20, by Socio-Economic Characteristics and Urban Residence

	Childhood Type of Residence			
	Rural	(N)	Urban	(N)
A	13.5	(227)	15.0	(98)
B	13.3	(804)	14.2	(343)

	Level of Education					
	No Schooling	(N)	Primary	(N)	Higher	(N)
A	12.9	(185)	14.0	(62)	15.9	(69)
B	12.9	(708)	14.0	(239)	15.9	(171)

	Religion			
	Muslim	(N)	Non-Muslim	(N)
A	13.9	(291)	13.9	(34)
B	13.4	(972)	14.3	(177)

	Work Status Before First Marriage			
	Never Worked	(N)	Worked	(N)
A	13.9	(318)	15.4	(7)
B	13.6	(1,117)	13.8	(29)

Notes: A: For women with current age 20-24.
B: For women with current age 20-49.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE DISSOLUTION AND REMARRIAGE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Marriage dissolution and remarriage play vital roles in the stability of a marriage and its subsequent effect on fertility. The population of families created by the event of marriage is subject to two forces of attrition: dissolution of marriage due to incompatibility (divorce) or to death of one spouse (widowhood). Separation is a state in which husband and wife are living apart because of marital discord, but the marriage may not be considered dissolved. Divorce and separation are two of the ways whereby an individual adjusts to marital disharmony. Widowhood is largely a phenomenon of old age.

Most of the analysis in the present chapter will be on the basis of divorce and, in a few cases, on the basis of divorce and widowhood. Divorce and widowhood occur under two different circumstances and thus attitudes towards the former partner depends on how the marriage ended. Information from marriage histories will be used in the analysis of marriage dissolution and remarriage because current marital status alone does not reveal how the former marriage ended (either by divorce or death of the spouse). A question on causes of divorce was not included in the survey, therefore, nothing can be inferred directly as to why a marriage was dissolved by divorce. Marriage dissolution and remarriage will be examined by considering the following indicators:

(1) current marital status,

(2) number of times married and divorced,

(3) outcome of the first marriage and prevalence of remarriage

after dissolution of the first and second marriages,

(4) average time spent in the married state since the first marriage,

(5) dissolution of the first marriage and remarriage following dissolution by socio-economic differentials, and

(6) indirect inference about the cause of divorce from the number of children born.

4.2 OVERALL PATTERN

Out of 5,024 rural and 1,489 urban ever-married females included in the Survey, 4,469 (88.9 per cent) and 1,303 (87.5 per cent) females respectively are currently married (Table 4.1). The data on the frequency of marriage reveal that of all ever-married females, 87.0 per cent in rural areas and 90.7 per cent in urban areas experienced marriage only once. A larger proportion of females who are currently in the marriage dissolution group than females who are currently still married, experienced multiple marriages. For current widows this proportion has been around 20 per cent.

The percentage distribution of all ever-married women, according to the number of times married by age at first marriage and current residence, is shown in Table 4.2. This reveals that 13 per cent of all ever-married women in the rural areas and 9.9 per cent in the urban areas married more than once. It is clearly demonstrated in Table 4.2 that age at marriage is inversely related to the number of times married. For example, 36 per cent of those women who married below age 10, married more than once in the rural areas. The corresponding figure for the urban women is 32.5 per cent. Only 6.8 per cent of rural and 4.5 per cent of urban women, whose age at first marriage was 15 years and over, married more than once. Only four rural women married four times and there were no urban women who were married more than three times.

It reveals from Table 4.3 that 9.2 per cent of the rural

Table 4.1

Number of Ever-Married Women in Each Current Marital Status and Number of Times Married by Current Residence

Current Marital Status	Number of Ever-Married Women	Number of Times Married	
		Once	More than Once
Rural			
Married	4,469	3,951	518
Widowed	388	305	83
Divorced	105	72	33
Separated	62	42	20
Total	5,024	4,370	654
Urban			
Married	1,303	1,199	104
Widowed	131	106	25
Divorced	24	16	8
Separated	31	21	10
Total	1,489	1,342	147

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

women and 5.5 per cent of urban women in the age group 15-19 were married more than once, while 16.7 per cent in the rural areas and 9.1 per cent in the urban areas in the age 45-49 were married more than once. It is clear that a greater number of rural women marry more than once and that remarriage takes place soon after the marriage breaks down. The number of times married is directly related to years since first marriage as seen in Table 4.4.

Table 4.5 shows that 10.8 per cent of rural women and 7.2 per cent of urban women in the age group 15-49 have encountered

Table 4.2

Percentage Distribution of All Ever-Married Women According to the Number of Times Married by Age at First Marriage and Current Residence

Age at First Marriage of Women	Number of Times Married			Number of Ever-Married Women (N)
	1	2	3	
Rural				
Under 10	63.8	30.6	5.1	(725)
10-14	90.2	9.1	0.7	(3,331)
15 and over	93.2	6.4	0.3	(968)
All	87.0	11.7	1.3	(5,024)
Urban				
Under 10	67.0	30.5	1.9	(151)
10-14	91.0	8.6	0.4	(847)
15 and over	95.5	4.2	0.2	(491)
All	90.1	9.4	0.5	(1,489)

Note: Sum of row percentages may not add up to 100 as percentages of women married more than three times are not shown in the table.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

divorce at least once in their lives, while 1.4 per cent of rural and 0.7 per cent of urban women have experienced it more than once. The average number of divorces decreases with an increase in current age in the rural areas. In the urban areas, the trend is not clear but the maximum number of divorces occurs in the age group 20-24. It is noticeable that rural women face more divorces than urban women. About 0.1 per cent of rural women faced divorce three times but no urban woman faced it more than twice. It is usually expected that with the influence of modernization urban women would face more divorces than rural women but as it can be seen this is not so in

Table 4.3

Percentage Distribution of Ever-Married Women According to the Number of Times Married by Current Age and Current Residence

Current Age of Women	Number of Times Married			Number of Ever-Married Women (N)
	1	2	3	
Rural				
15-19	90.8	8.5	0.7	(918)
20-24	88.3	10.7	1.0	(1,012)
25-29	87.6	10.8	1.6	(879)
30-34	85.2	13.3	1.5	(608)
35-39	83.5	15.0	1.5	(533)
40-44	82.3	16.3	1.4	(486)
45-49	83.3	14.4	2.3	(431)
15-49	87.0	11.7	1.3	(4,871)
Urban				
15-19	94.5	5.5	-	(237)
20-24	90.9	9.1	-	(341)
25-29	91.7	8.3	-	(278)
30-34	86.0	14.0	-	(193)
35-39	89.9	10.1	-	(158)
40-44	87.2	12.8	-	(133)
45-49	90.9	9.1	-	(112)
15-49	90.1	9.4	0.5	(1,459)

Note: Row percentages may not add up to 100 as percentages of women married more than three times are not shown in the table.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 4.4

Percentage Distribution of Ever-Married Women According to the Number of Times Married by Years Since First Marriage and Current Residence

Years Since First Marriage	Number of Times Married			Number of Ever-Married Women (N)
	1	2	3	
Rural				
0-4	95.9	4.1	0.0	(786)
5-9	91.4	8.0	0.6	(817)
10-14	87.9	10.6	1.4	(907)
15-19	85.5	12.9	1.6	(675)
20 and over	81.6	16.7	1.9	(1,835)
All	87.0	11.7	1.3	(5,024)
Urban				
0-4	96.9	3.1	0.0	(262)
5-9	94.7	5.3	0.0	(284)
10-14	91.1	8.9	0.0	(269)
15-19	84.0	14.6	1.5	(206)
20 and over	85.7	13.5	0.9	(468)
All	90.1	9.4	0.5	(1,489)

Note: Row percentages may not add up to 100 as more than three marriages are not included.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Bangladesh. It may be due to a better understanding of life blended with social prestige which keeps a marriage intact in the urban areas.

The percentage distribution of the outcome of first marriages of all ever-married women for marriage cohorts ranging from 1950 to 1974 is shown in Table 4.6. The extent of termination of marriage is slightly understated by the figures in the table because

Table 4.5

Percentage Distribution and Mean Number of Divorces by Number of Times Divorced by Current Age and Current Residence of Women

Current Age of Women	Mean Number of Divorces	Percentage Distribution of Females According to the Number of Times Divorced				Number of Ever-Married Women (N)
		0	1	2	3	
Rural						
15-19	0.14	87.5	11.0	1.2	0.3	(918)
20-24	0.13	88.5	10.0	1.2	0.3	(1,013)
25-29	0.13	88.5	10.1	1.3	0.1	(880)
30-34	0.13	88.5	10.0	1.5	0.0	(608)
35-39	0.11	89.7	9.2	1.1	0.0	(534)
40-44	0.10	91.2	7.8	1.0	0.0	(487)
45-49	0.07	94.2	4.9	0.9	0.0	(431)
15-49	0.12	89.2	9.4	1.2	0.1	(4,871)
Urban						
15-19	0.06	94.1	5.9	0.0	-	(237)
20-24	0.09	92.1	7.0	0.9	-	(344)
25-29	0.06	94.3	5.0	0.7	-	(278)
30-34	0.15	86.7	11.7	1.6	-	(196)
35-39	0.04	96.2	3.8	0.0	-	(158)
40-44	0.07	94.0	5.3	0.7	-	(134)
45-49	0.08	92.9	6.2	0.9	-	(112)
15-49	0.08	92.8	6.5	0.7	-	(1,459)

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 4.6

Percentage Distribution of the Outcome of First Marriages for All Ever-Married Women by Selected Marriage Cohorts (1950-74) and Current Residence

Marriage Cohorts	First Marriage Undissolved	First Marriage Dissolved			(N)
		By Death of Husband	By Divorce	Others*	
	(percentage distribution of ever-married women)				
Rural					
1950-54	73.5	14.7	10.9	0.9	(559)
1955-59	79.2	8.5	11.1	1.2	(620)
1960-64	80.6	5.0	13.7	0.7	(855)
1965-69	87.0	2.3	9.7	1.0	(814)
1970-74	86.5	1.1	10.3	2.1	(883)
1950-74	82.1	5.5	11.2	0.2	(3,731)
Urban					
1950-54	72.1	18.6	8.5	0.8	(129)
1955-59	70.5	16.6	10.9	2.0	(193)
1960-64	84.1	8.6	7.3	0.0	(245)
1965-69	85.2	5.0	7.6	2.2	(278)
1970-74	89.8	1.9	5.4	2.9	(313)
1950-74	82.3	8.4	7.6	1.7	(1,158)

Notes: * includes "separated" and "not stated" categories.
N: Number of ever-married women.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

termination of marriage due to death of ever-married women are not included. Overall, about 82 per cent of women in both rural and urban areas are still in their first marriage. This percentage decreases in a steady manner from the younger to the older marriage cohorts in the rural areas. It is also true in the case of urban cohorts with the

exception of the 1955-59 cohort.

Those women who are not in their first marriage are divided into three types:

(1) those whose first marriage was dissolved by their husband's death,

(2) those who were divorced, and

(3) others (separated and not stated).

The percentage of women who have been widowed rises steadily with older marriage cohorts, a feature to be expected on the basis of accumulated risk. In the oldest marriage cohort (1950-54) about one woman in seven in the rural areas and one in six in the urban areas have been widowed. It is usually expected that the extent of widowhood in the urban areas would be lower than that in the rural areas (provided the remarriage rate following widowhood is same or less) because of the existence of better medical facilities in the urban areas. But this is not so in the case of Bangladesh. It may be explained by a lower remarriage rate among the urban women whose marriage was dissolved long ago.

The percentage divorced has a pattern which is different from that of widowhood. Overall, 11.2 per cent of first marriages in the rural areas and 7.6 per cent of first marriages in the urban areas ended in divorce (Table 4.6). In the case of the rural areas, the proportion divorced increased over cohorts up to the marriage cohort 1960-64. It decreased in the marriage cohort 1965-69 but began to rise steadily for the youngest marriage cohort (1970-74). In the case of the urban areas, the proportion divorced increased with older marriage cohorts up to the marriage cohort of 1955-59, when it began to fall. In the absence of a more consistent trend, and considering the relatively small numbers in the individual marriage cohorts, the findings of this analysis can be only tentative. For every marriage cohort the percentage divorced in the rural areas is higher than that in the urban areas.

The divorce pattern of the traditional type may be derived from the experience of women in the rural areas who were married before 1955. This cohort had a longer exposure to married life. The percentage of these women whose first marriage ended in divorce was 10.9 per cent. The 1970-74 marriage cohort represents the most recent pattern of divorce. The proportion of women divorced in this marriage cohort may be biased downward because this cohort is just married for a few years and thus may not be expected to experience high proportion of divorces among them. Although duration of marriage has not been controlled, it may be inferred that recently the proportion has begun to rise in the rural areas while in the urban areas it is decreasing. Marriages in rural Bangladesh are, therefore, slightly more unstable today than they were previously, but marriage is more or less stable in the urban areas. Ruzicka and Chowdhury (1978:22) found in a rural sample registration area in Bangladesh that in the marriages of 1975-76 there were about 16 per cent brides who were divorcees. But their data were different from the type of data used by the present study.

The lower the age at marriage, the higher the rate of divorce and widowhood both in the rural and urban areas (Table 4.7). Those who were married below ten years of age faced the maximum number of marriage dissolutions. It might be that these females, at the time of the survey, were in older age groups, and therefore had a longer exposure to the risk of marital disruption. Both widowhood and divorce decreased with the increase in age at marriage.

Some indication of the relative stability of first and second order marriages can be observed from Table 4.8, in which the percentage of marriages ending in divorce is controlled for differences in the current age of the women. As marriage order increases the rate of divorce also increases for those women who are currently 15-24 years of age in the rural areas. For others the second marriage is more stable than the first, perhaps because by the time of their second marriage they have matured enough for marital life. In the urban areas also, except for age group 25-34, the second

Table 4.7

Percentage Distribution of All Ever-Married Women Whose First Marriages were Dissolved by Age at First Marriage and Current Residence

Age at First Marriage	First Marriage Dissolved	First Marruage Dissolved by			(N)
		Husband's Death	Divorce	Others**	
	(percentage distribution)				
Rural					
Under 10	52.3	18.1	28.3	1.3	(725)
10-12	80.4	9.9	8.7	1.0	(1,858)
13-14	85.9	6.9	6.5	0.7	(1,473)
15-17	85.7	6.6	6.0	1.7	(818)
18 and over	74.0	14.0	9.3	2.7	(150)
All*	78.8	9.8	10.4	1.0	(5,024)
Urban					
Under 10	52.3	21.2	24.5	2.0	(151)
10-12	78.9	13.4	6.7	0.9	(417)
13-14	86.5	7.2	4.9	1.4	(430)
15-17	86.3	6.8	4.3	2.6	(351)
18 and over	82.9	10.7	5.0	1.4	(140)
All*	80.5	10.6	7.3	1.6	(1,489)

Notes: * Percentages are different from Table 4.6 because only selected marriage cohorts were considered.
** includes "separated" and "not stated" categories.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

marriage is more stable than the first. Overall, the second marriage is more unstable in the rural areas although slightly more stable in the urban areas.

The duration of marriages ending in divorce is slightly

Table 4.8

Percentage of Marriages Ending in Divorce by Marriage Order and Current Age of Women and Current Residence

Marriage Order	Current Age of Women							
	15-24		25-34		35-49		15-49	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Rural								
First Marriage	13.3	(1,728)	13.4	(1,242)	11.3	(1,042)	12.8	(4,012)
Second Marriage	16.7	(186)	12.5	(176)	9.0	(24)	14.2	(386)
Urban								
First Marriage	7.7	(534)	9.7	(421)	6.1	(358)	7.9	(1,313)
Second Marriage	4.3	(46)	12.0	(50)	4.6	(43)	7.2	(139)

Note: Figures in the brackets indicate number of marriages in that category. For example, 13.3% means that 13.3 per cent first marriages out of 1,728 first marriages ended in divorce.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

longer in the case of rural women for first marriage than the second but it is longer for urban women for the second marriage than the first (Table 4.9). However, one interesting feature is that for marriage duration of less than two years, the rural divorce rate is much higher than the urban one for each marriage order. About 50 per cent of divorces occur within two years of marriage in the rural areas.

The median age at divorce following first marriage seems to be very young in both rural and urban areas (Table 4.10). Fifty per cent of the divorced women got their first divorce at about 14 years of age. It appears that most of the divorces take place within a short time span. It was shown in Table 4.7 that high proportions of those who marry very early get divorced. Ruzicka and Chowdhury (1978: 32) calculated the median age at divorce for women as 19 years in a rural sample registration area of Bangladesh. However, their estimate was based on divorces from all marriages.

Widowhood seems to occur at a fairly mature age where the expectation of life is only 46 years (BRSFM, 1977:91). Fifty per cent of the widowed women became first widowed at the age of 26. Because of this relatively late age at widowhood, few women have an opportunity to remarry.

An indicator of marital stability is the measure of time since first marriage which has been spent in the married state. The measure is included here as a characteristic of an aggregate or subgroup. Within each subgroup two quantities were calculated: (1) the accumulated amount of time spent in the married state by all women in the subgroup, using all the dates in the marriage history and (2) the total number of years since first marriage added over all women in the subgroup. Then (1) was expressed as a percentage of (2). This quantity is tabulated to current age and age at marriage in Table 4.11 for rural women and in Table 4.12 for urban women.

Overall, 93 per cent of the time since first marriage has been spent in the married state in the rural areas and 94 per cent of time in the urban areas. Age by age those age groups which had age at

Table 4.9

Duration of Marriages Ending in Divorce, Cumulative Percentage Ending Within a Given Number of Years by Marriage Order and Current Residence

Marriage Order	Per Cent of Females Whose Marriage Ended in Divorce Within a Given Duration of Marriage					N
	Less than 1 Year	Less than 2 Years	Less than 3 Years	Less than 4 Years	Less than 5 Years	
Rural						
First Marriage	20.3	55.0	58.9	69.1	75.0	(525)
Second Marriage	20.2	50.0	63.5	73.0	78.0	(74)
Urban						
First Marriage	19.4	43.5	63.0	74.1	77.8	(108)
Second Marriage	10.0	20.0	50.0	60.0	70.0	(10)

Note: N is the number of ever-married women whose first/second marriage ended in divorce.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 4.10

Median Age at Divorce and Widowhood of Ever-Married Women Whose First Marriage Ended in Divorce and Widowhood by Current Residence

	Median Age in Years			
	Rural	(N)	Urban	(N)
Women Whose First Marriages Ended in Divorce	14.1	(525)	14.5	(108)
Women Whose First Marriages Ended in Widowhood	26.2	(491)	26.9	(158)

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 4.11

The Average Percentage of Time Since First Marriage Which Has Been Spent in the Married State by Current Age, Age at First Marriage and Rural Residence

Current Age of Women	Age at First Marriage			All
	Under 10	10-14	15 and Over	
	% of time spent in the married state			
15-19	78	95	95	90
20-24	87	97	98	95
25-29	91	96	96	95
30-34	92	97	95	95
35-39	90	95	93	94
40-44	91	92	93	92
45-49	86	91	93	89
15-49	88	95	95	93

Note: $\text{Percentage of time spent in married state} = \frac{\text{Average effective duration (spent as married) in years}}{\text{Average total duration between current age and age at first marriage in years}} \times 100$

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

first marriage below ten years of age (both in rural and urban areas) have the least percentage of time spent in the married state. It is evident that for any given current age group, the percentage of time spent in the married state increased with the higher age at first marriage. Because of the high prevalence of widowhood at the advanced ages, the percentage of time spent in the married state decreased from ages about 30-34 group. Table 4.11 and Table 4.12 reveal that all ever-married women spent most of their reproductive life in the married state. It may be inferred indirectly from the two tables that

Table 4.12

The Average Percentage of Time Since First Marriage Which Has Been Spent in the Married State by Current Age, Age at First Marriage and Urban Residence

Current Age of Women	Age at First Marriage			All
	Under 10	10-14	15 and Over	
	% of time spent in the married state			
15-19	87	95	100	97
20-24	76	97	96	95
25-29	89	96	97	96
30-34	88	94	95	93
35-39	88	94	94	93
40-44	89	93	89	91
45-49	86	93	87	90
15-49	86	94	94	94

Note: Percentage of time spent in married state $= \frac{\text{Average effective duration (spent as married) in years}}{\text{Average total duration between current age and age at first marriage in years}} \times 100$

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

marital disruption does not have much effect on fertility reduction in Bangladesh.

For both rural and urban areas, one in ten first marriages were dissolved. The incidence of dissolution through widowhood increased with duration of marriage since first marriage as shown in Table 4.13 and Table 4.14. The main cause of dissolution for the shortest duration of marriage is divorce and separation. Despite increasing exposure to risk, the proportion of first marriages ending in divorce or separation did not increase with the duration of

Table 4.13

Indicators of First Marriage Continuity and Pattern of Remarriage by Duration Since First Marriage — Rural Residence

Duration Since First Marriage	Number of Ever-Married Women (N)	Present Status of Ever-Married Women		Number of Once Married Women	Current Marital Status of Only Once Married Women			Of Dissolved First Marriages % Remarried	Of All Ever-Married Women, % Married More Than Once
		Currently Married %	Not Currently Married %		SM	W	D/S		
0- 4	786	93	7	754	94	0	6	37	4
5- 9	817	94	6	747	95	1	4	66	8
10-14	908	94	6	798	95	3	2	73	12
15-19	675	94	6	577	95	4	1	76	14
20 and over	1,838	81	19	1,498	83	16	1	57	19
All	5,024	89	11	4,374	90	7	3	70	13

Note: SM = Still Married, W = Widowed, D = Divorced, S = Separated.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 4.14

Indicators of First Marriage Continuity and Pattern of Remarriage by Duration Since First Marriage — Urban Residence

Duration Since First Marriage	Number of Ever-Married Women (N)	Present Status of Ever-Married Women		Number of Once Married Women	Current Marital Status of Only Once Married Women			Of Dissolved First Marriages % Remarried	Of All Ever-Married Women, % Married More Than Once
		Currently Married %	Not Currently Married %		SM	W	D/S		
0- 4	262	93	7	254	94	0	6	33	3
5- 9	284	93	7	269	94	2	4	48	5
10-14	269	93	7	245	94	4	2	61	9
15-19	206	87	13	173	91	7	2	69	16
20 and over	468	78	22	401	80	20	0	45	14
All	1,489	88	12	1,342	89	8	2	57	10

Note: SM = Still Married, W = Widowed, D = Divorce, S = Separated.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

marriage. It implies that the relative probability of divorce or separation is high only in the initial years of marriage. Of those women whose first marriage had dissolved, seven out of ten in the rural areas and about six out of ten in the urban areas have remarried. The proportion remarried increased with marriage duration up to 19 years of marriage. Only about ten per cent of the ever-married women seem to have married more than once both in rural and urban areas.

Divorce is usually followed by remarriage. Table 4.15 shows that about seven out of ten women who were divorced had remarried within five years following divorce from the first marriage in the rural areas. In the urban areas, eight out of ten divorced women had remarried within five years following divorce from the first marriage. About 50 per cent of divorced women remarried within five years following divorce from the second marriage in the rural areas, while only one woman out of ten divorced women remarried in the urban areas. It is evident that divorces in the second marriages are very rare in the urban areas.

Widowhood is a feature of old age and social pressures exist against widows remarrying. Widows themselves do not want to remarry as they usually have great emotional attachments to their lost husbands. Instead, they derive satisfaction from looking after their own children. Only about 5 per cent of the widows remarried within one year following widowhood from their first marriage in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh (Table 4.15). Within five years after widowhood from the first marriage less than one-third of the widows in the rural areas and one-fourth of the widows in the urban areas remarried. It is evident that remarriage of widows is very rare in both rural and urban areas and its frequency is slightly less in the urban areas. However, remarriage of widows may also depend on age at widowhood.

Table 4.15

Percentage of Ever-Married Women Remarrying After Divorce and Widowhood by Marriage Order and by Interval Since Termination of Last Marriage by Current Residence

	Percentage of Women Remarrying Within				Total No. of Divorces
	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	5 Years	
Rural					
Following Divorce from					
First Marriage	32.8	46.4	54.2	65.1	(524)
Second Marriage	30.1	39.7	45.2	52.1	(73)
Urban					
Following Divorce from					
First Marriage	35.8	55.7	63.2	81.1	(106)
Second Marriage	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	(10)
Rural					
Following Widowhood from					
First Marriage	5.7	17.9	22.1	28.7	(491)
Urban					
Following Widowhood from					
First Marriage	5.0	13.2	21.5	25.9	(158)

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

4.3 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH DISSOLUTION AND REMARRIAGE

The rural/urban differentials in percentage of first marriage dissolutions and also in remarriage following dissolutions are shown in Table 4.16 and Table 4.17. Divorce, separation and

Table 4.16

Percentage Distribution of All Ever-Married Women Whose First Marriage Dissolved and Who Remarried According to Socio-Economic Characteristics — Rural Residence

Socio-Economic Characteristics	First Marriage Dissolved		Remarried After First Marriage Dissolved	
	%	No. of Ever-Married Women	%	No. of Dissolutions
Childhood Type of Residence				
Rural Background	21.5	4,937	60.9	1,059
Urban Background	16.7	84	64.2	14
Religion				
Muslim	23.1	4,164	65.2	963
Non-Muslim	12.8	860	23.6	110
Wife's Education				
No Schooling	23.9	3,895	61.9	930
Primary	13.3	862	57.4	115
Higher	7.0	200	57.1	14
Husband's Education				
No Schooling	26.5	2,790	60.6	739
Primary	14:6	1,183	71.1	173
Secondary	15.1	768	51.7	116
Higher	6.3	158	50.0	10
Husband's Occupation				
White Collar	18.9	830	57.3	157
Cultivators — Own Land	20.4	1,858	55.9	379
Share Croppers	19.6	465	61.5	91
Landless Agricultural Labourers	25.2	622	66.9	157
Unclassified and Unemployed	27.8	636	71.2	177
Others	18.3	613	58.0	112

Note: $\%\ \text{first marriage dissolved} = \frac{\text{No. of first marriage dissolved}}{\text{No. of ever-married women in that category}} \times 100$

$\%\ \text{remarried following first marriage dissolved} = \frac{\text{No. of women remarried}}{\text{No. of dissolutions in that category}} \times 100$

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

Table 4.17

Percentage Distribution of All Ever-Married Women Whose First Marriage Dissolved and Who Remarried According to Socio-Economic Characteristics — Urban Residence

Socio-Economic Characteristics	First Marriage Dissolved		Remarried After First Marriage Dissolved	
	%	No. of Ever-Married Women	%	No. of Dissolutions
Childhood Type of Residence				
Rural Background	21.4	995	55.9	213
Urban Background	15.7	492	36.4	77
Religion				
Muslim	20.9	1,263	53.8	264
Non-Muslim	11.5	226	19.2	26
Wife's Education				
No Schooling	25.7	868	50.2	223
Primary	12.9	310	50.0	40
Higher	6.2	275	52.9	17
Husband's Education				
No Schooling	4.7	3,340	54.4	158
Primary	4.0	1,510	45.9	61
Secondary	4.0	1,129	51.0	45
Higher	5.5	200	27.3	11
Husband's Occupation				
White Collar	14.5	726	52.4	105
Cultivators — Own Land	27.3	121	36.4	33
Landless Agricultural Labourers	39.1	46	33.3	18
Unclassified and Unemployed	24.5	212	71.2	52
Share Croppers	30.0	20	50.0	6
Others	20.9	364	44.7	76

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

widowhood have been aggregated because of small cell frequencies. It is apparent that the childhood place of residence rather than the current residence of respondents has influence on the extent of marriage disruption and remarriage. It is revealed that in case of marriage dissolution the influence of religion is highly noticeable. This differential is substantial both in rural and urban areas. Muslim marriages are on a contract basis and provisions exist for divorce in cases of serious marital discord. Hindu marriages, on the other hand, are based on eternal union which can not be terminated (Kapadia, 1966:168). This religious background is partly responsible for the lower dissolution of marriage among the Hindus, not taking into account the differential male mortality. The percentage of remarriage following dissolution is also very low for the non-Muslims (predominantly Hindus).

The level of education also has a differential effect on marriage dissolution and remarriage. Husband's education is negatively related to the probability of dissolution in rural areas but zero related in urban areas. A marked difference exists between rural and urban areas in husband's education, contributing towards marriage dissolution. For the same level of husband's education, the rural proportion of dissolution seems to be very high. The same is also true in the case of remarriage.

The husband's occupation appears to have a differential influence on the stability of marriage. In the rural areas, wives of the unclassified and unemployed husbands had the highest proportion of dissolution and wives of the white collar group had the lowest proportion of dissolution. In the urban areas, landless agricultural labourers had the highest proportion of dissolution and the white collar group had the lowest proportion of dissolution. In the case of remarriage, the unclassified and unemployed had the highest proportion of remarriage, and the landless agricultural labourers had the lowest proportion of remarriage in the urban areas. Those having lowest proportion of remarriage in the rural areas were cultivators who owned land.

The causes of divorce are complex and often the victims themselves do not know why their marriage broke down. Usually it is the result of the accumulated effects of many grievances. Some societies make divorce difficult by looking down upon the divorced person. In the Bangladeshi context, divorce is permissible by the Muslim religion but the society does not encourage it unless extreme grievances exist, such as cruelty or adultery. Objectively it is very difficult to go into a detailed inquiry of the causes of divorce in a survey with multiple objectives. Therefore the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey concentrated its attention on the situation of divorce rather than searching superficially for its causes. An analysis of divorce rates by economic status, education of husband and wife, religion, place of residence, number of children ever born, and age at marriage provides insights into the situation of divorce and thus helps in making inferences about the causes of divorce which may then be tested in more detailed studies.

Some of these socio-economic differentials of divorce are shown in Table 4.18. The measure used is the standardized average number of divorces in each socio-economic category. The average number of divorces by five-year age groups was used as the standard population. These rates were then applied to the number of ever-married women in each socio-economic category to get the expected number of divorces. It is evident from Table 4.18 that divorce is characterized by low economic status,[1] Muslim religion, low education of both husband and wife and low age at first marriage. Moreover, within each socio-economic category, divorce was more prominent among rural women than among urban women. McDonald and Abdurahman (1974:26) found the same type of characteristics in divorce in Indonesia which is also a predominantly Muslim developing country.

It has been observed earlier that divorce rate was very high

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[1] Economic score was obtained from such assets as boat, radio, ..., car assigning them a score according to their importance. For example, an asset like a car was given the highest score, 99. For details see Appendix E.

Table 4.18

Standardized Average Number of Divorces for Women Aged 15-49 by Economic Score, Religion, Wife's and Husband's Education, Age at Marriage and Current Residence

Socio-Economic Characteristics	Standardized Average Number of Divorces			
	Rural	N	Urban	N
Economic Score* for Assets				
Lower Class (0)	1.2	(3,484)	1.0	(735)
Medium Class (1-90)	0.7	(838)	0.4	(229)
Upper Class (91+)	0.4	(549)	0.2	(495)
Religion				
Muslim	1.2	(4,030)	1.8	(1,234)
Non-Muslim	0.2	(841)	0.1	(225)
Wife's Education				
No Schooling	1.2	(3,792)	0.9	(855)
Primary	0.7	(825)	0.3	(298)
Higher	0.3	(188)	0.2	(271)
Husband's Education				
No Schooling	1.3	(2,705)	1.0	(538)
Primary	0.8	(1,149)	0.6	(321)
Secondary	0.6	(745)	0.4	(351)
Higher	0.3	(152)	0.2	(203)
Age at First Marriage				
Under 10	3.0	(711)	2.4	(149)
10-14	0.8	(3,192)	0.5	(819)
15 and over	0.5	(954)	0.4	(491)

Note: * For details of scoring see Appendix E.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

for those women who married below ten years of age and divorces which occurred to these females may have been due to non-consummation which might also be influenced by socio-economic status. Traditional divorce rates have not changed in the rural areas of Bangladesh. It is usually found that most of the divorces in the rural areas involve the landless or very poor people who have nothing to lose financially from a divorce. It is worth mentioning that divorce is a male dominated affair in Bangladesh. It is the women who are relatively uneducated and unemployed and therefore are dependent upon their male partners for their livelihood and social status. With the increase in level of education and greater emancipation of women, the present situation may change dramatically. Carter and Glick (1970:55) observed that divorce rates in the United States increased after 1890 because of the following factors:

(1) massive urbanization;

(2) change in occupation of rural women,

(3) increase in the level of education for women,

(4) social acceptance of divorce and remarriage,

(5) wife was no more an indispensible part of the farm production team, and

(6) a rising expecation of happiness in marriage and an increasing unwillingness to tolerate an unhappy marriage.

If Bangladesh experiences these types of socio-economic changes, it is likely that divorce rates will also go up in Bangladesh.

Infertility, subfecundity and sex of children as causes of divorce may indirectly be inferred from the number of living children (male, female and both) possessed by the currently divorced women and also from the number of live births born to women aged 35-49 by number of marriages. The failure of women to have children immediately after marriage may explain the high proportion of early divorces. It is demonstrated in Table 4.19 that most of the divorced women in the younger age group did not have any living children. Sex of a child

Table 4.19

Percentage Distribution of Currently Divorced Womey by Number of Living Children, Sex, Current Age and Current Residence

Current Age	No. of Women Currently Divorced	Number of Living Children									
		All				Male			Female		
		0	1	2	3+	0	1	2+	0	1	2+
Rural											
15-24	70	75.7	18.6	4.3	1.4	87.1	11.4	1.5	85.7	11.4	2.9
25-29	29	41.4	31.0	10.3	17.3	66.0	17.0	17.0	58.6	31.0	10.4
15-49	99	65.7	22.2	6.1	6.0	80.8	13.1	6.1	77.8	17.1	5.1
Urban											
15-24	9	44.4	44.4	11.2	-	66.7	33.3	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
25-49	14	42.9	28.6	28.6	-	71.4	7.1	21.4	71.4	21.4	7.2
15-49	23	43.5	34.8	21.7	-	69.6	17.4	13.0	69.6	26.1	4.3

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

does not seem to have an important effect on divorce. A son is usually preferred but if a couple cannot have a son by their present marriage, the husband is allowed to have a second wife in the hope of getting a son. Table 4.20 shows that women who have married more than once are more likely to have had no children or only a small number of children. The average number of children ever-born decreases with the number of marriages. It seems clear that infertility and subfecundity are important among the causes of divorce in both rural and urban Bangladesh. Ruzicka and Chowdhury (1978:30) also found, in a rural sample registration area in Bangladesh, that the divorce rate was high among couples who could not have children immediately after marriage. They also found that childlessness was not the main issue and cause of divorce when both husband and wife divorced at an advanced age. These factors could not be examined in this study because information on husband's age at divorce was not collected by the survey used for this study.

Table 4.20

Average Number of Children Born to Ever-Married Women Aged 35-49 by Number of Marriages and Current Residence

	Average Number of Children Born by					
	One Marriage		Two Marriages		Three Marriages	
Rural	7.0	(1,204)	5.8	(221)	4.7	(27)
Urban	6.8	(358)	5.2	(43)	-	-

Note: Figures in the brackets show number of ever-married women.
- No woman with three marriages.

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study presents the findings of differential nuptiality patterns in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh using the 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey data. Prior to this study not much was known about Bangladeshi marriage patterns in general and differential nuptiality patterns in particular.

Bangladesh has a very young population. About 47 per cent of the population both in rural and urban areas are under 15 years of age. Only 49 per cent of the population are economically active. Males outnumber females in both rural and urban areas.

The average household size for the rural areas is 6.3 persons and for the urban areas it is 6.6 persons. The most common type of household both in rural and urban Bangladesh is husband, wife and children. Single person households are very uncommon in Bangladesh.

In both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh, marriage is almost universal, people marry at an early age, and there is a short time span during which most marriages take place. Permanent celibacy is virtually absent in Bangladesh. At any given point of time, the proportion currently married is very high in both rural and urban areas. Age at marriage has been increasing steadily during the last 25 years. The index of proportion married (Im) is also very high. The capital city (Dacca) seems to have the latest age at first marriage and slowest tempo with which marriages take place. Urban size therefore seems to influence age at marriage.

Most marriages take place before the age at menarche which

seems to indicate that the Bangladeshi marriage law is ineffective. The median age at first marriage for the urban women is 14 years and for the rural women is 13 years. The younger age cohorts have higher age at marriage which suggests that age at marriage is rising. Seventy-five per cent of the rural women in the age group 45-49 had a median age at marriage of under 15 years. It is about 18 years for the urban women.

The mean age difference between a husband and wife at marriage is ten years in both rural and urban areas. Age at first marriage of the wife is highly correlated with the age difference between a husband and wife. Women who have a younger age at marriage, have the highest difference in age at marriage between husband and wife both in rural and urban areas. Age differences between husband and wife have been stable for the last 25 years. Younger husbands marry wives not very much younger than themselves, but with an increase in age of the husband at marriage, this age difference increases rapidly. Those husbands whose age at marriage was 50 years or above have an age difference of 20 years or more.

Most of the women now living in the urban areas had spent their childhood (up to age 12) in the rural areas. Age at marriage is highest for the urban women who had an urban childhood-type of residence. Rural women with rural backgrounds have the lowest age at marriage. However, the rural-urban differential in age at marriage for childhood type of residence is not substantial.

The religious differential in age at first marriage is not high. Non-Muslims have a slightly higher age at marriage in both rural and urban areas.

Most of the ever-married women, both in rural and urban areas have had no schooling at all. Education has a substantial effect upon age at marriage. The age at marriage rises gradually with the increase in educational levels. For the same level of education, urban age at marriage is higher. Within an educational level, age at

marriage does not vary much by age. Age at marriage is highest for wives whose husbands attended up to university level and it is lowest if both husband and wife have had no schooling. Childhood type of residence and education are positively associated with age at marriage of the ever-married women.

Overall, women who worked before first marriage have a later age at marriage in both rural and urban areas. One interesting feature about the work-status of the rural women aged 20-24 is that those who worked before first marriage married earlier than those who did not work before first marriage. This is true, however, only for women who work in agriculture; the small proportion of women who work outside agriculture have higher ages at marriage than those who do not work before marriage. A rural-urban differential also exists in age at marriage by work status with rural women marrying earlier than urban women in each work status category.

Wives whose husbands are engaged in white collar occupations have the highest age at marriage, both in rural and urban areas, with the median age at marriage being higher in the urban areas than in the rural areas. Within the agricultural sector, age at marriage of the wife does not vary by whether the husband owns land or not. Within occupational groups, younger women have a higher age at marriage which may be due to the fact that they are better educated.

Age at marriage is inversely related to the number of marriages in both the rural and urban areas of Bangladesh. Only four rural women married four times but no urban women experienced more than three marriages. A greater number of rural women marry more than once and remarriage takes place soon after the previous marriage break-down. In addition, rural women face divorce up to three times whereas their urban counterparts face it no more than twice.

The percentage of women who have been widowed shows a steady rise with older marriage cohorts, a feature to be expected on the basis of accumulated risk. The extent of widowhood is higher in the

urban areas which may mean that lesser numbers of urban women remarry after a marriage is dissolved by death.

The divorce rates in the rural areas are rising but are decreasing in the urban areas. The lower the age at marriage, the higher the rates of divorce and widowhood both in the rural and urban areas. Those who were married below ten years of age face the maximum number of marriage dissolutions. The second marriage is less stable in the rural areas but it is slightly more stable in the urban areas. For rural women the duration of first marriage ending in divorce is slightly longer than for the second marriage ending in divorce, but for urban women the opposite is true; durations of second marriages ending in divorce are longer than first marriages of this kind. Divorces among second marriages are very rare in the urban areas. Remarriage following widowhood is very rare both in rural and urban areas.

In comparison to widowhood, divorce seems to occur very early in life in Bangladesh. The median age at divorce following first marriage is very young (14 years) in both rural and urban areas. Fifty per cent of the ever-married women who have been widowed become widows for the first time by the age of 26 years.

All ever-married women, both in the rural and urban areas, spend most of their reproductive lives in the married state. Therefore, it may be inferred indirectly that marital disruption does not have much effect on fertility reduction in Bangladesh.

Socio-economic factors affect both marriage dissolution and remarriage in both rural and urban Bangladesh. Women with urban backgrounds currently living in urban areas have a lower proportion of dissolution.

The influences of religion and education on marriage breakdown and remarriage are highly noticeable. Non-Muslims, predominantly Hindus, have very low proportion of marriage dissolution and

remarriage, probably due to the fact that Hindu marriages are based on an eternal union which cannot be terminated at will. Muslims have the highest proportion of dissolutions and remarriages. In the case of education, the higher the level of education, the lower the rate of marital disruption. Rural-urban differential exists at each level of education, marital disruption is higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

The husband's occupation seems to have a differential influence on the stability of marriage. In both rural and urban areas, wives of "white collar" husbands have the lowest proportion of dissolutions. Wives of "unclassified or landless agricultural labourers" have the highest rates of dissolution.

Divorce in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh is characterized by low economic status, Muslim religion, low education of both husband and wife, and low age at first marriage. Within a socio-economic category, divorce is more prominent among the rural women than among the urban women. Infertility and subfecundity are important among the causes of divorce in both rural and urban Bangladesh.

When comparing Bangladesh with her neighbour India, age at marriage in Bangladesh is lower, divorce rate is higher and the proportion single by age 20-24 is smaller (D'Souza, 1979). It seems that the age at marriage is rising slowly in both Bangladesh and India.

In a high fertility country like Bangladesh, differential nuptiality patterns have great impact on population growth. The present study has demonstrated that differentials like education, urbanization and occupation have substantial impact on age at marriage. But the prospect of rapid urbanization is not bright. The prospect of spreading formal education within a short period of time cannot also be foreseen. Non-formal education can probably be spread out within a reasonable time period. Roles of women outside the home should also be strengthened and they should be allowed to work outside the home to

earn their own livelihood. Mere legal action toward increasing age at marriage may not produce changes required for the lowering of fertility in the absence of social and economic supports. Sri Lanka and Malaysia have increased their mean age at marriage without any legal action. This was made possible by increasing the rate of literacy. China and Tunisia have raised their age at marriage through legal action and other socio-economic programmes (Duza and Baldwin, 1977:55-56).

The present study has shown that valuable information can be obtained about nuptiality patterns by using a marriage history approach in a survey. Information on age of current (last) husbands was collected only from once married women. Some other variables on which marriage history data could be collected are as follows:

(i) marriage order of the current (last) husband,

and (ii) causes of each divorce.

In addition, information on attitudes of parents and community leaders towards age at marriage might also be collected. The first variable could shed light on the nuptiality patterns of males; the second to find out the reasons for divorce and finally, to discern the views of the leaders and parents towards the age at marriage.

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SECTION-2: MARRIAGE HISTORY

201. Now I have some questions about your married life. Are you now married, widowed, divorced or separated?

MARRIED [1] WIDOWED [2] DIVORCED [3] SEPA-RATED [4]

202. Were you married only once, or more than once?

ONCE [1] MORE THAN ONCE [2]

(ASK 211; TICK APPROPRIATE BOX IN 212, AND ASK 213 OR 214)

203. In what month and year were you and your husband married?

Beng
Eng _____, _____
(MONTH) (YEAR)

D.K. [ ]

How old were you then?

_____
(RECORD BEST ESTIMATE)

204. Did you start living with your husband immediately after the marriage?

YES [1] NO [2]

205. How many month(s) after the marriage? _____ (Months)

206. Does your husband ordinarily live in your HH?

YES [1] NO [2]

207. Is he away only for the time being, or have you stopped living together for good?

AWAY FOR TIME BEING [1] STOPPED FOR GOOD [2]

208. In what month and year did you stop living together?

Beng
Eng _____, _____
(MONTH) (YEAR)

D.K. [ ]

How many months ago ____
(month)

209. Have you been married more than once?

ONCE [1] MORE THAN ONCE [2]

(SKIP TO 215)

210. How many times have you been married altogether?

_____ (NUMBER OF TIMES)

INTERVIEWER: FOR EACH PAST MARRIAGE ASK 211-214, THEN SKIP TO 215.

FORMER MARRIAGES

	211 In what month and year were you (first, ...) married?	212 How did the marriage end?	213 IF DEAD: In what month and year did he die?	214 IF DIVORCE OR SEPARATION: In what month and year did you stop living together?
1	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____	DEATH [1] DIVORCE [2] SEPARATION [3]	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____
2	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____	DEATH [1] DIVORCE [2] SEPARATION [3]	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____
3	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____	DEATH [1] DIVORCE [2] SEPARATION [3]	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ years ago_____	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____
4	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____	DEATH [1] DIVORCE [2] SEPARATION [3]	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ years ago_____	Beng Eng Month_____ Year_____ Years ago_____

Source : BFS, 1978 : Marriage History Section of the Questionnaire

APPENDIX B

DATA SET

Variable Number	Information	Card Type		Column Number		New Field Width	Cumulative Field Width
		Old	New	Old	New		
1	Rural/Urban Identification (HH)	11		5-8	1-4	04	04
2	Childhood Type of Residence (CTR)	11		15	5	01	05
3	Age (Month, Year) (CAGE)	11		16-19	6-7	02	07
4	Ever Attended School	11		22	8	01	08
5	Highest Level of School Attended (HLS)	11		23	9	01	09
6	Highest Class Passed	11		24-25	10-11	02	11
7	Can Read Newspaper, Book or Letter	11		26	12	01	12
8	Religion (RLG)	11		27	13	01	13
9	Current Marital Status (MSTAS)	21		9	14	01	14
10	No. of Times Married (TM1)	21		10	15	01	15
11	Age at Present Marriage (AGFM1)	21		11-14	16-17	02	17
12	Started Living with Husband Immediately	21		15	18	01	18
13	No. of Times Married (TM2)	21		24	19	01	19
14	No. of Times Married (TM3)	21		25	20	01	20

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

Variable Number	Information	Card Type		Column Number		New Field Width	Cumulative Field Width
		Old	New	Old	New		
15	Date of (Former) 1st Marriage (DFM1)	21		26-29	21-22	02	22
16	Outcome of Former First Marriage (OFM1)	21		30	23	01	23
17	Date of Termination of Former 1st Marriage (DTFM1)	21		31-34	24-25	02	25
18	DFM2	21		35-38	26-27	02	27
19	OFM2	21		39	28	01	28
20	DTFM2	21		40-43	29-30	02	30
21	DFM3	21		44-47	31-32	02	32
22	OFM3	21		48	33	01	33
23	DTFM3	21		49-52	34-35	02	35
24	DFM4	21		53-56	36-37	02	37
25	OFM4	21		57	38	01	38
26	DTFM4	21		58-61	39-40	02	40
27	Total Male Living (TML)	32		11-12	41	01	41
28	Total Female Living (TFL)	32		13-14	42	01	42
29	No. of Live Births (TLB)	32		15-18	43-44	02	44

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

Variable Number	Information	Card Type		Column Number		New Field Width	Cumulative Field Width
		Old	New	Old	New		
30	Present Work Status	61		9	45	01	45
31	Type of Occupation (TOP1)	61		13-14	46-47	02	47
32	Type of Occupation (TOP2)	61		29-30	48-49	02	49
33	Age of Current (Last) Husband (AGEH)	71		11-14	50-51	02	51
34	Husband Ever Attended School	71		15	52	01	52
35	Highest Level Attended	71		16	53	01	53
36	Highest Class Passed	71		17-18	54-55	02	55
37	Can Read Newspaper, Book, Letter	71		19	56	01	56
38	Childhood Type of Residence	71		20	57	01	57
39	Occupation of Husband	71		21-23	58-60	03	60
40	Husband Owns or Rents House	91		15	61	01	61
41	Husband Owns Other House	91		16	62	01	62
42	Owns Radio	91		17	63	01	63
43	Owns Boat	91		18	64	01	64
44	Owns Tea Set	91		19	65	01	65
45	Owns Car	91		20	66	01	66
46	Owns Iron	91		21	67	01	67

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

Variable Number	Information	Card Type		Column Number		New Field Width	Cumulative Field Width
		Old	New	Old	New		
47	Owns TV	91		22	68	01	68
48	Owns Bicycle	91		23	69	01	69
49	Owns Refrigerator	91		24	70	01	70
50	Owns Watch/Clock	91		25	71	01	71
51	Owns Motor Bicycle	91		26	72	01	72
52	Owns Sewing Machine	91		27	73	01	73
53	Owns Bedstead	91		28	74	01	74
54	No. of Days Ate Rice Last Week	91		29	75	01	75
55	No. of Days Ate Meat or Fish Last Week	91		30	76	01	76
56	No. of Times Had Meals Yesterday	91		31	77	01	77
57	Worked Before First Marriage (WBFM)	61		26	78	01	78
58	No. of Years Worked Before First Marriage (NYBFM)	61		27-28	79-80	02	80

APPENDIX C

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

At the Bucharest Population Conference in 1974 a decision was taken to carry out research on fertility behaviour in as many countries as possible under uniform standards. To realise this goal, the World Fertility Survey (WFS) was formed. The WFS is an international population research program, the purpose of which is to assist a large number of interested countries, particularly the developing countries, in carrying out nationally representative, internationally comparable and scientifically designed and conducted sample surveys of human fertility behaviour. It is run by the International Statistical Institute (ISI) with the collaboration of the United Nations' Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP). The UNFPA and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are the major financial supporters of the program.

In 1975 the Bangladesh Government and the WFS agreed to the participation of Bangladesh in the survey program. The Bangladesh component of the survey, known as the Bangladesh Fertility Survey (BFS) was carried out by the Population Control and Family Planning Division under the direction of a National Director. The National Director was guided by a National Co-ordination Committee and field work was carried out from mid-December 1975 to March 1976. The *First National Country Report Number One*, consisting of marginals, was planned to be published in June, 1977, but has not appeared as yet (April, 1979).

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

Bangladesh lacks a sound vital registration system. The Bangladesh Fertility Survey was designed to satisfy a number of needs in the field of population. Policy makers and population analysts in the country and abroad had seen an increased need for more information and improved knowledge about population trends and other factors concerning fertility behaviour. Moreover, the BFS, being the first national survey of a large magnitude, would contribute much to understanding and standardizing future surveys to be conducted in the country.

The Survey has provided an opportunity for up-to-date information to be collected and analysed on fertility levels and various factors affecting fertility behaviour of the ever-married Bangladeshi women between the ages eight and fifty. This would also permit international comparison to be made with similar data obtained from developed and developing countries and would also provide baseline data for the evaluation of the government sponsored vital Population Control and Family Planning Programme. The survey also obtained information on community variables such as presence of schools, mosques, railway stations, post offices and hospitals.

1.3 SAMPLE DESIGN AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

The BFS sample was based on a three-stage Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling design of non-institutional households. The sampling frame was based on the 1974 Population Census of Bangladesh. Before describing the details of the sampling, some clarification is required about census divisions. The Census Commission divided the whole of Bangladesh as follows: Census Districts, Police Stations or Charges, Unions, Villages or Blocks. For BFS sampling purposes, Bangladesh was first divided into two strata — rural and urban. Sampling for rural and urban areas was done independently. Out of 4,241 circles, 80 circles were selected on the

basis of PPS. These were called Primary Sampling Units (PSU). From each of these eighty circles, two villages were selected using the same procedure. These selected villages were called Intermediate Sampling Units (ISU). In places where villages had less than 400 households, they were amalgamated with adjacent villages before the selection of the ISU's. A complete listing of all the households (HH) in the selected ISU's was done by the BFS listers. After the household listing was completed, 30 HH's (Ultimate Sampling Unit — USU) were to be selected from each ISU using pre-determined intervals with the assumption that census HH's and BFS HH's were identical. In practice, considerable movement had occurred since the Census of 1974, which resulted in variable sample size.

In Urban Stratum 40 charges were selected as PSU's out of 708 charges and from each PSU two blocks were selected (ISU). A complete listing of households was done for the ISU's and from each ISU 20 HH's (USU) were to be selected. For the same reason as in the rural areas, variable numbers of households were selected. The sample design could be summarized as follows:

	PSU	ISU	USU
Rural	80	160	4,800
Urban	40	80	1,600
Total	120	240	6,400

In practice, 1,521 urban and 4,627 rural households were selected for interview.

1.4 QUESTIONNAIRE AND RELATED MATTERS

A questionnaire was developed incorporating the contemporary WFS core questionnaire and the abortion module which was required to be adopted as a part of the agreement. In addition to the above, modules such as children's education and work, assets and expenditure,

and nutritional status (height and weight) of the respondents were included. The questionnaire was translated into Bengali and pretested. With the experience gained in the pre-test the whole questionnaire was modified and finally prepared in Bengali for the main survey.

The final version of the questionnaire, besides household information, contained the following eleven sections:

1. Respondent's Background
2. Marriage History
3. Pregnancy History
4. Contraceptive Knowledge and Use
5. Fertility Regulation
6. Work History of Respondent
7. Current (Last) Husband's Work
8. Children's Education and Work
9. Assets and Expenditure
10. Abortion — Attitude Towards
11. Height and Weight.

The questionnaire was rather lengthy but was well designed.

1.5 INTERVIEWERS AND ACTUAL FIELD WORK

All the interviewers were female graduates and most were unmarried. Selection of the interviewers was mostly on the basis of academic qualification. They were given extensive training for six weeks.

Actual field enumeration started in mid-December 1975. The field work was divided into three phases — each phase planned to extend over approximately one month. Apart from Dacca, Bangladesh was stratified into nine survey regions. Three section leaders were appointed to administer one survey region in each phase. Each section leader had under his control three or four survey teams. The field work was completed on schedule. A Quality Control and Post

Enumeration Survey Programme was carried out in 48 per cent of sample areas.

1.6 RESPONSE RATES

In the Bangladesh Fertility Survey 95.9 per cent rural and 93.7 per cent urban households were successfully interviewed (Population Control and Family Planning Division, 1977:4). The non-response was mainly due to demolition of some households, especially in the slum areas and erosion of households in the riverine areas of Bangladesh. The response rates for individual respondents were 98.1 per cent for rural area and 97.4 per cent for urban area. Most of the non-response of the eligible respondents was due to refusal to be interviewed because of social or health reasons.

1.7 DATA PROCESSING, ANALYSIS AND FIRST COUNTRY REPORT

Each completed questionnaire was first checked in the field and then edited manually at headquarters. Editing and coding ran parallel to the field work. The data was further edited by the computer. The WFS tabulation plan was adopted with some modifications.

The first draft of the country report number one is complete and the report is being printed in London (WFS, 1978:3).

APPENDIX D

Determining the Values of Coale's Three Nuptiality Parameters: Ao, K and C where

Ao = origin or age at which most of the marriages begin to take place

K = tempo or speed with which marriages occur

C = proportion ultimately ever-married.

The fit of the standard schedules to the nuptiality of an actual cohort is an approximation. The procedure of determining Ao, K and C is as follows:

First of all, the ratios R_1, R_2, R_3 are calculated on the basis of where Ao lies. For example, if Ao lies between 10 years and 15 years, then

$$R_1 = \frac{\text{Cumulative Proportion of Ever-Married Women Aged (10-14)}}{\text{Cumulative Proportion of Ever-Married Women Aged (15-19)}}$$

$$R_2 = \frac{\text{Cumulative Proportion of Ever-Married Women Aged (15-19)}}{\text{Cumulative Proportion of Ever-Married Women Aged (20-24)}}$$

$$R_3 = \frac{\text{Cumulative Proportion of Ever-Married Women Aged (20-24)}}{\text{Cumulative Proportion of Ever-Married Women Aged (25-29)}}$$

A given value of any of these (R_1, R_2, R_3) can occur with different combinations of K and Ao, but if two ratios (e.g. R_1 and R_2) are specified, only one combination of K and Ao is possible. Hence K and Ao can be estimated by locating (through interpolation in Table 1A of Coale (1971:210)) the values that would yield the observed R_1 and R_2, or the observed R_2 and R_3. If the experience of the cohort were perfectly consistent with a transformed standard curve, the values of K and Ao, indicated by R_1 and R_2, and by R_2 and R_3, would be the same.

A perfect fit is rare; the recommended procedure is to combine R_2 with with R_1 if $R_1 > (1-R_3)$, and with R_3 if $(1-R_3) > R_1$.

The value of C is estimated by determining the person-years lived ever-married at the beginning and end of the third five-year age interval (20 and 25 if marriages begin between 10 and 15) in the transformed standard schedule with the estimated values of K and Ao.

Specifically, one determines

$$K\ Zs\left(\frac{20-Ao}{K}\right) \quad \text{and} \quad K\ Zs\left(\frac{25-Ao}{K}\right)$$

where Zs = the average number of person-years lived ever-married in a standard cohort not subject to mortality.

The difference between these two, divided by 5.0, is the proportion ever-married in a cohort subject to a curve characterized by the calculated values of Ao and K, and with an ultimate proportion ever-married of 1.0. The required estimate of C is, then,

$$(\text{Cumulative Proportion Ever-Married 20-25}) \Big/ \frac{K}{5}\left(Zs\left(\frac{20-Ao}{K}\right) - Zs\left(\frac{20-Ao}{K}\right)\right)$$

Zs values are used from Table 4 of Coale (1971:202).

In the present study Ao was arbitrarily chosen as 10 years. So, R_1, R_2 and R_3 were calculated from age-groups 10-14, 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29. Proportion ever-married was used from Appendices D.1 to D.4. After computing R_1, R_2 and R_3, R_1 was compared with R_3 to see whether R_1 was greater than or less than $(1-R_3)$. If R_1 was greater than $(1-R_3)$, R_2 was combined with R_1 and if R_1 was less than $(1-R_3)$, R_2 was combined with R_3. By the recommended procedure, K and Ao were estimated from R_2 and R_1. For example, for the rural areas:

$$R_1 = 0.162$$

$$R_2 = 0.763$$

$$R_3 = 0.980$$

$$1 - R_3 = 1 - 0.980 = 0.020 \text{ which is less than } R_1.$$

Therefore R_1 was combined with R_2. For one value of Ao a value of K (by linear interpolation from Table 1A) was found that gave the correct R_2 and an R_1 that was too small; for another value of Ao, K was found out that gave the correct R_2 and an R_1 that was too large; by linear interpolation of both K and Ao between two points values of the parameters were estimated yielded correct values of R_2 and R_1. The two set of values obtained were

K	R_1	R_2	Ao
0.43	0.162	0.770	1.0
0.55	0.162	0.700	0.5

Thus, the final estimates of Ao and K were

$$Ao = 10 + 0.95 = 10.95 \simeq 11.0$$

$$K = 0.44.$$

Estimation of C

$$Ao = 11.0, \quad k = 0.44$$

$$Zs\left(\frac{25-Ao}{K}\right) = Zs\left(\frac{25-11}{0.44}\right) = Zs(31.82)$$

$$Zs\left(\frac{20-Ao}{K}\right) = Zs\left(\frac{20-11}{0.44}\right) = Zs(20.45).$$

Now, from Table 4 of Coale (1971:202)

$$Zs(31.82) = 20.462$$

$$Zs(20.45) = 9.471.$$

Therefore $$C = (0.970) \Big/ \frac{0.44}{5} [20.462 - 9.471]$$

$$= 0.970/10.991 \times 0.088 \times 10.991$$

$$= 1.002 \simeq 1.00.$$

In a similar way, Ao, K and C were estimated for other areas.

APPENDIX D.1

Total Number of Females, Number of Females Never Married and Proportion of Females Never Married by Current Age and Rural Residence, from the Household Information

Current Age	Total Females	No. of Females Never Married	Proportion of Females Never Married
10-14	1,995	1,757	0.880
15-19	1,497	387	0.258
20-24	1,159	38	0.032
25-29	975	8	0.008
30-34	646	1	0.001
35-39	576	2	0.003
40-44	521	1	0.001
45-49	457	0	0.000
10-49	7,826	2,194	0.280

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

APPENDIX D.2

Total Number of Females, Number of Females Never Married and Proportion of Females Never Married by Current Age and Urban Residence, from the Household Information

Current Age	Total Females	No. of Females Never Married	Proportion of Females Never Married
10-14	709	657	0.926
15-19	508	209	0.411
20-24	424	43	0.101
25-29	312	10	0.032
30-34	206	2	0.009
35-39	178	1	0.005
40-44	151	1	0.006
45-49	132	0	0.000
10-49	2,620	923	0.352

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

APPENDIX D.3

Total Number of Males, Number of Males Never Married and Proportion of Males Never Married by Current Age and Rural Residence, from the Household Information

Current Age	Total Males	No. of Males Never Narried	Proportion of Males Never Married
10-14	2,103	2,080	0.989
15-19	1,373	1,261	0.918
20-24	1,110	664	0.598
25-29	913	185	0.202
30-34	713	31	0.043
35-39	724	10	0.013
40-44	541	8	0.014
45-49	464	4	0.008
10-49	7,941	4,243	0.534

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

APPENDIX D.4

Total Number of Males, Number of Males Never Married and Proportion of Males Never Married by Current Age and Urban Residence, from the Household Information

Current Age	Total Males	No. of Males Never Married	Proportion of Males Never Married
10-14	699	692	0.989
15-19	472	458	0.970
20-24	458	329	0.718
25-29	370	116	0.313
30-34	305	36	0.118
35-39	265	7	0.026
40-44	163	2	0.012
45-49	158	5	0.031
10-49	2,890	1,645	0.569

Source: 1976 Bangladesh Fertility Survey.

APPENDIX E

SCORES FOR ECONOMIC STATUS

The scores for economic status were obtained by the procedure suggested by Nam (1968:490). It is as follows: the scores were derived by computing a cumulative percentage distribution of the rural assets such as boat, radio, ..., car. The assets were first arranged in ascending order according to arbitrary importance, the preceding one having lower importance. The score assigned to each asset was the mid-point of the cumulative percentage interval for the asset in the rural area. For example, an asset like a car was distributed between the 99th and 100th percentiles. A score of 99 was thus assigned to a car. Motor cycles, televisions, refrigerators and cars were considered as a single item, possession of one or all of these items scored one score. The same scores were assigned to both rural and urban areas. According to the distribution of the scores, 71 per cent of rural and 51 per cent of urban women belonged to the category "no asset". Those with a score of 1-90 represented 17 per cent in the rural areas and 16 per cent in the urban areas. The remaining belonged to the top category (91+).