

Marital Dissolution in South Africa: Analysis of Census 2011 Data.

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Abstract

Evidence suggests that dissolution (divorce/separation) is high in South Africa, Therefore, the issue of dissolution, its levels and related factors are of concern to the government and other stakeholders in South Africa. The study used the Census 2011 data collected by Statistics South Africa to critically examine the levels and role of four groups of characteristics (individual, educational, economic and contextual characteristics) in determining dissolution among women aged 15-54 years in South Africa. Study was based on the rational choice theory i.e. the general economic-demographic approach to family dynamics. Adopting a quantitative approach, analysis was carried out at the bivariate and multivariate levels using the chi-square test and binary logistic regression technique.

Findings show that dissolution is highest among women aged 15-19 years (11.3%), lowest among those aged 25-29 years (3.7%) and maintains an increasing pattern over older age groups. Dissolution was highest in the urban areas (9.2%) and amongst the coloured (11.0%) and white (10.9%) population groups. The lowest dissolution rate was observed for the Indian/Asian population group (6.9%). All variables tested at the bivariate level were found to have a strong association with marital dissolution ($P > |z| = 0.000$). At the multivariate level, age, employment status, income level and educational level were found to be significantly related. Also, the results show that not having parents alive or the spouse living in the same household has a significant impact on marital dissolution in South Africa. The study concludes that all findings in the study be considered by the government in policy formulation around this issue.

Keywords: divorce, separation, association