

Economic Independency of Women and Separation Rate in Muslim Marriages in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Women's participation in workplace and their economic independence in Bangladesh have been increasing since its independence. The key objective of this research is to show the relations between women's economic independence and separation in Muslim marriage in Bangladesh. This paper argues that although there is increase in women's economic independence, because of conflicts in traditional and modern values and existence of children in families, the separation rate has increased more than the divorce rate in Bangladesh. In order to explain this argument, this research employs both qualitative and descriptive methods of data collection and analysis to measure the relationship between women's economic independence and separation rate. Finally, this research suggests that it is necessary to create a balance between existing social structure, economic reality, and individual's needs to strengthen and enrich marital life. Otherwise, it can be said that the rate of separation and divorce in Bangladesh will be continuously increasing that will help making a new family structure in the country.

Keywords: Empowerment, Marriage, Separation, Economic independency, Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

As with the modernization process, a single income is no longer sufficient to maintain a family in Bangladesh, there has been a sharp increase in the number of women in the workplace of Bangladesh over the past few decades (Khan, 2004). There is a sudden tendency of having dual-career married partners with young children combined with the sudden change in the traditional family structure in our country. This results in substantial family responsibilities for both men and women (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). Therefore, these juggling liabilities of workplace, household, and child-care are now causing more family conflicts than before (Razak, Yunus&Nasurdin, 2011). According to Khan, financial hardship joined with more educational and employment facilities for women, western influenced media, and especially the development of individualism have created a major change in the situation of marriage in Bangladesh. Sudden increase in women's participation in workplace has disrupted the traditional balance of norms and values in the country (2004). Not all the conflicts result in divorce. Having a traditional mentality compels women to think twice before breaking a marriage in Bangladesh, unlike the women living in the developed countries (World Divorce Statistics). The Program Manager of Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee/Bangladesh Resources Across Communities BRAC Education Program has observed that USA and European countries face more divorces as the individual freedom is given priority over society and children. Contrary to that, Asian or African nations give priority to familial and social opinions (Billah, 2013). So, they are reluctant to file divorce. Instead, women choose to get separated and compromise until and unless it she does not have other option. In addition, in an article named "Children's Reactions to Parental Separation and Divorce", Lee and Bax stated that children who have experienced their parents' divorce display a range of emotional and behavioral reactions. Therefore, parents always think about the consequences of divorce and the impact on their children (2000). There is a strong relationship between the intense marital conflict and children's poor adjustment. Children suffer from more psychological problems after the divorce of their parents (Burke, McIntosh, Gridley, 2009). In Bangladesh, parents care about their children more than their marital happiness. So, the presence of children in a family has a huge contribution in the decision of getting divorced. Usually, couples who have children are reluctant to get divorced and try to compromise with their partners by only being separated.

As stated in the meaning of Divorce and Separation in Bangladesh, separation means that husband and wife are living separate and apart, whether under the same roof or otherwise. It may occur by mutual consent or by one of them leaving or being expelled from home. In Bangladesh, it often happens that the husband and the wife are still living in the same residence, but consider separated from each other as they do not have any physical and mental intimacy. On the other hand, divorce means the couples will no longer stay together. Divorce is the only legal way for terminating a marriage



having its wide impact for a long sometimes even for life of not only the concern parties but the people's connected with the immediate-past family (Nuruzzaman, 2003).

The problem discussed in this paper is how women's economic independence is contributing to the increment of separation rate in Bangladesh. As women are facing conflict in their traditional and modern values and also have to take care of their children at the same time, women are the most sufferer of the separation issue. This paper, it will be helpful creating awareness in order to create a proper balance between existing social structure, economic reality, and individual's needs. Thus, the key objective of this research is to identify the connection between women's economic independence and increase of separation in Bangladesh. This paper argues that although there is increase in women's economic freedom, because of conflicts of traditional and modern values and existence of children, the separation rate has increased more than the divorce rate in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi researcher, it is easier for me to conduct the interviews, so I am well equipped to do this research. Although maximum literatures have shown that women' participation in the economic sectors is contributing to increasing the divorce rate in Bangladesh, interviews and present scenario shows the result that people choose separation over divorce thinking about traditional values and mental pressure on children.

2. Literature Review

Ahmed (1987) in a study of socio-economic determinants of divorce in Bangladesh based on data collected from ever-married women aged 15-49 by the 1975 Bangladesh Fertility Survey, finds divorce to have a strong inverse relation with education. Moreover, it is related to current and childhood residence, regional origin, and age at marriage. It is more common among illiterates, Muslims, and rural and workingwomen.

Shaikh (1998) has studied social and demographic correlates of divorce in rural Bangladesh by using data from the Demographic Surveillance System (DSS) for the region Matlab for the period 1974-1993. His study finds age, education, and fertility to be important factors of divorce. His findings show that the number of divorce initiated by males declined during the period of 1975-1992, while the overall divorce rate was on the increase among younger couples in the rural Matlab. He also finds that a continuously declining rate of the median age at divorce for husbands has prevailed during the period, whereas a continuous increase in the median age at divorce for wives was noticeable in this period.

Another study by Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) finds underage of wife for marriage, complaints of the husband's family members to the husband against the wife, physical and sexual incapability of spouses, dowry, mistrust related to marital relationships between spouses, and economic incapability of husband to be some of the significant reasons of divorce (RDRS, 1990). Thus, the study finds age, quality of marital relations, and physical and economic factors causally related to divorce.

Bhuiya et al (2005) in a study of divorced, abandoned and widowed women in a rural area of Matlab, Bangladesh, find second marriage and dissertation by husband, non-fulfillment of the claim for dowries, physical and sexual abuses of the wives as the prevalent reasons for the marital disruption of the rural women.

Their study shows that divorced women faced a lack of social support at the time of marriage termination and financial inability in their post-divorce life. Divorced women's lack of sources of regular income to support themselves and their children, heavy dependence on their parents and brothers, total responsibility for rearing the children, feeling of being guardian less and support-less, public ridicule, and insecurity and difficulty in the marriage of their grown-up daughters were found to be the main problems faced by divorced women in their post-divorce life. Thus, the study reveals that divorce causes severe economic, social and psychological consequences for women in Bangladesh, as it does for women elsewhere in the world.

Smith (1997), in a study of the growth of divorce in Great Britain, finds that in the post-war period, legislative changes had a temporary impact on the increase of divorce. His study includes data from England, Wales, and Scotland. His study finds many other factors significantly related to the growth of divorce in Great Britain, such as women's increased opportunity for labour force participation and technological development in fertility control. According to his study, welfare facilities in the post-divorce life and difference in income of spouses had no role in the growth of divorce (Smith, 1997) South and Spitz (1986) in a study of determinants of divorce over the life course in

America based on longitudinal data identifies the wife's labour force participation and the husband's employment and urban residence seem to influence the probability of divorce, irrespective of the stage in the marital life course. At the same time, the effect of the wife's education appears to decrease the probability of divorce in the early marital duration but to increase in the later duration.

Kalmijn and Uunk (2007) in a study of social consequences of divorce in the light of stigmatization find that in regions where there is more disapproval of divorce, women experience a greater decline in contacts with friends and relatives after divorce, both men and women experience a greater reduction in neighborhood contacts. They found that the stigmatization effect is primarily present for divorcees who did not move after divorce.

Uunk (2004) investigates institutional effects on the economic consequences of divorce for women in the European Union by using longitudinal data from the European Community Household Panel survey from 1994-2000. According to his study, welfare state arrangements have a strong impact on the economic consequences of divorce. A country's level of social welfare and public childcare provision reduces negative economic effects of divorce for women (Uunk, 2004). Women's reduced economic positions at divorce depend on the state's basic arrangements affecting women's income position, particular role of the state attached to it, the welfare provisions, the level of social inequality, and the public encouragement of female employment. A study was done by Moinuddin (2002) on the current position of divorced and separated Muslim women of two-gram panchayats in two districts of West Bengal finds extramarital relationships of husbands, poor economic conditions of both parties and family quarrels as the most prominent reasons of divorce. Other reasons for divorce like dowry issues, infertility, second marriages, and reestablishment of relationship with the first wife were also present.

LubnaTabassum in "Marital Instability in Dhaka, Bangladesh with Extraordinary Reference to Dual Earner Couples (2004)," concentrates on how women's financial freedom gives birth to marital conflicts in Bangladesh. Financial hardship joined with more educational and employment facilities for women, western influenced media, and especially the development of individualism have created a major change in the situation of marriage in Dhaka. As indicated by her, the present financial strain has forced numerous housewives to work outside the home. The employment of women, which is relatively a new phenomenon, has upset the traditional stability of norms and values. So, wives' entries into the wage economy have caused problems on their marital relationships. In addition, women's increasing independence and autonomy due to their involvement in the job market contribute towards the increasing divorce rates.

In "The Social Sanction of Divorce: Who Ultimately Pay the Social Costs of Its Adverse Effects?"(2013), Md. MizanurRahman, Dr. Vincentas Rolandas Giedraitis, and Tahmina Akhtar have demonstrated the effects of divorce on individuals, family, and society. They have given the definitions and functions of marriage and divorce. Marriage has many basic and social functions, but divorce has a diverse social impact on the divorcees that are both positive and negative. The main area for conducting the research is Sylhet In the year 2007. Divorce does not have enough attention from the research community in Bangladesh yet, and that is the sole purpose of this research-to explores the adverse effects of divorce. Both marriage and divorce recognize the changing patterns of the most important institutions, like family and marriage. In this research, the authors have applied 'Case Study' as method and 'Interview and observation' as data collection techniques with a sample of twenty divorced women. The divorce rate is steadily increasing, and its social effects are many and multi-dimensional. These are resulted from the exercise of modern norms and values, professional and occupational diversity, reconstitution of nuclear family breaking down the joint family, poverty. Women are the main victims who carry most of the severe consequences of divorce and ultimately pay most of the costs of its adverse effects.

In a paper "People's Reasons for Divorcing: Gender, Social Class, the Life Course, and Adjustment" by Paul R. Amato and Denise Previti (2003), 208 people's responses on "why their marriages ended in divorce" were assembled. The participants reported unfaithfulness as a common cause of divorce. Also, incompatibilities, growing apart were the other answers. People's specific reasons for divorcing varied with social class, gender, life course variables such as age at marriage, duration of the marriage, and having children, etc.

In "Children's reactions to parental separation and divorce" by Katherine M Lee and Karen A, Bax (2000), the mental condition of children after their parents get divorced is described. For the majority of children who experience the divorce of their parents' marriage, the effects are modest and relatively short-lived. Within two years of a separation, the majority

of parents regain their equilibrium, establish polite but distant communication with their ex-partner, and their children, in turn, adapt to the new living arrangements. Nevertheless, most children report painful feelings about their parents' divorce and a significant minority of children suffer extended and prolonged symptomatology related to parental divorce that may include both internalizing and externalizing problems. They also stated that children who have experienced their parents' divorce display a range of emotional and behavioral reactions in the months following the event. Following their parents' separation, children may regress, display anxiety and depressive symptoms, appear more irritable, demanding and noncompliant, and experience problems in social relationships and school performance.

According to "Parenting after Separation" by Susie Burke, Jennifer McIntosh and Heather Gridley (2009), the children are greatly affected by the divorce of their parents. They demonstrated the relationship between intense marital conflict and children's poor adjustment. Children are found to have more psychological problems when their parents are in conflict, either during marriage or following divorce. Also, children who are present in the marital conflict have a higher risk of facing psychological and behavioral problems. Separation and divorce can protect children from ongoing exposure to within-marriage conflict. Side by side, it exposes children increase to interparental conflict, particularly during the transition from marriage to separation.

In a newspaper "The Financial Express," an article "Rising Divorce Rate a Disquieting Social Trend" (2007), Masum Billah explained that extra marital relationship, family influence, economic growth and wider area of education are the main reasons of rising divorce rate. Women are now more educated, and their participation has also increased in the workplace. Also, a lot of abused wives now decide to leave their husbands, feeling that they no longer need someone 'stronger' to watch over them.

The existing literatures have used the terms 'divorce' and 'separation' simultaneously without addressing the prime difference between these two events. However, as discussed in this paper, not only the definitions of divorce and separation vary, but also the reasons and impacts of these two events on the family lives are very different. Similarly, the literatures have focused on the adverse effects of divorce in children, work, and family, social and individual life. In this paper, the reasons and effects of separation and divorce are discussed separately.

In a newspaper "The Financial Express," an article The Daily Star (2018), Nahela Nowshin explained that there are some statistics and data found of the divorce rate in Bangladesh. Also, the percentage of women who initiated divorce in the past couple of years is found. On the other hand, there is no single literature that shows the separation rate in Bangladesh over the past few years. The reason behind it is that in Bangladesh, there are very few legal separations among couples. It means most of the couple does not file their separations following the state laws and policies. Thus, no evidence and data contain the number of separation. That is why, because of lack of existing data on separation, my argument by using primary interview and case study as data.

Most of the literatures have focused on how women's economic independence contributed to increased number of divorce. No papers in Bangladeshi context directly connect women's economic independence to separation. The issue of work-family conflict is a matter of large-scale discussion, but mostly in the western context (Carnicer, Sanchez, Perez, & Jimenez, 2004; Karatepe&Baddar, 2006). On the Asian countries, this topic is limitedly discussed (Kim & Ling, 2001; Lo, Stone & Ng, 2003). In my paper, I will review the literatures on divorce then I will show that although the rate of divorce is increasing day by day, in Bangladesh, people are choosing to be separated for several reasons. Lack of papers will help me create a greater impact on the existing literature on this important phenomenon.

In Bangladesh, even if couples get a divorce, most of the time, they become separated for an extended period of time before their divorce, which is evident in my primary source of data. They try to have a compromise so that they can ignore the possibility of getting divorce. Existing literatures did not explain this transitive time between separation and divorce. This research is a significant one to fulfill the knowledge by explaining to what extent a husband and wife are ready to compromise and be separated, and when they take the decision of divorce.

3. Study Context

Women empowerment is a dynamic process that has been quantified measured and described in a variety of ways. At this moment, the empowerment of Bangladesh has now become a familiar and much-used term, because most of the women in Bangladesh (Basically Muslim married women) are employed in a different sector.

Marriage is the very foundation of civil society, and no part of the laws and institutions of a country can be more important to its subjects than those which regulate the manner and condition of forming and if necessary of dissolving the marriage contract (Westbury, 1868). In Bangladesh, marriage, separation, divorce, and other related issues are disposed with different law. But how much, these laws are sufficient to provide a proper solution under this question. In Bangladesh women opportunities and participation in public space, different working sector has seen improvements in recent decades. Progress has been made in closing the gender gap among the populations (Khatun, 2015). Bangladesh mention has the growth of the readymade garments industry and other governmental and Non-governmental sectors women participation increase day by day, along with their marital separation and divorce rate also increased day by day. The rate of people getting divorced and living separately from their spouses almost doubled over the decade, according to the report of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, 2015).

Marriage registrars, psychologist, loss of family bonds and values, polygamy and extra-marital affairs, virtual word and economic sufficiency of women opting out of marriages following mental and physical torture of reasons for increasing divorces and separations.

In 2006, the crude rate of divorce was 0.6 percent one thousand of the population and this increased to 1.1 in 2016 while the rate of separation also rose to 0.6 from 0.2 during the same period (BBS, 2015). The report finds that the education level of women appear to be associated with the crude divorce and separation rate. According to the BBS, some of the most common reasons behind decisions of separation and divorce stem from inability to maintaining a conjugal failure in providing subsistence, immoral practices, incurable diseases, physical assault, dowry, educational status, dowry, premature marriages, infertility, and polygamy.

4. Objectives

This study was conducted through the following objective-

1. To find out the present condition of marital among Bangladeshi Muslim Women
2. To explore the economic independency and causes of divorce and separation of Bangladeshi Muslim Women.

5. Methodology of Paper

This paper was constructed by qualitative and quantitative study. Quantitative study was conducted by survey, and qualitative study was followed by case study (See Appendix-1), in-depth study of secondary sources, basically literature review. The literature explored for the paper includes different government and non-government reports, websites, published official statistics, newspapers, etc.

It is important to note that, other than these essential questions (Bangladeshi people's marital views); there were extra and follow-up questions as well. As Bangladeshi people are conservative about their marital issues, the interview type was semi-structured. The wordings were flexible based on how much the interviewees wanted to share and comfortable. The question order was set in a way, then it started with broad questions (e.g., occupations of both) and moved on to more specific and sensitive questions.

For the interviews and the case study, the sources were selected based on a particular age range, religion, education level, and marital status. The age range is from 20-50, yet there is one exception, which is the child. There are reasons for considering the age of 50 as a maximum because usually, people above 50 do not think of divorce and separation even if they are not in a successful marriage. They think that they have endured the problems for such long time, there is no point of leaving each other, and they also think about their children. So, the data collection process would have been hard to find such participants, especially in Bangladesh. In addition, when the idea of marriage comes, western countries consider same-sex marriage. However, in Bangladesh, as it is uncommon, I have taken the sample of people in marital status. Finally, the law and provisions for divorce stated in the Muslim Family Law Ordinance, 1961, is the only codified law in Bangladesh dealing with the Muslims only. For the peoples of other religion like Christian and Buddhists there are different rules and laws, but for the Hindus still, there is no codified law in Bangladesh (Divorce and Divorce Law in Bangladesh). So, I have taken the Muslim community in data collection.

6. Summary of the findings

Being educated and financially independent, at present, wives are more aware of their rights unlike those wives who are financially dependent on their husbands. As a consequence of being a modern wife, if there are any marital conflicts that are causing unhappy and unhealthy relationship with her husband, she at least considers the option of living alone. However, most of the cases, this consideration of being single cannot be fully implemented for two reasons. From this study, it is found that having traditional conservative values about divorce since their childhood are stopping them to initiate divorce in the first place. Wives, nevertheless, try to manage and compromise for long time thinking about society's perception before initiating a divorce. Additionally, if the married couple has children, they give their children the utmost priority and do not immediately initiate divorce thinking about their child's future. Therefore, the separation rate is relatively higher than the divorce rate in Bangladesh.

7. Discussion

The results show that separation and divorce can happen because of many reasons. Some of the main reasons are extra marital relationship, drinking or drug problem, incompatibility, physical and mental abuse etc (United States Department of Health Services). As stated in an article titled "Dual Career Couples in Bangladesh: Exploring the Challenges", nowadays in those marriage where husband and wife both works, they are facing acute challenges despite having financial benefits, (Dribe&Stanfors 2010) The most frequently cited problems by dual-career couples are work-family conflict (Duxbury & Higgins, 2003), division of labour for household activities and marital problems (Yogev& Brett, 1985) childcare and career advancement (Neault&Pickerell 2005). Findings prove that women are now more educated (70.09, UNESCO-2017), and their participation has also increased in the workplace. Also, a lot of abused wives now decide to leave their husbands, feeling that they no longer need someone 'stronger' to watch over them. Women's increasing independence and autonomy due to their involvement in the job market contribute towards the increasing divorce rates. From January 2012 to December 2012, a total of 16,453 divorce cases were filed. Of these, 11,203 were filed by women and the rest 4,759 by men, according to media reports (Different types Bangladesh newspaper). Divorce does not have enough attention from the research community in Bangladesh yet, but findings show that women are the main victims who carry most of the severe consequences of divorce and ultimately pay most of the costs of its adverse effects. Findings also prove that most children report painful feelings about their parents' divorce. Children who have experienced their parents' divorce display a range of emotional and behavioral reactions in the months following the divorce. Additional findings also suggest that the longer the duration of marriage is lesser, the possibility of getting divorce (Appendix 01, case study).

According to Brennan, Barnett, and Gareis, a working couple's marital happiness depends on the working time of the female (2001). According to the interview from a separated couple supports this view. The wife indicated the reason of the separation as 'husband being inconsiderate about the wife's job.' She told that she had to come from her office at 9 pm every five days a week as she has used to work in a renowned private bank in Bangladesh, and her husband and the in-laws were not at all supportive when they were married. The husband on that issue argues that he never told her to resign from her job; rather she wanted her take another job where she does not have to work for so long and can give enough time to her families as well. As women's employment and career are considered as violating the values and norms revolving around the female role, it causes more conflict and less marital happiness (Yogev, 1981). The husband and wife informed that they were together for almost seven and a half years, where finally they took the decision to separate. 'Why separation, why not divorce' they both answered the question by saying that they are worried about their two children who are only three and one and half years old respectively. Both of them said that they love their children and so do not want to create any mental harm to their children by getting divorced. In Bangladesh, divorce rate is strongly associated with childlessness, it is noteworthy that having a child is what keeping them away from getting divorced, and having child is the foremost reason of this couple for choosing separation.

As for the second divorced couple, they were married for four years. The main reason of their divorce is that the husband had an extramarital relationship. After being separated for one and a half years, the wife finally made decision of initiating the divorce. Professor Moniruzzaman of Dhaka University says that newspaper reports suggest that the officials of Dhaka City Corporation' 10 zonal offices said that 80% of the divorces are filed by the wives, and the major reason behind is their husbands' extramarital relationships (The Financial Express, 2013). In addition, women are now more exposed to western cultures for the past couple of years, so a sense of individualism is growing in them. The traditional values of

the East look at this perception of individualism as 'superior' to the age-old values (Hossain, 2013). It is interesting to point out that husbands' extramarital relationship has been an age old trend. However, previously, traditional women used to feel obliged to keep this a secret to save her husband's reputation. That is why; traditional women did not file divorce as she did not want to threaten her marriage. Nevertheless, modern women are more assertive, straightforward, and aware of their self-esteem (2013). As she is already confident about her identity, instead of questioning about her own competence as a wife and another wife files a divorce (Hossain, 2013).

It is a noteworthy detail that, the wife from whom I have taken the interview, she tried not to give divorce in the first place. The couple was separated for one and half years, and as she did not have any other choice, she filed a divorce. Compared to the previous couple, this couple did not have any children.

In Bangladesh, husbands and wives give more priority to their children and traditional values than their own happiness. Although at this moment, Bangladeshi women are more educated, financially independent there is a rooted regular value in them. They do not initiate divorce right after they become independent, rather they want to compromise. That is why; slightly disagree with the existing literatures that suggest that women's economic independence is increasing the rate of divorce in Bangladesh. So conclude that the separation rate is increasing more than the divorce rate.

8. Limitation of this Research

This research is only conducted within the Muslim community of the Bangladesh, but I have not used any variable related to religious policies and laws of divorce. There are different types of Talaq in Islam that focuses on different practices, laws, and Islamic teachings on this issue. This paper major concern was not to discover the religious perspective; it's only to look from the social perspective of divorce in Bangladesh. So, my variables are more related to socio-economic aspects of Divorce. However, relating the issue with Islamic policies might give a more comprehensive knowledge on this issue to the future researchers.

Primary sample for interview and case study only include people from Chittagong division of Bangladesh. Women in Chittagong are still lagging behind in workplaces because of fewer opportunities compared to the women residing in the capital city Dhaka. As Dhaka is more modernized and has better financial opportunities for both men and women, the couples living there might have different mentality on divorce and separation. My research does not include any person outside Chittagong because of time constraint and budget. Future researchers can engage people from all over Bangladesh to get diverse opinions on this issue.

9. Conclusion

Increase in women's economic independence does not result in the rising rate of divorce, but it contributes to the rising rate of separation in Bangladesh. Having conflicting traditional and modern values and existence of children in families are the root causes of separation in Bangladesh. As there are no literature about separation rate of Bangladesh, future researches should work on gathering data on separation rate from all divisions and social classes of Bangladesh. Finally, it is reasonable to conclude that more research work on separation rate can create awareness to change the shape of society's perception towards the divorced and separated couple. A balanced society of traditional and modern values can decrease the divorce and separate rate, and establish stability in marriage in Bangladesh.

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Appendix -01: Case Study

I have chosen the case study method for data collection using my personal connection. The participant, who wants to remain as anonymous, is a 35 years old woman. It has been 15 years that she is married to her husband, and they have 3 kids. She is a lecturer in a private university and economically independent. Although her husband has a drinking problem and often comes late in the house, she never protested against it as there are kids in the house. However, for 3years, she has been started to realize that this is not the definition of marriage. She has discussed it about her family, and colleagues and everyone told her to give divorce to her husband. However, she still thinks about how their child would react when their father will leave separately. She thinks that it is too late to take an action, although she does not feel any intimacy as her husband is morally very different than her. So, thinking about their children and traditions of Chittagong, she and her husband are living separately.

Another secondary case study I got is about a woman named Ayesha Parvin, who is a successful vocational manager. She spent years trying to do an abusive marriage work. When she took the decision of initiating the divorce, her parents did not give her any support saying, "What kind of woman are you, if you can't keep your man straight? Why can't you be like other women who are trying to keep their marriage work?" She felt like it her sole responsibility to make her marriage work. From a survey of 22,000 women, it is found that four in five women had experienced domestic abuse like Ayesha. Here, the independent variable is domestic violence, and dependent variable is divorce. Also, she does not have any child, and now she is happy to be living as a single independent woman (BBC News).

I am using comparative method to analyze these two case studies. Firstly, women's greater economic independence and education is driving the divorce trend in Bangladesh (Ain o Shalish Kendra). However, I disagree with the argument, as in this case, I would not point out the reason of the divorce as Ayesha's economic independence; rather the domestic violence is the key reason of getting a divorce. On the other hand, in the 1st case study, the woman who is a lecturer and financially way more independent than Ayesha has not initiated divorce. The reason of her divorce is incompatibility and husband's drinking problem.

Secondly, as evident in the 1st case study, women still try to compromise to be with her husband's as Bangladeshi women still possess traditional values from their childhood. Khan points this out saying even educated girls in urban Dhaka are still trained by their mothers to be submissive and taught the twin virtues of patience and sacrifice, as marriage is viewed as the main goal of a Bangladeshi woman's life. Girls also learn to accept their inferior status in the society and to fit into socially acceptable roles (2004). However, as both of the women are now more educated and financially independent, they understand that they can no longer accept the abusive relationship. So, 1st woman chose separation, and the 2nd chose divorce.

Finally, there is also a big difference in these two case studies, which is the existence of children. As the 2nd woman does not have any children, she did not have to think about the impact of her divorce on her child as the 1st woman. The 1st woman thinks about the psychological problems her child would go through if the parents start living apart. So, the couples who have children are more likely to try to compromise.