

Muslim Marriages: Age, Mehr, and Social Status

by

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Marriage, the prescribed legal union between a man and a woman, establishing them in new social roles as husband and wife, is one of the most important events in the life of the two individuals concerned. It is also an important event in the life of the community as a whole. In Pakistan, where marriage is nearly universal and family planning is not yet widely practiced, the number of marriages and age at marriage has important consequences for the fertility level of the population. A Muslim marriage in this country is of additional social and economic significance because of the practice of *mehr*. In Islam, *mehr* is a sum of money¹ which the husband is duty-bound to give to the wife as part of the marriage contract.

Although marriage is an important social institution in Pakistan, little systematic research has been done thus far on its patterns. The most important reason behind this has been the lack of adequate data except that in the census, which unfortunately is very limited for the purposes of such a research. It may be mentioned here that until recently marriages were not officially registered. A beginning was made after the Muslim Marriage Law Ordinance was passed in 1961, requiring Muslim Marriages to be registered with the local Union or Town Committees. Thus from July, 1961 onwards we have records of interesting data which can serve as a good beginning for research.

The first attempt to use this data for research was made by Korson [1, Pp. 586-600; 2, Pp. 527-533], who selected three relatively homogeneous areas of Karachi and demonstrated that age at marriage is related to social status.²

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¹The Holy Quran mentions *mehr* as follows:
"And those of whom Ye seek content (by marrying them), give unto them their portions (*mehr*) as a duty" (Sura iv. 24).

²Social Sciences Research Centre, University of the Punjab has also done similar study on the marriage data from the city of Lahore.

By using the marriage registration data, the present study purports to examine a series of factors in Muslim first marriages in Karachi. Specifically, factors like the rate of marriage, age at marriage and its association with *mehr*, will be examined.

This study may be seen to differ from Korson's in more than one ways. First, the sample was selected to deal with total population of Karachi (Municipal Corporation and Cantonment). Second, a number of variables other than age and social status are examined. Third, the samples on which this study is based were drawn for two different years—1962 and 1965 to determine whether or not any short-run changes in marriage patterns were evident.

II. METHODOLOGY

The data utilized in this study are derived from the registration forms of Muslim Marriages, as required to be filled under the Muslim Family Law Ordinance. The Form, which is called *Nikah Nama*, contains the following information: (i) year of marriage (ii) name of the Union/Town Committee (iii) age of bride and groom (iv) marital status of the bride at the time of marriage (v) amount of *mehr* in rupees (vi) date of marriage according to the Hijri Calendar, etc.³

For this study, a systematic random sample, with sampling fraction of one in 25, was drawn from the registers of all Union Committees of Karachi for the years 1962 and 1965: 1962 was the first year for which a full year's record was available and 1965 the most recently available full year at the time the study began in January 1966. All available information was recorded and transferred to cards for hand-sorting.

Prior to the tabulation a measure of the social status of the area of residence of bride was established. Essentially this is an ecological measure based on the prestige value of the bride's residential area. The socio-economic status of residential areas had been established in the People of Karachi study [4, p. 192] and ranking given there was adopted in this study. Since marriages tend to be within classes and since they are usually registered in the area of bride's residence, this method provides a rough approximation of the social status of the bride and groom. Obviously more adequate measures might be desirable such as occupation, wealth etc., but unfortunately the study is restricted here by the available data as recorded in the *Nikah Namas*. Nevertheless, the ecological ranking of the areas and the system of registration provides a simple indirect measure of socio-economic status [5, Pp.351-357].

Using this procedure, marriages were classified as having occurred in *High*, *Middle* and *Low* socio-economic areas. The High areas include Clifton, Bath Islands, Queens Road, Garden East, Housing Societies Union, and PECHS. In these areas the residents are predominantly businessmen, high government officers, judges and military personnel of high rank. Here the plots are large and the houses not only large, but often palatial.

The Middle areas consist of Nazimabad, P.I.B. Colony, Clayton Road, Sadar etc., where people either live in medium-sized houses or flats of large multi-storeyed buildings. In these areas the income level tends to be moderate.

³ For a separate paper on the subject, see [3].

The Low areas consist of the colonies for displaced persons in various localities. These include Liaquatabad, SITE, etc. The low ranking areas also include the decaying port areas of Karachi such as Layari, Chakiwara and Ranchore Lines. Incomes are low in these areas and workers are unskilled and impoverished.

In brief, the study is based on a 4% sample of registered marriages for the years 1962 and 1965 and is limited to the data as recorded on the *Nikah Namas* with the exception of the measure of socio-economic status which was derived from an ecological ranking of the areas where the marriage was registered, normally the residential area of the bride. Further, the study is restricted to first marriages since the number of second and subsequent marriages was extremely small. It should be remembered, however, that this refers to first marriages of the bride since no information on this item is required from the groom.

III. NUMBER OF MARRIAGES

In the selected samples there were 403 total Muslim marriages for 1962 and 336 for 1965.⁴ The decline in the number of marriages appears to be associated, to an appreciable extent, with the Indo-Pakistan conflict in September 1965. Apparently some of the marriages were postponed which restricted the number of marriages in the second year of the study. Since a large proportion of the population of Karachi consists of immigrants from India, and many residents still have relatives in India, marriages are often arranged between young men and women in Karachi and their relatives, who are Indian residents. After the September conflict and the subsequent restrictions on the movement of the nationals of one country to the other, many marriages may well have been postponed indefinitely.

Using the sampling fraction, the number of marriages has been raised to provide an estimate of the total number of marriages in Karachi. The sample of 1962 leads to an estimate of 10075 marriages registered in Karachi during that year. For 1965 the estimated number comes out to be 8400. Further, the Muslim population of Karachi for 1962 was estimated to be about 15,85,606. This estimate was made by increasing the 1961 census figure for Karachi by 6% per annum, the estimated rate of growth accepted by the Karachi Development Authority. Using the estimated number of marriages in Karachi for 1962 only and also the population for the same year, the Muslim marriage rate per thousand of population comes out to be 6.4. In Table I the marriage rate for Karachi is compared with the rates for some predominantly Muslim countries. It is observed that the Muslim marriage rate for Karachi is comparable to those of Iran, Syria and Tunisia, but is lower than other countries. Unfortunately the data to compare the marriage rate of other predominantly Muslim urban areas are lacking. Thus the slightly lower marriage rate in Karachi may be due to a number of factors. First, a low rate of marriage is

⁴ Total marriages include first marriages and subsequent marriages. 402 total marriages in 1962 include 383 first marriages and 336 total marriages in 1965 include 323 first marriages. Subsequent marriages refer to females who were either widowed or divorced.

usually associated with an urbanized area, as for example Singapore.⁶ Second, an under-registration of marriages particularly in view of the fact that only Muslim marriages are included. Further studies in other areas of Pakistan, both rural and urban, would throw more light on the effectiveness of the marriage registration system.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES IN PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM COUNTRIES AND IN KARACHI (MUSLIM POPULATION) FOR 1962

Area	Estimated Total Population in Million	Number of Marriages	Marriage Rate
Indonesia	98.0	1,036,332	10.6
Lebanon	2.1	15,096	7.6
Jordan	2.0	14,613	8.5
U.A.R.	27.0	228,044	8.4
Albania	1.7	12,838	7.5
Iran	21.0	142,974	6.6
Syria	5.0	30,912	6.1
Tunisia	4.3	27,005	6.1
Karachi (Pakistan)	1.6 ^a	10,075 ^b	6.4

Source: [6, p. 782].

- (a) Muslim population for Karachi Municipal Corporation and Cantonment only.
 (b) Muslim marriages only.

First Marriages by Socio-Economic Areas

Table II gives the number of first marriages which were registered in 1962 and 1965 in the High, Middle and Low ranking socio-economic areas of Karachi. As one would expect on the basis of the known distribution by socio-economic areas, the total number and proportion of marriages increases from the High socio-economic areas to the Low areas. The distribution of marriages, however, is not constant for the two years of the study. In 1962 the percentages of marriages were 15.4, 33.2 and 51.4 in the High, Middle and Low socio-economic areas. In 1965 the respective percentages were 11.4, 36.0 and 52.6.

⁶ Singapore, with a population of 1.7 million in 1962, had a marriage rate of 3.7 for 1962 [6, p. 782].

TABLE II

**DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST MARRIAGES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC AREAS:
KARACHI 1962 AND 1965**

Type of Area	1962		1965		Decline between 1962 and 1965	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Areas	383	100	323	100	60	15.7
High	59	15.4	37	11.4	22	37.2
Middle	127	33.2	116	36.0	11	8.7
Low	197	51.4	170	52.6	27	13.7

It is observed that in comparison to 1962 the number of marriages has declined in 1965 in all socio-economic areas. The last column in Table II shows that the percentage decline in High areas was 37.2. In the Middle and Low areas the percentage declines were 8.7 and 13.7 respectively.

Average Age at First Marriage

The average ages at first marriage for males and females in Karachi as estimated in the present study are given in Table III. This table also gives the average age at marriage as estimated by Korson on the basis of his sample of Karachi.

It is observed that the average age at marriage for males comes out to be 24.6 and 25.4 for the years 1962 and 1965 respectively. For the females these averages are 18.7 and 19.0 respectively for the two years. Korson's estimates for males and females are about one year higher than the estimates for 1962 and 1965 in the present study.

TABLE III

**AVERAGE AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE FOR MALES AND FEMALES IN
KARACHI**

Sex	Present Study		Korson's Study*
	1962	1965	1962-64
Males	24.6	25.4	26.4
Females	18.7	19.0	19.6

*Source: [1, p. 594]

Such a difference can be attributed to the difference in sampling techniques and the area covered by the two studies. Korson restricted his analysis to one high socio-economic area, one medium socio-economic area and one low ranked socio-economic area. Thus, relative to the total city population, the upper status population was over-represented and since marriage age seems to increase with socio-economic status, Korson's estimates of average age at marriage of 26.4 for males and 19.6 for females are probably too high when the population of the city as a whole is considered. Using the 1961 Census data, Sadiq [7, p. 90] estimated the average age at marriage for males and females in Karachi as 25.5 and 18.2 respectively. These estimates are closer to those of the present study. It may be mentioned here that Sadiq estimated the overall mean age at marriage for Pakistan in 1961 as 23.1 and 15.5 for males and females respectively.

Looking again at the estimates for 1962 and 1965 it seems that there is a tendency in the average age at marriage of males and females to slowly rise from year to year. This tendency is also indicated in Tables VI and VII, where it is observed that compared to 1962 the percentage of both males as well as females who married at higher ages increased in 1965. To further confirm whether the rise in average age of males as well as females is appreciable, a statistical test of significance (*t* test) was applied. This test, however, indicates that at 5% level of significance the rise is significant only in case of males. Further light on this observation will be thrown in the following.

Age at First Marriage and Socio-Economic Areas

Here we examine the relationship of average age at marriage and socio-economic status. Essentially the present study, with data from a broader sample, provides a further test of Korson's study.

In the present study it has been observed that the age at marriage in High socio-economic areas is higher than both Middle and Low areas, and this is true for both males and females. It is in this part that this study appears to confirm Korson's study. Let us now compare Middle and Low socio-economic areas and see how do our results compare with Korson's.

It is observed from Table IV that in the case of males the average age at marriage in Low areas is a little higher than for Middle areas; for females, however, it remains slightly lower. To see whether the average ages at marriage in the High, Middle and Low areas are significantly different from each other, a statistical test of significance was applied. The test indicated that, at 5% level of significance, the difference between High and other areas is significant both for males as well as females. But the difference observed between Middle and Low areas is statistically insignificant. This shows that Middle areas may be containing an appreciable number of low socio-economic status people and vice versa. It is also possible that age at marriage in these two classes of people may not actually be very different because of highly over-lapping social values. Thus our study could not confirm Korson's study where it has been observed that, the lower the socio-economic class, the lower the age at marriage. The possible reasons for the difference in results obtained between Korson's study

and our study may be due to the fact that Korson selected three distinct socio-economic areas and his sample did not cover the whole of Karachi city.) Thus he probably had an over-representation of high socio-economic areas and low proportion of low socio-economic areas. This means that Korson's results probably led him to correct conclusions only in the part where he observed higher age at marriage in higher socio-economic areas, whereas his observed differences in the ages at marriage of middle and low areas may have been biased.

TABLE IV

AVERAGE AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC AREAS:
KARACHI 1962 AND 1965

Type of Area	Males		Females	
	1962	1965	1962	1965
All Areas	24.6	25.4	18.7	19.0
High	26.0	26.2	19.6	20.1
Middle	24.3	24.9	18.6	18.9
Low	24.4	25.4	18.4	18.8

Table IV also shows that in comparison to 1962 the average age at marriage has increased in 1965 for males as well as for females but the increase in case of females seems to be very slight. On the application of a test of significance, it was observed that the increase for males was significant for all areas. For females, however, the increase was statistically significant for low areas only.

IV. MEHR IN MUSLIM MARRIAGES

In this section we turn to an interesting feature of Muslim marriage patterns in Pakistan—the amount of *mehr*. *Mehr*, under the religious code of Islam, is the amount of money to be paid as a duty by the bridegroom to his wife as a part of the marriage contract. While the amount of *mehr* is established at the time of *nikah* (the marriage ritual) and is stated in *Nikah Nama* (the Registration Form), the money may not or need not be paid at that time. The bridegroom with the consent of bride (or her parents) has the choice of paying the amount at the *nikah* registration or at a later date. *Mehr* is fixed by the elder relatives of the bride and bridegroom at the time of marriage. In many sections of the society, however, the practice of *mehr* has taken a little different shape. These people demand high amounts of *mehr* to be pledged for their daughters, which is only to be paid if the divorce takes place. Thus for them the higher pledged *mehr* serves as a security for the matrimonial life of their daughters. A high *mehr* appears to have two functions. First, it becomes, as indicated above, a financial support for the wife in the case of marital dissolution. Second, because of the financial hardship the payment might not

occur and *mehr* may thus become a possible deterrent to divorce. Finally, in many cases it appears that *mehr* has become a status symbol which is directly related to dowry.

Out of the data on Muslim marriages, available in Karachi, *mehr* seems to be related to two factors. First, it is related to socio-economic status and second, it is related to the age of the bride and the bridegroom. We will examine each of these factors separately.

Mehr and Socio-Economic Status

The amount of *mehr*, pledged at the time of marriage in each of the three socio-economic areas, is indicated in Table V. The highest amount of *mehr* is pledged for the marriages registered in High socio-economic areas. In these areas, the average amount was Rs. 8,220 in 1962 and Rs. 6,627 in 1965. Surprisingly, the average amount of *mehr* pledged at the time of marriage in the Middle ranked socio-economic areas is not much different from the amount pledged by the families residing in the Low socio-economic areas. In 1962 the average amount of *mehr* was Rs. 3,470 for Middle areas, and Rs. 3,276 for Low areas. In 1965, these averages increased to Rs. 4,873 and Rs. 4,993 respectively. If these figures are indeed representative of the amount of dowry given at the time of marriage, it is evident that families from lower class areas must necessarily contribute to their own poverty through unreasonably high expenditures on marriage ceremonies. Studies on marital expenditure, for example, have indicated that the cost of the marriage ceremony itself may be a significant factor in the limited capital available to rural population [7, p. 422]. The indirect measures of this study tend to be consistent with such findings and conclusions.

TABLE V

AVERAGE MEHR BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC AREAS: KARACHI 1962 AND 1965

Type of Area	Average Mehr in Rupees	
	1962	1965
All Areas	4,102	5,137
High	8,220	6,627
Middle	3,470	4,873
Low	3,276	4,993

Perhaps the most interesting fact indicated by the data in Table V is the relatively low *mehr* pledged by families in Middle socio-economic areas. A possible explanation is that such areas are occupied by large numbers of Memons, Khojas and Bohras. These communities are traditionally well off and are largely engaged in business and commerce. They pledge smaller sums because

divorce and other disputes are governed by the verdicts of the community head and, as such, the community takes the responsibility of maintenance of the bride in the relatively rare cases of marital dissolution. When the community as a whole assumes responsibility for a bride's well-being, high amounts of *mehr* are not required. (Further, many middle class as well as low class people still believe that since marriage is a holy contract in the name of God, each party must try his or her best to respect it for the whole of life, without any undue monetary pressure. Such families also pledge very low *mehr*.)

Mehr and Age at Marriage

An interesting feature of this study is the positive relationship of *mehr* with age at marriage of males as well as females. It is observed from Table VI and VII that, as the age of males and females at marriage rises, the amount of *mehr* also rises up to a certain age. The people who marry earlier are mostly from the families where higher education is not considered necessary. Such families can be divided into three groups roughly. The first group consists of very rich business communities like Bohra, Khoja, Memon etc., who would like to educate their children to a level just sufficient to enable them to handle the business of their forefathers. Such communities have traditions of early marriage of males as well as females, and also low *mehr*. The second group of people who believe in early marriage and low *mehr* are those who are from poor families. They are the people who cannot afford higher education and thus would like their children to start earning as early as possible. The poor people, as is generally true everywhere, tend to marry their children at younger ages. The third group consists of those middle class families who believe in early marriage of their daughters only. They tend to depend on the family pressures to protect the matrimonial life and a majority of them would not press for a higher *mehr*.

We further observe from Table VI and VII that the amount of *mehr* rises with the age at marriage of males as well as females. To explain this phenomenon it may be pointed out that the higher-aged males mostly marry higher-aged females.* The people who marry late are perhaps those who go for higher education. In the case of males some more years are spent to enable them to attain a reasonable income level. These are the people who wish for a better standard of living after marriage. Such people are perhaps more selective about choosing a life partner. Some of the things they look in the family of the bride are the socio-economic status, the education of the bride and the amount of dowry which she would bring. In return for such expectations the parents of the girl demand proportionate higher monetary guarantee in the shape of *mehr*.

(The positivity of relationship between age at marriage and amount of *mehr* is explicable thus: we have seen that one of the pre-requisites of the demand for high *mehr* is that the girl should be educated. The amount of *mehr* is thus positively related to the educational status of the girl which, in turn, is positively related with her age. Similarly the girls for whom higher *mehr* is

* More than 96 per cent of males with age at marriage more than 25, married females aged 18 and above. This covered 56 percent of the total females married at age 18 and above. See Table VIII.

TABLE VI
AGE AT MARRIAGE OF MALES AND AVERAGE MEHR, ALL AREAS OF KARACHI 1962 AND 1965

Age at Marriage	1962			1965				
	No. of Marriages	Percent Distribution	Cumulative Percent Distribution	Average Mehr in Rupees	No. of Marriages	Percent Distribution	Cumulative Percent Distribution	Average Mehr in Rupees
19	—	—	—	—	1	0.3	0.3	2,000
20	6	1.6	1.6	2,214	5	1.5	1.8	3,411
21	8	2.1	3.7	4,716	5	1.5	3.3	1,505
22	37	9.7	13.4	1,587	33	10.2	13.5	1,468
23	65	17.0	30.4	1,921	37	11.5	25.0	2,184
24	92	24.0	54.4	2,418	50	15.5	40.5	2,138
25	60	15.7	70.1	4,987	56	17.3	57.8	4,576
26	40	10.4	80.5	5,493	34	10.5	68.3	5,401
27	46	12.0	92.5	5,768	38	11.8	80.1	8,316
28	11	2.9	95.4	8,873	30	9.3	89.4	6,996
29	13	3.4	98.8	11,615	17	5.3	94.7	9,326
30	3	0.7	99.6	16,333	8	2.5	97.2	11,128
31	—	—	—	—	2	0.6	97.8	11,000
32	1	0.2	99.8	20,000	3	1.0	98.8	26,675
33	—	—	—	—	1	0.3	99.1	15,000
34	—	—	—	—	1	0.3	99.4	5,100
37	1	0.2	100.0	101	—	—	—	—
40	—	—	—	—	2	0.6	100.0	30,500
All Ages	383	100.0	—	4,102	323	100.0	—	5,137

TABLE VII
AGE AT MARRIAGE OF FEMALES AND AVERAGE MEHR, ALL AREAS OF KARACHI 1962 AND 1965

Age at Marriage	1962				1965			
	No. of Marriages	Percent Distribution	Cumulative Percent Distribution	Average Mehr in Rupees	No. of Marriages	Percent Distribution	Cumulative Percent Distribution	Average Mehr in Rupees.
16	28	7.3	7.3	1,527	23	7.1	7.1	1,944
17	62	16.1	23.4	2,343	52	16.1	23.2	2,860
18	77	20.1	43.5	3,373	60	18.6	41.8	4,279
19	119	31.1	74.6	3,074	71	22.9	63.8	4,093
20	55	14.4	89.0	5,624	53	16.4	80.2	6,392
21	31	8.1	97.1	8,148	33	10.2	90.4	8,486
22	18	2.1	99.2	13,637	18	5.6	96.0	7,724
23	—	—	—	—	3	0.9	96.9	20,000
24	—	—	—	25,000	8	2.5	99.4	8,838
25	—	—	—	—	2	0.6	100.0	15,000
All Ages	383	100.0	—	4,102	323	100.0	—	5,137

demanding are mostly married to the educationally and economically better males. Such people would obviously be of higher ages. Indirectly, therefore, the amount of *mehr* is also positively related with the age at marriage of males.

(In short while preference for marriage at young age is visible for males as well as females, the time spent on education and attainment of economic self-sufficiency directly affects the age at marriage and also plays an important role in the fixation of the amount of *mehr*.)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper we have examined a number of factors associated with Muslim marriages in Karachi to secure basic and somewhat preliminary information on marriage patterns. Specifically, we have dealt with age at marriage and *mehr*.

Of particular demographic interest is the age at which marriage occurs, since it determines the length of exposures of females to child bearing. As long as age at marriage of females is low and birth control is not widely practiced, Pakistan will have to suffer a continuing pattern of high fertility. The data presented in this study, together with other researches [6: 7; 9] indicate that females marry on the average at ages less than 19. Thus on the average 30 potential child-bearing years may be spent in a marital union, assuming age 49 to be the limit to a woman's fecundability and also assuming no marital dissolution.

While it is clear on the evidence found in developed countries that the acceptance and practice of birth control is the most important factor in reducing fertility, it is also clear that a higher average age at marriage helps in achieving this goal. The classic case, of course, is Ireland where marriages are at older ages, and there is a large proportion of unmarried individuals in that country. These factors have played an important role in keeping a low fertility level in the population of Ireland. In addition, it has been suggested that raising the legal age at marriage in India would reduce the fertility level significantly within a short period of time. Apparently, though the information is somewhat limited, pressures to postpone marriages in China are operating as an implicit form of fertility control.

Whether or not one can legislate the age of marriage any more than it is at the present time in Pakistan is open to question. There are strong social pressures to marry off daughters at early ages. (Even though the Muslim Family Law Ordinance prohibits marriage before the age of 16 for females, the fact that nearly 7 percent of marriages in Karachi take place at this age would suggest a phenomenon somewhat akin to age heaping, that is, recording the age of the girl as 16, although she may be younger. Indeed, the average age at marriage for females in Karachi may be even lower than the data presented here would indicate, since the falsification and erroneous reporting of ages of females may be widespread.)

In the long run, as the country develops economically, the average age of marriage will probably increase without further legal intervention. One traditionally finds that innovations in social patterns or ideas are more readily adapted at higher social class levels and then the changes gradually spread down to the rest of the population. It is for this reason that family planners eagerly look for the appearance of social class differences in the acceptance of family planning techniques as a forerunner of wider acceptance in the population. What is found in this study as well as in Korson's study is that some social class differences do appear to exist and age at marriage is higher in the upper socio-economic areas than in the middle or lower areas. It may well be that what the data indicate is a rising age of marriage in the upper classes which eventually will be adopted by others in lower classes. In view of the present level of fertility in Pakistan, these differences probably will have little influence on fertility or at least will have no effect in the immediate future.

TABLE VIII

**DISTRIBUTION OF MARRIAGES BY AGE AT MARRIAGE OF HUSBAND
AND WIFE: ALL AREAS OF KARACHI**

1962

Age at Marriage of Husband	Age at Marriage of Wife							
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22 & over	All Ages.
20	5	1	—	—	—	—	—	6
21	2	1	1	4	—	—	—	8
22	14	10	3	9	1	—	—	37
23	5	23	18	18	1	—	—	65
24	2	20	26	37	5	2	—	92
25	—	3	19	23	13	1	1	60
26	—	—	8	14	15	3	—	40
27	—	2	2	11	17	14	—	46
28 and over	—	2	—	3	3	11	10	29
All Ages	28	62	77	119	55	31	11	383

1965

20 or less	4	1	1	—	—	—	—	6
21	1	2	1	1	—	—	—	5
22	12	9	4	6	2	—	—	33
23	4	16	7	7	2	1	—	37
24	2	13	14	12	5	2	2	50
25	—	4	19	18	12	2	1	56
26	1	1	5	7	13	5	2	34
27	—	—	3	14	9	6	6	38
28 and over	1	4	6	6	10	17	20	64
All Ages	25	50	60	71	53	33	31	323

Of no less relevance to the demographic situation in Pakistan is the practice of pledging *mehr* at the time of marriage. If *mehr* can be assumed to be an indirect measure of dowry, then the data presented here may be used to estimate one of the costs involved in marriage in Karachi. The average amount of *mehr* pledged in Karachi is Rs. 4,077 in 1962 and Rs. 5,152 in 1965. This is more than 8 times the estimated average personal income for urban residents of West Pakistan (Rs. 515) and greater than the estimated average household income (Rs. 3,035) for West Pakistan urban household [9, p. 16 and Table A-5]. In a sense, what these figures indicate is that a male is supposed to provide at the time of divorce or separation an amount which would provide his wife an income, at constant prices and assuming no other dependents, comparable to the average income of population for eight years.

This paper should be regarded as exploratory. Further research will be needed to determine the marriage patterns for the entire country—rural as well as urban. Because of the significance of marital practices for the birth rate and thus the rate of growth of the population, it is desirable to secure current estimates of age and rate of marriage. Because of the potential dysfunctional consequences of high marriage costs, it would be further useful to have detailed information on the economics of marriage and preferably more direct information than is provided by the estimates of *mehr*.

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