

MARITAL DISRUPTION IN SRI LANKA: TRENDS AND DIFFERENTIALS.

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Abstract: The paper aims to examine the trends, patterns and demographic and socio-economic differentials of marital disruption in Sri Lanka, by using the data from censuses from 1946 to 1981, Demographic and Health Survey, 1993 and Demographic Survey, 1994. In this study, the martially disrupted persons are divorced and/or separated persons aged 15 years and above at the survey or census. The levels and patterns of marital disruption are measured using overall and age-specific divorce/separated- marriage ratio whilst the differentials are examined using chi-square test. The number and the growth rate of divorced and legally separated persons in Sri Lanka are notable over the period 1946-1994 despite the data limitations. The number and upward trend of marital disruption could be more expected when the remarriages of divorced and separated persons, particularly divorced men, during intercensal period are concerned. The divorce – marriage ratio of males is lower than that of females. Marital disruption is higher among women who are less educated, above 35 years of age, resident in estate or rural areas and have at least two living children. The educational levels of both wife and husband are, other things are being equal, inversely related to marital disruption. The age of marriage of martially disrupted women was 22 years whilst their marital union has ended within 14 years of marriage. The number of children ever born to martially disrupted women was slightly lower than that of currently married women due to the cessation of reproductive time span within marriage.