# SECOND DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION AND DIVORCE IN INDIA

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## INTRODUCTION

### Demographic transition theories and the first demographic transition

Population, its growth and its size play an important role in the process of economic development of an economy. India is witnessing an increase in population but a decrease in growth rate of population. While some regions of India are in the second demographic transition some regions are still undergoing first demographic transition. This present study, Second Demographic Transition and Divorce in India, is an attempt to understand the process of transformation from the first demographic transition to Second Demographic Transition in the nine selected states.

Demographic transition theory explores a detailed description about the mechanisms of change in mortality and fertility with considerations on how this would affect the demographic development of the world in the future and what would be consequences of it. (Notestein,1945; Davis,1945). The first demographic transition is the precondition for the second demographic transition. First demographic transition defines the shift from high mortality or high fertility to the low fertility and low mortality. Thus, over the time population growth will gradually decline. The endpoint of the first demographic transition (FDT) was supposed to be a stationary population corresponding to replacement fertility rate 2.1 i.e., just over two children on average, zero population growth, and life expectancies higher than 70 years. Because there would be an ultimate balance between deaths and births, there would be no "demographic" need for sustained immigration.

### Second demographic transition

After the first demographic transition, a new demographic phenomenon has developed in the western countries. This new demographic phenomenon is termed as second demographic transition by various scholars. Lesthaeghe defined the second demographic transition (SDT) in 1986 (Lesthaeghe, 1995). In the same line in 1987 Van de Kaa formulated the Second demographic transition (SDT) (Kaa, 1987). At the macro level, the SDT provides a view of how societies evolve over time, stressing the role of ideational change in bringing about a package of demographic/family behaviours (Kaa,2002).

This transition explains new and emerging characteristics such as baby bust, the systematic postponement of marriage and parenthood, sub-replacement fertility, disconnection between marriage and procreation, the multitude of living arrangement other than marriage, parenthood outside marriage, the rise of "higher order" needs: individual autonomy, expressive work and socialization values. It also explains the role of rising levels of female education, greater female economic autonomy and multiple lifestyles.

The application of this theory was carried out mainly in the western countries. It remains as a phenomenon of the western world. It perhaps takes time to spread in the developing countries.

**Second demographic transition in Developing and developed countries**

In case of developing and, developed countries pattern of demographic transition is different. Since it is not easy to differentiate fertility transition at the global level, demographers have tried to find out "unifying" definition of fertility transition at the global level.

After the Second World War, Western countries became modernized and economically developed. At the same time, fertility declined and reached below the replacement level. Most of the European countries witnessed the second demographic transition accompanied by the low-growth rate of population and fertility rate below the replacement level (Kaa, 1987).

However, there is a huge variation in this transition from first demographic transition to second demographic transition among the developed and developing countries. The transition from high birth and high mortality rates to low birth and low mortality rates in developing countries started only in the second half of the twentieth century; it was more rapid but was also accompanied by higher growth rates of the population, up to three to four per cent per year and it is still underway.

Developing countries are still in the process of demographic transition. For example, Nigeria's fertility rate is very high and the death rate is also high. If we take the example of another developing country like India, in the state of Odisha, mortality pattern is still high and the fertility rate is declining. There are contrasting evidence of demographic transition in developing c
ountries.

**India and Second demographic transition**

After independence, India experienced high population growth. To control the population growth, India became the first nation to formulate the family planning in 1952. Despite this programme being in operation for more than half a century, India's population growth is continuing. However, the pace of population growth has slowed down in the last few decades.

After the globalization, remarkable changes have been observed in socio-cultural, economic and technological development in India. These changes have in turn affected the fertility rate in some of the states of India. Characteristics of demographic transition vary from state to state. While some states have witnessed signs of second demographic transition with a fertility level below 2.1, there are also other extremes in the country with very high fertility. Thus the demographic transition in India does not have homogeneity across country.  Thus the second demographic transition, in case exists in India, are only in come pockets of the country.

**Divorce and second demographic transition in India**

Divorce is defined as the termination of marriage or marital union and it is also known as the marital dissolution (Stevenson and Wolfers, 2007). Divorce is common

to all the societies including developing countries like India. Divorce has existed at all times in known history. The Indian divorce rate is still low compared to other countries. The idea of divorce as a process of dissolving and releasing the partners from marriage has been present in both pre-industrial societies as well as in advanced social order. The term divorce signifies an end of marriage using legal formalities.

Indian society is predominantly patriarchal. There are rigid gender roles, with women having a passive role and husband an active dominating role. In recent years, however, there are changes with increasing divorce rate at least in some parts of the country.

Divorce is still not common in India as it in western countries. In western countries, divorce was prohibited until recently and was legalized only after the 1970s. Italy legalized divorce in 1974, Spain in 1981 and Ireland in 1997 and Malta in 2011.

The concept of second demographic transition explains how a new way of life affects behaviour, belief and attitude of the population, which in turn affect their traditions, customs and norms (Caldwell, 1976). It is caused by a wave of socio-economic change including revolutionary changes in family standards and values.

Women are more autonomous today than they were earlier. This can be seen in their participation in greater numbers in labour force, in higher education and in decision-making positions that affect their lives as well as the lives of others (Dyson and Moore, 1983). It is widely assumed that because of this empowerment of women, fertility has gradually fallen, the divorce rate has become higher and the character of marriage has changed. It is often seen that development in society leads to higher expectations from marriage and family, which leads to divorce. This idea is mainly associated with urban areas. Lesthaeghe (2011) says that the decline in birth rate and low level of fertility are a consequence of an increasing tendency towards "self-realization".

It has been noted that divorce differs according to the social system. Human societies always welcome change and modernize themselves. Such practices have had a great and effective impact on family values and structure. Divorce can be considered as one such example of change. In this process, divorce has appeared as a new phenomenon of the development process and modernization.

Increasing urbanization and industrialization has led to rising divorce rates, because these are processes associated with decline in religious belief; breakdown of traditional norms, including reduced social pressure to maintain relationship established through marriage; pursuit of individual self-interest, increasing economic independence of women, and increased levels of stress in family life (Goode, 1963). Early empirical studies that have attempted to analyse the impact of marital instability on the lifetime fertility of individuals have shown that marital dissolution results in an overall loss in fertility (Lesthaeghe and Moors, 1994).

Thus it can be concluded that the demographic changes coupled with modernization has an important role to play in enhancing the divorce rate. The second demographic transition process led to major changes in the society including increased divorce. Divorce is not a problem for all societies currently but definitely has been a major issue in developed parts of the world. But for most developing societies like India divorce can have adverse impacts because increasing trends in the divorce effect to adults and children alike. So there is need to study changes in the pattern of divorce consequent to the development. Divorce may be one phenomenon, which is pushing India into the SDT.

**Need of the study**

In recent years, steady increase in the divorce rate is noticed in developed cities of India (Dommaraju and Jones, 2011). In a study done by Dommaraju (2016), it was found that the divorce rate was very high in the northeastern states compared to the rest of India. As compared to the northeastern part of India, the general divorce rate in northern and western part is slow.

Factors affecting the divorce rate vary from state to state. For instance, Northeastern part of India is considered to be educationally advanced with changes in the values and attitudes. It is also argued that they are accepting or following the pattern of western culture, which is responsible for high divorce rate (Ghosh, 2011). According to the researchers in Mumbai, cultural differences between the couples and sexual

dissatisfaction among the partners have been observed as important reasons for divorce (Singh and Sinha, 2005).

Thus there is need to study the general divorce rate, their trends and patterns, in different regions of India. It is also important to consider places with high and low divorce rate so that a good understanding of the reasons for divorce can be assessed. The relationship between divorce rate and second demographic transition is also important to understand.

**Hypothesis**

The research work is based on the following hypotheses:

- **Hypotheses I:**
  - Divorce rate is high in the Northeastern states of India compared to the Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
  - Higher Divorce rate leads to the Second demographic transition

**Research question**

This study seeks to understand divorce both at the macro & micro level in the context of second demographic transition. The research questions of the study are as follows:

- What are the trend and the patterns of the divorce rate in India?
- What are the major factors affecting the divorce/separation across states in India?
- What are the factors affecting divorce at the macro and micro levels?
- What is the interconnection between divorce and second demographic transition in India?

**Objectives**

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To analysis the district wise divorce rate in India for the year 2011 and to explore the trends in divorce rate in selected states of India for the year 1991 to 2011.
- To understand the factors affecting the divorce/separation.

- To examine the factors affecting the divorce at the micro level.
- To explain the important determinants of second demographic transition and its connection with the divorce.

**Data**

The present work is based on secondary data. In India, direct data on marriage dissolution suffers from underreporting. Registration data suffers due to the inadequate registration of marriage and divorce cases, along with misreporting of ages. Hence, census data is the only available source to provide information of entire population by marital status. It provides age-sex specific data on marital status for each census. Therefore, present study utilizes census data to estimate the parameters responsible for the dissolution of marriage.

Along with census data, the present study also uses National family health survey data (NFHS). Fourth Round of National family health survey (2015-16) has been used for the present study. This study provides information at the household and individual level and therefore it is important to understand the micro-level determinants of divorce in India.

**Study area**

The general divorce rate is computed for all the districts of India. However, the detailed study of the divorce trend, factors affecting divorce rate and the role played by divorce rate in the second demographic transition is restricted to the nine states of India. The states are chosen based on high and low prevalence of divorce. Northeastern states, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are chosen for the study. Moreover, variation in fertility transition is also considered while choosing the states. Madhya Pradesh is in the early stages of fertility transition while Maharashtra is in the advanced stages but with low levels of divorce rate in both the states.

The present study includes seven Northeastern states namely, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and the other two states includes Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

**The scenario in Northeast India**

Northeastern states of India include the eight states viz Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim.

The northeastern region presents a complex socio-cultural framework with a unique set of challenges and opportunities. The northeastern is not known for their cultural values but they are also known as one of the women empowering state like Kerala.

The population of the Northeastern region as per the 2011 population census stands at 45 million, which is 3.76 % of India's total population (Dikshit and Dikshit, 2014). The state is spread over an area of about 262,230 sq. km. The state is predominantly a hill area, yet has made tremendous progress in recent times in infrastructure development. The overall population density is 159 persons per square KM below national average. The most densely populated parts of the region are the plains of Brahmaputra and Barak, the Imphal plain in Manipur and the western part of Tripura (Census of India, 2011).

**Brief introduction of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra**

Madhya Pradesh with 51 districts was formed on November 1, 1956. It is located in the central part is a part of the peninsular plateau of India. Population of the state of Madhya Pradesh is 72 million contributing 6 per cent to India's total population.

The state's population mainly comprises of people belonging to different religions like Hindu, Muslim, Jain and Parsis. Among them, Hindu populations are in majority. The state of Maharashtra is the second largest state of India in respect of population after Uttar Pradesh. As per the Population Census 2011, Maharashtra has total 11.23 crore population. Maharashtra has the 79.83 per cent of the population following Hinduism. 11.54 per cent of the population is Muslims and the rest belong to different religion.

**Methodology**

The present study computes the proportion of divorced/separated females out of the total married females. The divorce rate used for the present study is calculated by dividing divorced/separated female population (age 15 and above) by the married female population of the same age.

$$\text{General divorced/separated rate} = \frac{\text{Divorced/separated females(15+)}}{\text{Married females (15+)}} \times 1000$$

Using GIS mapping, district-level analysis of the general divorce rate has been done for all the districts of India. District level performance and trends have been assessed with the help of choropleth maps.

To find out the determinants of divorce, a panel data method is used and a fixed effect model is adopted for estimation. Census data based on 1991 to 2011 across districts are used for the model. Also, the binary logistic regression has been carried out to understand the factors associated with the high general divorce rate at the micro level using NFHS data.