

Estimation of Nuptiality and its Analysis from the Census Data of Pakistan

by

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The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance promulgated by the Pakistan Government in March 1961 requires the registration of all Muslim marriages with the nominated persons. Such registration is made practicable by the introduction of the "Basic Democracy" system of government on the local level. Before the introduction of this system, there was no all-embracing civil organization for such registration, though Muslim marriages were generally recorded by the religious registrars such as Qazis, Mosque Imams, etc. No private or government organization ever tried to collect information on marriages from which age at marriage could be estimated. Data under the new provision are not yet available; even if available, one cannot immediately measure their reliability.

I. METHOD OF COMPUTATION OF MEAN MARRIAGE AGE, MARRIAGE FREQUENCIES AND MARRIAGE PROBABILITIES

In the absence of marriage statistics, mean age, marriage frequencies and probabilities can be computed from census tabulations by age and conjugal condition by a method developed by John Hajnal [2]¹. This method gives the mean age at first marriage for all males or females in a synthetic censal cohort who marry for the first time before a certain advanced age, say 50 years. It also gives marriage frequencies and marriage probabilities for such a population.

Method of Computation of Mean Age at Marriages by Hajnal's Method: If marriage rates had remained unchanged, the proportion ever married in successive age groups in a closed population (not affected by migration) would be identical with the proportions attained in a "cohort" of persons from birth through successive ages—provided that there were no differences in death rates at given ages between married and unmarried persons. On these conditions, a 'synthetic cohort' can be constructed from observations on a cross section of the population at a particular moment. Such a procedure involves three assumptions: 1) Although the population of Pakistan was strongly affected by migration at the time of Partition, this was a movement of families so that its age structure is comparable to that of a closed population; 2) the nature and magnitude of differential mortality by marital status in Pakistan is unknown. It is assumed

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¹ See also, [1].

that it would have only a minor effect on indices obtained by the method proposed by Hajnal. This factor must be ignored here—as is usual in application of this technique; 3) An adjustment will be made to take account of deviations from the initial assumption of constancy in marriage rates in the decade prior to 1961 Census when comparable data for the area comprising Pakistan are available. (This adjustment is described below).

The method for estimating the mean age at marriage consists in finding the total number of years lived in the single state by a generation from birth to age 50 years and dividing this total by the number who have been removed by marriage from a no-mortality cohort. The average number of single years lived is also the average age at first marriage and is described as the "singulate meanage at marriage".

The formula used for deriving the mean age at marriage from proportions single for Pakistan is:

$$\bar{X} = d + \frac{\sum_{x=d}^D n_s s_x - (D-d) s_D}{1-s_D}$$

x = singulate mean age at marriage

$n_s s_x = \frac{n S_x}{n P_x}$ Where $n S_x$ and $n P_x$ are the number of singles and total population between the ages x to $x + n$; and $n_s s_x$ is proportion in age group x to $x + n$.

d = earliest age at which marriage takes place².

D = maximum age (which in our case is 50 years)

s_D = proportion single at exact age D . (As the population is given in five years age group, this was estimated by taking average and is equal to $\frac{s_{45}^s + s_{50}^s}{2}$)

Modification of Hajnal's Technique: In the method given above, it is assumed that cross-sectional marital status data in a census are representative of the marital experience of a cohort passing through life with no mortality and no migration. If the pattern of marriage is changing as in Pakistan, the method originally given by Hajnal requires some modification. Because of the change in marriage rates, the proportion single in a census cannot be used to represent the performance of a cohort over time. As the age distribution is usually tabulated

² In the censuses of 1921 to 1951, data on marital status were tabulated from the age 'zero'. This was due to common pattern of child marriage. In the 1961 Census, the earliest age was taken as 10. Some child marriages may still be prevalent, but its proportion is so small that it would not effect the comparable results on age at marriage. For earlier censuses, $d=0$ and for 1961 calculation, its value is 10.

in five-year groups and if also census data are available for every five years, another synthetic intercensal cohort can be made assuming that differential mortality by marital status is negligible. But in Pakistan the census is taken every decade and only the censuses of 1951 and 1961, taken since independence, are available. Because of the ten-year interval, proportions single for 1956 were estimated by taking the average of those given in 1951 and 1961 Censuses.

The probability of remaining single between the years 1956 and 1961 is calculated for each age group, and is the inverse ratio of the proportion single in 1956 and the proportions single for the same cohort (five years older) in 1961. The probabilities of remaining single are then applied successively to a hypothetical cohort of one thousand persons to determine the proportions single at each age as the cohort moves through time.

The above method in mathematical form can, thus, be illustrated:

$${}_5s_x(1956) = \frac{{}_5s_x(1951) + {}_5s_x(1961)}{2}$$

where ${}_x s_5$ is proportions single in age group x to $x + 5$.

$${}_5s'_x(1956) = \frac{{}_5s_{x+5}(1961)}{{}_5s_x(1956)}$$

The probability of remaining single for persons aged x to $x + 5$ in 1956 for the next five years.

These probabilities are then applied to a cohort of one thousand persons to get the 'synthetic intercensal cohort' in five years age group having only the experience of the five years. Applying formula given above³, we get the mean age at marriage for the 1956-61 synthetic cohort (Table I).

Marriage Frequencies and Probabilities: The number of marriage in a no-mortality cohort can be found from proportions single by the process of differencing at each age. The formula can be interpreted as follows:

$s_x - s_{x+n}$ Proportions of the persons in original cohort getting married for the first time within age group x to $x + n$. The marriage frequencies for an actual population are estimated from the equation.

³ This method (Hajnal's) has some limitation. As the ages are given in quinquennial groups, it is sometimes hazardous to make an assumption that the average number of persons marry at the middle age of the group. The assumption of linearity does not hold when most of the persons marry in the early part of the age group. In such a case the average age is likely to lie below the mid-point of the span and the method may, therefore, overestimate the mean age at marriage. This limitation can be overcome if the age distribution is given in single years of age and is without misreporting. In the case of Pakistan, where age misreporting is quite frequent and age distributions were only available in five-year group, this formula might give satisfactory results.

${}_nM_x = (s_x - s_{x+n}) \frac{{}_nP_x}{n}$ i.e., number of persons marrying within age group x to $x + n$ or the marriage frequency of the age group.

Similarly, $\frac{s_x - s_{x+n}}{s_x} = 1 - \frac{s_{x+n}}{s_x}$ probability of marrying (or not remaining single) within the age interval x to $x+n$.

TABLE I

PROPORTIONS SINGLE BY SEX AND FIVE-YEAR AGE GROUPS IN 1951, 1961, ESTIMATED 1956 AND SYNTHETIC COHORT 1956-61, PAKISTAN

Age	${}_5s_x$ (1951)	Estimated ${}_5s_x$ (1956)	${}_5s_x$ (1961)	Synthetic Cohort 1956-61
Male				
10	.9533	.9604	.9676	.9676
15	.7618	.8094	.8571	.8635
20	.4438	.4780	.5123	.5465
25	.1828	.2012	.2197	.2512
30	.0870	.0894	.0919	.1147
35	.0464	.0494	.0523	.0671
40	.0377	.0362	.0348	.0473
45	.0258	.0268	.0278	.0363
50	.0213	.0218	.0222	.0301
Mean age at marriage	22.0	—	23.1	23.6
Female				
10	.8151	.7948	.7745	.7745
15	.2729	.2639	.2549	.2484
20	.0905	.0745	.0585	.0551
25	.0304	.0274	.0245	.0181
30	.0180	.0167	.0154	.0102
35	.0143	.0136	.0128	.0078
40	.0112	.0110	.0108	.0062
45	.0110	.0102	.0095	.0054
50	.0088	.0077	.0066	.0035
Mean age at marriage	16.0	—	15.5	15.4

Source: Computed from [6] and [10].

Note: The method of computation of proportions single for the 1956-61 cohort is as follows:

The probability of remaining single in 1961 of the male cohort aged 10-14 in 1956 is $\frac{.8571}{.9604}$. By applying this probability to the proportions single of 1956-61 in the age group 10-14 we got the proportions single for the age group 15-19 in the synthetic intercensal cohort, i.e.,

$$\frac{.8571}{.9604} \times .9676 = .8635.$$

TABLE II

PROPORTIONS SINGLE, MARRIAGE FREQUENCIES AND MARRIAGE PROBABILITIES OF SYNTHETIC INTERCENSAL COHORT, 1956-61, BY SEX AND FIVE-YEAR AGE GROUP, PAKISTAN

Age	Proportions single	Marriage frequencies		Marriage probabilities ¹	
	${}_5S_x$	${}_5M_{x-2.5}$	${}_1M_x$	$1 - {}_5t_{x-2.5}$	$1 - {}_1t_x$
Male					
10	.9676	.0324	.0065	.0324	.0066
15	.8635	.1041	.0208	.1076	.0225
20	.5465	.3170	.0634	.3671	.0875
25	.2512	.2953	.0591	.5403	.1440
30	.1147	.1365	.0273	.5434	.1452
35	.0671	.0476	.0095	.4150	.1019
40	.0473	.0198	.0040	.2951	.0675
45	.0363	.0110	.0022	.2326	.0515
50	.0301	.0062	.0012	.1708	.0369
Mean age at marriage	23.6				
Female					
10	.7745	.2255	.0451	.2255	.0499
15	.2484	.5261	.1052	.6793	.2035
20	.0551	.1933	.0387	.7782	.2601
25	.0181	.0370	.0074	.6715	.1996
30	.0102	.0079	.0016	.4365	.1084
35	.0078	.0024	.0005	.2353	.0523
40	.0062	.0016	.0003	.2051	.0449
45	.0054	.0008	.0002	.1290	.0272
50	.0035	.00062	.00043	.11124	.02335
Mean age at marriage	15.4				

1. $1 - {}_5t_{x-2.5}$ is the probability of remaining single between the ages $x - 2.5$ and

$x + 2.5$ and $(1 - {}_1t_x)$ where ${}_1t_x = \sqrt[5]{{}_5t_{x-2.5}}$ is the marriage

- probability between the ages x to $x + 1$.
2. Assumed value; calculated value is .0019.
 3. Assumed value; calculated value is .0001.
 4. Assumed value; calculated value is .3519.
 5. Assumed value; calculated value is .0833.

Source: Same as for Table I.

If we apply the proportions marrying as calculated in Table II to the total population, we get (Table III) the approximate number of first marriage at different ages upto 50 years which one would have obtained from the ages recorded in marriage certificates if there had been a system of such registration in Pakistan.

The last column of Table II gives the estimated average annual probabilities of first marriage for a synthetic intercensal cohort of 1956-61. The figures .2601 at the age 20 for the female cohort shows that there were about 26 chances out of 100 for a single 20-year old female (in a no-mortality cohort) to be married before she reached the age 21.

TABLE III
MARRIAGE FREQUENCIES FOR 1961 POPULATION BY APPLYING THE
MARRIAGE PROBABILITIES OF SYNTHETIC INTERCENSAL COHORT,
1956-61 BY SEX AND FIVE-YEAR AGE GROUPS, PAKISTAN

Age	Population (thousands) $\frac{{}_5P_{x-2.5}}{2}$	Marriage frequencies (thousands) ${}_5M_{x-2.5}$	${}_5M_{x-2.5}$ per hundred marriages	${}_1M_x$
Male				
10	941,589	30,507	4.59	0.92
15	767,687	79,916	12.01	2.40
20	691,879	219,326	32.97	6.59
25	717,682	211,931	31.86	6.37
30	604,649	82,535	12.41	2.48
35	536,817	25,552	3.84	0.77
40	458,823	9,085	1.37	0.27
45	371,558	4,087	0.61	0.12
50	354,855	2,200	0.33	0.07
Female				
10	749,480	169,008	23.71	4.74
15	720,099	378,844	53.15	10.63
20	687,406	132,876	18.64	3.73
25	690,850	25,561	3.59	0.72
30	549,384	4,340	0.61	0.12
35	442,520	1,062	0.15	0.03
40	396,783	635	0.09	0.02
45	294,469	236	0.03	0.01
50	287,857	171	0.02	0.004

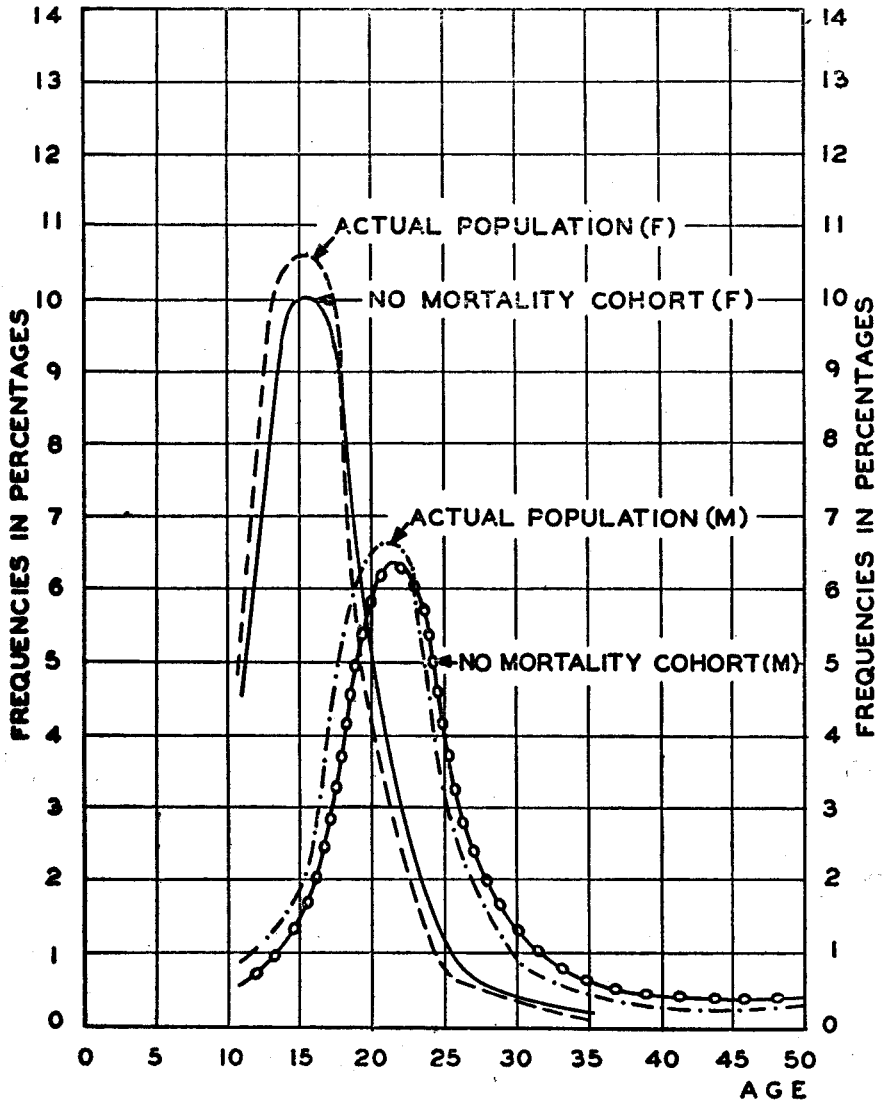


Figure 1. Estimated Average Annual Marriage Frequencies for Synthetic Intercensal Cohort, 1956-61, and Actual Population by Sex: Pakistan

The plotted curves (Figure 1) of marriage frequencies of actual population are slightly shifted to the left from the rectangular population (no-mortality) curve due to the tapering age distribution of the actual population. The peak at 6.5 per cent of male population shows that this percentage of men in a no-mortality cohort would marry between the ages 22 and 23 in contrast to 10.1 per cent of females between the years 15 and 16.

The Figure 2 presenting comparable marriage frequencies for three censuses shows a marked backward shift in the peak of male frequencies of 1931 and a high percentage of females marrying in the early ages compared to other censuses. This change is mainly due to Marriage Restraint Act (discussed on P. 239). The curves of female marriage frequencies reach a peak at 15-16, drop sharply to age 30-31 and then flatten out as all the females are married by age 30. For males the peak is reached about 5 years later and the fall is gradual making a broader distribution of marriage frequencies than for females.

II. AREA AND PERIOD COVERED FOR ESTIMATING THE MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE

For the estimation of changes in mean age at marriage, censuses of 1921 to 1961 are utilized. The Pakistan censuses of 1951 and 1961 covered all the area acceded to it in 1947 but excluded some tribal areas and disputed territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Junagadh and some states of Kathiawar.

From the British Indian censuses, it is difficult to extract the figures for the three partitioned provinces covering precisely the districts now forming part of Pakistan. It is assumed that figures on proportion single covering the whole area of these three provinces can be utilized for the part which belongs to Pakistan. This assumption is based on the consideration that within a province there was not so much variability in the marriage pattern. A similar assumption is made for 1921 estimates regarding Sind when it was a part of the province of Bombay.

These censuses contain information on "marital status" in five-year age group, classified according to provinces and main religions. Age distribution for the 1931 Census was available in smoothed form. For comparison sake these data were converted to unsmoothed form by calculating the original census figures with the help of the formula given in the report of 1931 Census of India. The difference found in average age at marriage is not very great (Table IV).

Due to World War II and the civil disturbances in India, census data of 1941 relating to civil condition by age and provinces (excluding native states),

TABLE IV

MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FROM PROPORTIONS SINGLE, SMOOTHED CENSUS
AND UNSMOOTHED INTER POLATED DATA FOR 1931
PAKISTAN AND PROVINCES

Area	Sex	Smoothed	Unsmoothed
Pakistan	M	19.6	19.5
	F	12.3	12.1
Punjab (Undivided)	M	21.5	21.5
	F	15.2	15.0
Bahawalpur (Punjab States)	M	19.5	19.4
	F	13.8	13.4
Sind (Bombay)	M	19.4	19.3
	F	12.4	12.1
Tribal Areas	M	23.1	23.2
	F	14.7	14.7
Baluchistan	M	22.9	23.1
	F	14.5	14.2
East Pakistan (Undivided Bengal)	M	18.7	18.7
	F	10.8	10.6
N-W.F.P.	M	23.4	23.4
	F	16.4	16.3

Source: [3].

was tabulated on the 2 per cent sample basis. These data were available for only former provinces and not of princely states.

III. TIME-TREND AND REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN MEAN AGES AT MARRIAGE

For analysing the trend of mean age at marriage, the censuses of 1921 to 1961 were utilized. The census of 1961 did not classify the marital status by religious groups but gave separate information for urban and rural areas. Data by administrative divisions were available for 1951 and 1961. Information since 1921 was also available for some of the cities but not from all the censuses and thus there remained some gaps to be filled in. For computing the mean ages at marriage Hanjal's method of synthetic censal cohort discussed above was used.

Time-Trend in Mean Marriage Ages: While the higher average age at marriage among males than females is noticeable, the customary age at marriage of females in all provinces has a significant upward trend except for a dip in 1931 and a slight drop in 1961. Males did not show any apparent increase up to 1951 resulting in narrowing down the difference in mean ages from 7.5 years in 1921 to 6 years in 1961. Due to slight drop in female age and increase in male age at marriage, the gap in 1961 has again increased to 7.6 years.

While the age at marriage of females for the whole country increases from 13 years in 1921 to 15.5 years in 1961, the males during the same period gained about 1.6 years. In the former provinces of Punjab, N-W.F.P. and the Bahawalpur State, the male age at marriage in 1951 compared to 1921 fell somewhat while in other provinces little change is observed.

The dip of 1931 is due to Child Marriage Restraint Act which was enforced on April 1, 1930. The voice of social reformers against the curse of early marriages especially of females resulted in passing this Act which prohibited all marriages involving girls under fourteen and boys under eighteen. Up to a certain extent, the Legislative Act interfered with the Hindu and Muslim Personal Laws and thus got resistance from all sections throughout India. The Bill itself took a long time in vigorous debating in the Legislative Assembly; became Law on October 1, 1929 and was enforced from April 1930. Many persons took advantage of the delay of the Act and solemnized early marriages of their children which might not have taken place in the ordinary course of time. According to the 1931 Census, the proportion of Muslim child-wives under ten years of age was higher in some provinces than among Hindus [4; 5].

The analysis of proportions single in censuses taken after 1931 show that though child marriage has dwindled to minor proportion, the legislation was well intentioned but proved to be of a recommendatory character and not fully effective in practice. Non-registration of births and marriages, the impossibility of finding the exact ages of couples and difficulty in getting information about marriages in isolated villages, are possible reasons for its ineffectiveness. Any change in child marriage seems to be due, in addition to the effect of legislation, to increasing literacy, social and economic changes, and enlightenment, resulting from the contact with the wider world, during and after World War II.

It is also noticeable that the rise in age at marriage since 1921 is due to the increase in proportions single up to the age group 20-24. Above that there is little change (Table V).

The slight drop of 1961 in the female marriage age appears to be due to external causes: the effect of civil disturbances on independence, the unsettled

TABLE V
 PERCENTAGE SINGLE AND MARRIAGE FREQUENCIES FOR CENSUS SYNTHETIC COHORTS OF 1921-1961
 BY SEX AND FIVE-YEAR AGE GROUPS, PAKISTAN

Age	Percentage Single s^5_x					Percentage marriage frequencies (${}^5M_{x-2.5}$)				
	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
Male										
0	99.62	98.61	99.56	99.95	—	0.381	1.391	0.441	0.051	
5	98.53	94.32	98.29	99.83	—	1.09	4.29	1.27	0.12	
10	92.94	88.46	95.05	95.33	96.762	5.59	5.86	3.24	4.50	3.242
15	74.00	57.17	77.06	76.18	85.71	18.94	31.29	17.99	19.15	11.05
20	42.19	37.48	42.07	44.38	51.23	31.81	19.69	34.99	31.80	34.48
25	19.49	14.03	18.63	18.28	21.97	22.70	23.45	23.44	26.10	29.26
30	9.62	8.75	7.55	8.70	9.19	9.87	5.28	11.08	9.58	12.78
35	5.55	5.04	4.51	4.64	5.23	4.07	3.71	3.04	4.06	3.96
40	4.74	4.15	3.43	3.77	3.48	0.81	0.89	1.08	0.87	1.75
45	3.64	3.37	3.13	2.58	2.78	1.10	0.78	0.30	1.19	0.70
50	3.50	3.10	2.87	2.13	2.22	0.14	0.27	0.26	0.45	0.56
Female										
0	99.05	96.69	99.42	99.87	—	0.951	3.311	0.581	0.131	
5	92.28	77.67	95.38	99.03	—	6.77	18.92	4.04	0.84	
10	54.46	56.18	68.00	81.51	77.452	37.82	21.49	27.38	17.52	22.552
15	10.84	10.79	20.76	27.29	25.49	43.62	45.39	47.24	54.22	51.96
20	3.22	3.65	3.74	9.05	5.85	7.62	7.14	17.02	18.72	19.64
25	1.74	1.82	1.48	3.04	2.45	1.48	1.82	1.26	6.01	3.40
30	1.43	1.42	0.96	1.80	1.54	0.31	0.35	0.52	1.24	0.91
35	1.07	1.17	0.603	1.43	1.28	0.36	0.30	0.36	0.37	0.26

¹Marriage frequencies for age 0 to 2.5.

²Census of 1961 does not give marital status figures under age 10.

³This is assumed value; computed value is 0.99.

⁴Values beyond ${}^5M_{32.5}$ are not given as the figures are very small and some become negative which is impossible.

economic condition, and migration. The difficulty in finding proper partners, due to separation of relatives and unfamiliar neighbourhood, might be another reason for some of the delay in marriages before 1951. In 1961 the greater drop in female marriage age is in East Pakistan. One reason might have been the new marriage law of 1961 before which many marriages were celebrated in East Pakistan.

Another important reason can be explained in terms of drop in the number of females at the ages when they commonly marry. The famine of 1943, epidemic and World War II not only depressed the marriage rate but considerably increased mortality in the younger age groups resulting in a smaller cohort 0-9 in 1951 [6]. This smaller cohort was in the age group 10-19 in 1961 and changed slightly the marriage age. Since the males marry girls who are 5 to 10 years younger than themselves, the figures in the following tabulation fully support our demographic explanation for early female marriage in 1961.

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN POPULATION FROM 1951 TO 1961

Age	East Pakistan		West Pakistan	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
10—14		—13.0		—29.3
15—19	—6.8	—6.2	—2.6	—12.7
20—24	6.6	12.8	17.3	20.8
25—29	17.9		32.5	

The figures in the above tabulation show that female population declined in both provinces in the age groups 10-14 and 15-19 while male population slightly decreased in 15-19 but increased in 20-24, the peak years of marriage frequencies. The deficit of females 10-19 reduced the supply of brides at the conventional age at marriage without a corresponding reduction in grooms. Therefore, more than the usual proportion of these young girls would be pressed into marriage while males of the usual marriage age would necessarily remain bachelors.

Variation in Age at Marriage by Administrative Divisions: Besides social and cultural factors, industrialization, urbanization and literacy have great influence in the regional patterns of marriage. Due to amalgamation of all provinces of West Pakistan into one unit, the census of 1961 did not classify the data according to former provinces. Analysis of regional patterns of marriage are made from the information of marital status by Administrative Divisions.

TABLE VI
MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE IN 1961 BY ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS AND
URBAN-RURAL AREAS, PAKISTAN

Division	MALE			FEMALE		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Pakistan	24.4	22.9	23.1 (22.0)	17.8	15.1	15.5 (16.0)
East Pakistan	25.2	22.7	22.9 (22.4)	15.9	13.8	13.9 (14.5)
Rajshahi	24.3	21.8	21.9 (21.9)	15.6	12.9	13.0 (13.0)
Dacca	25.5	23.0	23.3 (22.9)	16.0	13.8	13.9 (14.0)
Chittagong	25.7	23.5	23.7 (22.2)	16.6	14.7	14.8 (16.2)
Khulna	24.5	22.2	22.3	15.3	13.5	13.6
West Pakistan	24.1	23.4	23.5	18.3	17.4	17.6
Peshawar	25.1	24.2	24.5 (21.8)	18.8	18.0	18.2 (17.9)
Dera Ismail Khan	24.3	23.7	23.7	18.5	17.4	17.6
Rawalpindi	24.1	24.1	24.0 (21.4)	18.7	18.0	18.2 (18.9)
Sargodha	23.6	23.8	23.8	18.1	18.5	18.5
Lahore	24.4	23.4	23.7 (21.1)	19.1	18.2	18.5 (18.6)
Multan	23.4	23.2	23.2 (21.2)	17.7	17.1	17.1 (17.7)
Bahawalpur	22.4	22.5	22.5	17.1	16.5	16.5
Khairpur	22.2	22.0	22.0	16.5	15.1	15.4
Hyderabad	22.2	21.8	21.9	18.0	16.0	16.5
Quetta	24.6	24.9	24.9	18.1	16.8	17.2
Kalat	23.6	22.9	23.0	15.9	14.8	15.0
Karachi	25.5	25.0	25.4 (24.8)	18.2	17.1	18.1 (16.9)

Note: Figures for the year 1951 are in parentheses.

Sources: [6;10].

population [11]. It is also observed that there is a growing tendency among males in the urban class to marry when they have some economic security in life. A girl's parents also try to get a husband for their daughter who can properly support her and a family.

This urban-rural difference in marriage age probably affects the fertility of the country. Earlier marriage and proportionally more married women in the rural areas result in higher child-woman ratio compared to urban areas. Whereas in rural areas the ratios were 84, 87 and 79 for the whole country, East and West Pakistan respectively, the corresponding figures in urban areas were 78, 85, and 76 respectively.

Mean Age at Marriage by Religious Groups: The comparison of mean ages at marriage for the successive census years (1921-51) show that all the religious communities have taken part in the move toward later marriage. The dip of 1931 is common for all groups. Muslim males show no significant change. The change has generally been greatest among the Hindu women, who were formerly the youngest ones to marry. Christian women marry later than women of other religious communities.

Child marriage among all religious groups of East Pakistan was at one time the rule rather than the exception. Now it is going out of fashion rapidly under the combined influence of social and economic changes. Though child marriage still occurs, its extent is becoming far less significant. According to the 1931 census, 55 per cent of Muslim and 60 per cent of Hindu girls in the age group 5-14 were single. The census of 1951 shows 85 and 94 per cent for the two religious groups. Since 1931 the age at marriage of females is higher among Caste Hindus than among Muslims. Among the Scheduled Caste Community, the figures approach more nearly those of Muslims. The figures for Schedule Caste in East Pakistan are similar to those for Sind on the male side. The women of this community, however, marry later in Sind, a surprising fact since the shortage of women is more acute in the latter province.

West Pakistan, which is mainly comprised of Muslims, has different marriage trends for males and females. While female age at marriage has an upward trend, the age at marriage of the opposite sex is continuously decreasing and the gap in the ages is narrowing. This may be due to a decline in female mortality resulting in an increase in the supply of girls.

Among the "other religious groups" (mainly comprised of Christians and Parsees, the most educated class) in Karachi, the ages at marriage are 26.7 and 22.8 for males and females, respectively. In these communities, the proportion

TABLE VII
 MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE OF CENSUS SYNTHETIC COHORTS, BY PROVINCES AND RELIGIOUS
 GROUPS, PAKISTAN: 1921-51

Region	Year	All religions		Muslims		Hindus		Scheduled Castes		Christians		Others	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Pakistan	1921	21.5	13.0	21.9	13.7	20.9	12.0	—	—	24.9	17.3	22.6	15.7
	1931	19.6	12.3	19.5	12.4	20.9	11.7	—	—	—	—	21.5	15.8
	1941	21.6	14.3	21.4	14.3	22.1	13.8	—	—	—	—	20.9	16.1
	1951	22.0	15.9	21.8	16.0	23.0	15.9	23.4	14.4	—	—	21.2	17.7
Punjab	1921	22.2	15.1	23.0	15.9	20.6	13.6	—	—	23.7	16.3	22.5	15.0
	1931	21.5	15.2	22.2	16.0	20.1	13.8	—	—	—	—	21.3	15.7
	1941	21.7	16.1	22.5	16.8	20.5	14.9	—	—	—	—	20.9	16.0
	1951	21.2	18.3	21.2	18.1	23.3	19.5	21.5	17.9	—	—	20.1	19.2
Bahawalpur	1921	23.7	15.5	24.0	15.7	22.5	14.5	—	—	—	—	22.4	15.8
	1931	19.5	13.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1941	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1951	21.0	17.6	20.9	17.6	19.5	17.9	20.2	17.0	—	—	22.5	21.1
N-W.F.P.	1921	24.4	16.6	24.3	16.8	23.5	15.6	—	—	30.0	17.5	25.0	14.1
	1931	23.4	16.4	23.4	16.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	23.4	15.2
	1941	22.2	17.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1951	20.8	18.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frontier regions	1931	23.1	14.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1951	22.1	19.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sind	1921	20.6	12.5	23.7	15.2	19.6	11.6	—	—	—	—	23.9	16.4
	1931	19.4	12.4	22.0	14.4	18.4	11.7	—	—	—	—	23.7	18.5
	1941	21.5	14.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1951	23.5	16.0	23.6	16.0	22.3	15.2	22.7	15.6	—	—	22.4	17.1
Khairpur	1951	22.4	15.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1951	23.9	14.9	25.5	14.9	22.4	14.4	—	—	—	—	26.8	18.4
Baluchistan	1931	22.9	14.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1941	22.0	15.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1951	24.3	16.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1951	22.6	16.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Baluchistan States Union	1921	21.9	12.3	21.0	12.5	22.0	11.7	—	—	—	—	22.0	16.2
	1931	18.7	10.8	17.6	10.4	20.1	11.2	—	—	25.2	17.6	22.0	15.4
	1941	21.7	13.4	20.9	13.2	22.5	13.5	—	—	22.9	16.7	20.7	16.2
	1951	22.4	14.4	22.0	14.1	24.2	16.0	23.2	14.2	—	—	21.5	16.1

TABLE VIII

MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE BY CITIES, PAKISTAN: 1921-61

City	1921		1931		1941		1951		1961	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Dacca	23.1	13.5	23.1	13.0	—	—	24.6	15.3	26.6	16.3
Narayanganj	—	—	—	—	—	—	23.4	15.1	25.3	15.8
Barisal	—	—	—	—	—	—	23.7	16.4	25.3	17.0
Chittagong	—	—	—	—	—	—	24.2	15.3	25.8	16.3
Karachi	—	—	21.6	15.5	—	—	24.8	16.9	25.5	18.2
Peshawar	25.0	17.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	25.6	18.8
Lahore	23.7	16.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	24.9	21.4
Multan	24.2	16.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	23.6	17.4

TABLE IX

MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE BY CITIES AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS, EAST PAKISTAN, 1951

Religious group	Dacca		Narayanganj		Barisal		Chittagong		East Pakistan	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
All religions	24.6	15.3	23.4	15.1	23.7	16.4	24.2	15.3	22.4	14.4
Muslims	24.5	15.3	23.1	14.8	23.4	15.8	23.9	14.8	22.0	14.1
Caste Hindus	27.0	17.0	25.1	16.4	25.3	17.7	26.4	17.1	24.2	16.0
Scheduled Castes	23.1	14.4	22.7	14.3	24.6	17.0	24.3	14.3	23.2	14.2
Other religions	26.4	15.5	23.9	17.7	24.9	19.4	25.1	20.9	21.1	16.1

Source: [6].

which is married upto age 45 is distinctly lower, especially on the female side, and the proportion never-married is quite high compared to other communities.

Late marriage in Baluchistan and N-W.F. Province, regions of high sex ratio, greater illiteracy and almost totally Muslim population, seems to be mainly the affect of local and tribal customs. The social custom of *Walwar* (bride price), which is paid by the bridegroom or his father, somewhat delays the marriage [9]. The man has to wait until he or his family has put aside enough capital to purchase a wife. The price depends on the tribal custom, the family status and financial position as well as on the good looks and accomplishment of the bride. To be kept single by her relatives until a suitor of sufficient wealth materializes also results in the late marriage of females.

Differences in Mean Age at Marriage Among Cities: The age at marriage is showing an upward trend in cities as it is throughout Pakistan. Mean marriage age for male and female is greater in cities compared to other urban areas. The difference between cities are due to education and nearness to industries. Lahore represents the highest age for females perhaps because it is a cultural and educational centre. Dacca has the highest age at marriage for males which may be due to the fact that it is the provincial capital, and industrial centre and has a high sex ratio. The census data of 1951 also shows that both sexes of Caste Hindus marry later than Muslims. The Scheduled Castes are nearer to Muslims in their patterns of marriage.

In the cities of East Pakistan, there is some indication that nuptiality has decreased a little since 1951. More men appear to remain unmarried in towns than in villages because of the imbalance of sexes resulting from migration.

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