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Couple Therapy in the Divorce Process of Bangladesh: A Psychological and Legal Analysis

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Abstract

Bangladesh has experienced a significant rise in divorce rates in recent years. Numerous variables may be blamed for this trend, some of which have their roots in severe and unforeseen situations, while others are the result of very minor problems that could be successfully handled with expert counselling. Strengthening family systems as a cornerstone of a civilized society is crucial to protecting the social fabric and maintaining the fundamental institution of the family. In many ways, the structured divorce process for Muslims under Bangladeshi law is praiseworthy. It does not, however, contain a clause requiring marriage counselling before a divorce is finalized. In contrast, pre-divorce counselling is either legally compulsory or highly encouraged in many other nations. It may be possible to resolve conflicts and possibly save the marriage by incorporating professional counselling into the divorce process, especially during the pre-trial and trial phases of a suit for dissolution of marriage or within the ninety days after the divorce notice is issued. By enforcing such a requirement, Bangladesh's legal system will not only conform to international best practices but also significantly support the maintenance of social cohesion and family harmony.

Keywords: Divorce, Couple therapy, Conciliation, Bangladesh.

Introduction

The family system is the fabric of society that constructs the foundation of civilization for human beings. Divorce is a big threat for the family system prevailing with peace and harmony. It is a common phenomenon and the number of which is increasing unexpectedly in Bangladesh. The reasons for divorce are many but the probable solution for that is not progressing in an expected way. It is true that in many cases divorce is inevitable nonetheless it can be avoided in many cases. Because many of

the reasons for divorce are mental, which can be technically solved by getting the parties more aware and understand through counselling. For example, only change or substituting the thought process of parties can solve numerous problems relating to marriage and family matters that can be a good option to prevent divorce among others. Counselling can be accepted as a good resort before and after marriage when it is leading to divorce. In Dhaka, a couple files for divorce every 40 minutes (Pieal, 2023). Couples therapy has therefore become much more popular, with many people viewing it as a “marriage savior” (Pieal, 2023). For instance, before a storm hit, Sneha and Ashiq (not their real names) had been a happy married couple for four years, at least in the eyes of their friends and family. Initially, there were certain miscommunications and trust issues that neither of them addressed. However, the animosity between them peaked at one point, and they quickly realized that something was seriously amiss. They even considered getting a divorce, but none of them was prepared to face the possibility because they already had a kid who was two years old. Furthermore, they did not wish to leave their child's future out in the air (Pieal, 2023). To no avail, they discussed their ideas with a few of their loved ones. They finally sought the help of a couple of therapists as a last option (Pieal, 2023). Then, for the first time, all their unsaid emotions were revealed to one another. It was still a slow process, though. Additionally, it was clear after five sessions that the couple was no longer at problems (Pieal, 2023). If the said fact is twisted differently: without availing counselling they would directly go to the court for divorce, the court would proceed with no order for counselling due to lack of legal prerequisites. In that case, the family may not prevail. Again, if we go back to the story and think that the reason of the dispute among the couple was a lack of skill in dealing with marital relations, and it could be solved if they would go through with marriage counselling. Unfortunately, such type of counselling is not legally recognized in our country.

Couple Therapy

Couples therapy, also referred to as marriage counselling, is essentially a life-changing experience that explores partner dynamics to pinpoint and address conflict (Atlanticbehave, 2024). One type of psychotherapy that can benefit the relationship with a spouse is couple therapy. Couples therapy is an option for partners who are experiencing relationship problems and would like assistance in reestablishing the relationship, or who just wish to take proactive

steps to safeguard their existing relationship (Gupta, 2024). Regardless of whether they are married or not, it is beneficial at any point in their relationship (Gupta, 2024). Marriage counselling is a type of psychotherapy designed to assist married couples or long-term partners in resolving challenges within their relationships (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.11).

Marriage counselling entails meetings with a qualified therapist who specializes in relational dynamics (Hub, 2024). The major purpose is to provide a safe and organized environment in which couples can openly address their concerns. The therapist facilitates the discussion, allowing each couple to communicate their thoughts and feelings without judgment (Hub, 2024). This approach aims to enhance communication, resolve disputes, and foster emotional connections (Hub, 2024).

The major education necessary for successful marriage and happy family living includes marital counselling for our youths (Adeogun, 2011, p.8). Adams asserts that marriage counselling entails a couple consulting with a psychologist, social worker, or other mental health professional to address dysfunction within their marriage or relationship (Adams, 2005). This type of counseling is often sought by couples who want to improve their understanding of one another and strengthen their relationship (Kepler, 2015, p. 11). Couples counselling frequently addresses issues such as divorce, betrayal, fury, financial concerns, substance addiction and use, parenting disagreements, blended households, sexuality, poor communication, and so on (Kepler, 2015, p.11).

Mueller claims that relationship therapy can be approached in a variety of ways. Emotionally focused treatment (EFT), for instance, aims to strengthen your link and attachment to your partner (Lmft, 2023). The therapist helps you recognize and change the habits that cause you to feel disconnected (Gupta, 2024b). Another approach is the Gottman method, which entails resolving points of contention and giving you and your spouse problem-solving techniques (Vinney, 2023). It seeks to increase the degree of intimacy and friendship between you and your companion (Vinney, 2023). The strength-based strategy used by Ellen Wachtel entails concentrating on the relationship's advantages (Vinney, 2023). It places more emphasis on introspection than guilt (Vinney, 2023). Psychodynamic couple therapy examines the underlying needs and fears that drive one and his or her partner in order to better one's understanding of the other. (MSEd, 2024). Behavioral treatment is This type of therapy, also referred to as behavioral couples therapy (BCT) (MSEd, 2024a), focuses on changing behavior by discouraging negative behaviors and rewarding positive ones that increase stability and contentment (Gupta, 2024b). Cognitive behavioral couples therapy (CBCT) (MSEd, 2024c),

also known as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), is a treatment that focuses on identifying and changing thought patterns that have a negative impact on behavior (Gupta, 2024b).

Effectiveness of Couple Therapy

The family represents the smallest social unit, and society is a part of the country. A strong nation is based on the family (Andrean, Ming, & Sahertian, 2021, p.11). As the smallest social unit, the family will consequently disintegrate and become disorganized because of a family crisis (Andrean et al., 2021, p.11). Other parents cannot excel if the familial system is flawed, and genuine happiness will remain unattainable (Andrean et al., 2021, p.11). The disintegration and disorganization of society's social fabric will influence national and state social arrangements if this continues, and an increasing number of families will also encounter a crisis (Andrean et al., 2021, p.11). Therefore, these family crises can be resolved to some extent by applying marriage counseling.

Couples can learn how to communicate effectively, rebuild trust after betrayal, and rekindle affection through guided therapy sessions (Hub, 2024). Psychotherapy and family systems serve as the foundation for marriage counselling, which aims to comprehend the symptoms of its clients and how their interactions lead to marital issues (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.11).

To overcome relationship troubles, short-term therapy is often used, with only a few sessions required (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.11). Marriage counsellors usually enquire about the roles, norms, objectives, and beliefs of the couple (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.11). Therapy frequently starts with the couple evaluating the positive and negative elements of their relationship (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.11). Counselling also teaches strategies to manage financial stress collectively (Siji & Rekha, 2018). Addressing the root causes of marital problems opens the door to healing and reconciliation, potentially keeping the marriage from ending (Siji & Rekha, 2018).

Another possible mediator of the association between personal well-being and marital quality is the length of the marriage (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.23). Early marital commitment is a stage of life in which the cycles of individual, marital, and family life (transgenerational) are all involved in a cogwheeling form (Harway, 2005, p.34). This phase is vital for a couple (Harway, 2005, p.34). After the first few years of marriage, marital quality was observed to decrease (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.19). In 2010, 64% of Australian

individuals were in a pair relationship, 53% were legally married, and 11% were in a de facto relationship, demonstrating the inherent stabilizing power of the couple connection in society (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.12). However, in the majority of affluent nations, the divorce rate is rising to over 50% (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.12). About half of all divorces in Australia involve couples with children, and the usual length of marriage before separation is 8.8 years (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.12). There have been concerns raised about the efficacy of marriage counselling (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.13). Recent studies show that seven out of ten couples who get marriage counselling are quite happy in their marriage (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p.13).

However, not all studies are that optimistic (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p. 13). Both partners must be willing to acknowledge each other's deficiencies, take responsibility for their contributions to the problems, and be motivated to restore the relationship for marriage counselling to be successful (Siji & Rekha, 2018, p. 13).

Common Problems/Reasons in Divorce

The choosing of spouse is one of the most significant decisions in the life of every individual. The mistaken relationship can ruin a person's life regardless of their level of education, employment status, or material and financial affluence. Every day, we encounter a lot of problems that require quick decisions (Adeogun, 2011, p.8). Actually, a number of the choices we have made in the past have shaped who we are. And the decision of who to marry has a significant impact on a person's overall level of fulfilment (Adeogun, 2011, p.8). The choices we make have a significant impact on our lives and future. Choosing a spouse has a significant impact on that person's future, making it an extremely essential decision. The person you choose to marry determines the quality and standard of your life (Adeogun, 2011, p.8). However, in order to make the best decision, we must be well-informed prior to choosing a spouse (Adeogun, 2011, p.8). But after being married, People enter marriages with irrational expectations about how their lives will be and how the marriage will function, and things don't always go as planned when it comes to daily problems, finances, children, and employment. When a marriage begins to fall apart, it frequently results from typical problems that many couples have (Hub, 2024). Infidelity, disagreement or excessive bickering, substance addiction, domestic violence, and a lack of commitment to the partnership among others, are the most frequent causes of divorce (Scott, Rhoades, Stanley, Allen, & Markman, 2013, p.2).

Lack of Effective Communication and Misunderstanding

Strong relationships are built on effective communication. Families with teenagers, those with low incomes, and those with low context communication have the greatest divorce rates (Sari, Kurnia, & Sundaya, 2016, p.7). Couples who have communication problems may eventually develop miscommunications and resentment. A general disconnection between spouses, frequent conflicts, and feelings of being ignored or misinterpreted can all result from poor communication (Connaughton, 2024). This communication failure frequently plays a major role in couples considering divorce (Hub, 2024). Since it is frequently the primary cause of the relationship's initial disintegration, it is not unexpected that misunderstandings and poor communication are frequent components in contentious divorces (Connaughton, 2024).

Infidelity

When a relationship ends after infidelity, it's usually assumed that one or both partners were unfaithful. However, infidelity is just one of many other factors that have been connected to divorce (Hall & Frank D., n.d.).

One of the most difficult problems a partnership may encounter is infidelity. When trust is lost, it can be very challenging to regain (Hub, 2024). Couples may find it difficult to move past infidelity since it can result in severe emotional distress and betrayal (Hub, 2024). The strongest and most direct predictor of marital breakdown was infidelity, even if these relationship and personality characteristics were still specifically linked to divorce (Hall & Frank D., n.d.). Extramarital relations, which are becoming more and more prevalent among both men and women, are the cause of many divorces nowadays (Ittefaq Desk, 2025). With professional assistance, some couples can overcome infidelity, but others find it impossible (Hub, 2024).

Lack of Intimacy

For a marriage to be healthy, there must be both emotional and physical intimacy (Hub, 2024). Couples that lack emotional connection may also feel emotionally estranged from one another (Hub, 2024). They could find it difficult to relate to one another's feelings and experiences (Robinson&Clapham, 2024). Partners may feel abandoned, unloved, and estranged when intimacy wanes (Buscho, 2020). A number

of things, such as stress, health problems, or unresolved disputes, might contribute to this lack of intimacy (Hub, 2024).

Lack of sex can cause discontent, which will eventually destroy a marriage (Mohink, 2023). Intimacy, however, is not limited to the bedroom (Buscho, 2020). Over time, the lack of intimacy can damage the tie between partners, prompting them to consider divorce (Hub, 2024).

Financial Stress

Relationship conflict is frequently caused by financial issues (Hub, 2024). Financial priorities, saving, and spending disagreements can lead to a lot of stress (Hub, 2024). Financial difficulties can intensify other marital problems, resulting in a vicious cycle of discontent and conflict (Hub, 2024). Divorce risk is not correlated with wives' full-time employment or their percentage of household work, but it is with husbands' absence of full-time job (Killewald, 2016, p. 696, 716, 717). Couples often find it difficult to maintain their relationship due to extreme financial distress, which can ultimately lead to divorce (Hub, 2024).

Domestic violence

Divorces are frequently caused by domestic violence, which is more prevalent than most people realize (Macias, 2010, p.82). A person's psychological and physical health is at least as negatively impacted by persistent or ongoing verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse (PSYCH AB), and those who endure physical and sexual violence in their marriage are more likely to choose to separate and get a divorce (Mullin, 2021, p.2). When the abuse becomes unbearable, people tend to apply for divorce unless it is unsafe to do so because of the possibility of violence. In the end, abuse results in a higher divorce rate (Bowlus & Seitz, 2006, p.1114).

Addiction

It's possible that an addict's bond with her addiction - be it drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling, shopping, or prescription drugs—is greater than her bond with her husband (Buscho, 2020.) The wife experiences physical and mental stress because of her husband's actions and emotional condition following their exposure to the risks of drugs. These include violent and temperamental behaviors as well as an inability to properly control their emotions (Zakaria & Ibrahim, 2022, p.1726). As a result, the

marriage is brittle, and when the addict consistently relapses or refuses treatment, the union is in danger. Divorce frequently follows (Buscho, 2020).

The above reasons are more common for divorce from psychological and social perspectives among others. In Bangladesh, it is stated that the main reason of divorce are extramarital relations. Other reasons for divorce include incapacity or refusal to maintain the family, family pressure, physical torture and sexual incapacity.

The reasons for divorce, be it psychological or others are not contradictory rather similar and parallel, that can be resolved through counselling to some extent during marriage or before taking final decision for divorce. Understanding these concerns can help identify the signals early and seek help before the condition becomes irreversible (Hub, 2024).

Legislative Panorama of Divorce Procedure in Bangladesh

Muslim personal law grants both spouses the ability to terminate the marriage if they consider cohabitation to be unfeasible. (Alam, 2014, p.33). The Quran guarantees that divorce is not capricious, since this is addressed by extending the divorce process over a duration of around three months, during which the husband retains the opportunity to rescind the divorce (Alam, p.33).

Under Section 7(1) of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961 (hereinafter referred as MFLO,1961) if a man wants to divorce his wife, he must notify the chairman in writing as soon as possible after the talaq is declared in any way, and he must also provide the wife with a copy of the notice. Section 7(2) of the MFLO provides that anyone found in violation of sub-section (1) suffers a maximum penalty of one [ten thousand taka] fine, one year in simple imprisonment, or both. Section 7(3) further asserts that except as specified in sub-section (5), a talaq that has not been cancelled earlier, explicitly or otherwise, will not take effect until ninety days have passed since the Chairman receives notice under sub-section (1).

In order to facilitate a reconciliation between the parties, the Chairman must establish an Arbitration Council within thirty days after receiving notice under sub-section (1). The Arbitration Council will thereafter take all steps required to facilitate reconciliation (Alam, 2014, p.33). Section 7(5) of the MFLO, 1961 says that if the wife is pregnant at the time of the talaq, the talaq will not take effect until the conclusion of the pregnancy or the time frame specified in sub-section (3), whichever

comes first. Moreover, Section 7(6) of the MFLO, 1961 lays down that if a wife's marriage has been dissolved by talaq under this clause, she is not prohibited from being married to the same husband again without getting married to someone else first, unless it has been dissolved for the third time.

After the MFLO, 1961 was passed, verbal divorce was declared illegal in all cases (Ahmad, 2019). By section 7(1) of the Muslim Family Law Ordinance 1961, a Muslim in Bangladesh who intends to get a divorce must serve notice of the divorce to both the chairman of the arbitration council and their spouse (“Role of Arbitration Council in Divorce – an Ultimate IP Solution,” 2022). The chairman of the union council will serve as the head of the arbitration council, and the mayor of a municipality or city corporation will serve as the chairman of the arbitration council (“Role of Arbitration Council in Divorce – an Ultimate IP Solution,” 2022). The relevant Regional Executive Officer, a deputy secretary of the government, is given the authority and responsibility of chairman of the arbitration council by the mayors in the city corporation region (“Role of Arbitration Council in Divorce – an Ultimate IP Solution,” 2022). The social welfare division of the city corporation or municipality council provides secretarial services to the arbitration council (“Role of Arbitration Council in Divorce – an Ultimate IP Solution,” 2022). A notification requiring the spouse to attend arbitration proceedings may be issued by the arbitration council. Here, there is no counselling expert in the arbitration council to deal with the matter. The social welfare officer, who is not a qualified counselor, will attempt to persuade both spouses to revoke the divorce if they show up for the hearings. To withdraw a divorce, a spouse must apply to the arbitration council. The council will then record the parties' statements and, in accordance with the law in effect, order the withdrawal. A 90-day period passes before the divorce takes effect if no reconciliation is made. After that, the Union Council grants a divorce. Importantly, though, divorce is not accepted until the necessary registration is finished (Juralacuity, 2024). The arbitration council lacks the power to compel the parties to appear at arbitration. The government may think about designating family court judges as the chairman of the arbitration council in light of the present social situation, which calls for a revision of the council's function and authority. (“Role of Arbitration Council in Divorce Proceedings in Bangladesh – shossainandassociates.com,” n.d.) However, The purpose

of this ordinance was to reduce the administrative burden and expense of a court hearing (Huq, 2001, p.5).

A recent study conducted by the Bangladesh Legal Aid & Services Trust (BLAST) and the Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA) revealed some consistent findings. To activate the Council, one of the measures was to ensure capacity building. Counselling and conciliation training should be given to the Council Chairmen, and members should receive fair compensation for their work (Ahmad, 2019). Moreover, the inclusion of professional counselor in the arbitration council is required to be considered for effective reconciliation among the spouses. Again, throughout the procedure, there is no mandatory requirement for the spouse to have counselling (couple therapy) before finalizing the divorce, which can be taken into consideration in modern times.

As stated in section 8 of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961, a wife who is granted the right to divorce through delegation may use it to the extent that it is appropriate, just like her husband (as stated in section 7). In accordance with Section 2 of the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act of 1939, a wife may also request a declaration of the dissolution of her marriage.

The Family Courts Act, 2023 was passed to settle marital disputes, guardianship and custody of children, maintenance, dissolutions of marriage, dower and restitution of conjugal rights as specifically outlined in Section 5.

It was decided that if section 5 of the Family Laws Ordinance, 1961 is read in conjunction with section 23, it will be evident that the provisions of the said Ordinance must be adhered to in the event that the Family Court issues a decree for the dissolution of a marriage as listed in section 5(a) of the Ordinance, provided that the decree pertains solely to Muslims. In the celebrated judgment of *Pochon Rikssi Das vs Khuku Rani Dasi and others* 50 DLR 47 it was held that when the phrase "subject to the provisions of Muslim Family Laws Ordinance" is used in section 5 of the Family Courts Ordinance, it seems that the rights and obligations granted to citizens who practice Islam under that ordinance are completely safeguarded.

Section 11 of the Family Courts Act, 2023 states that the court must schedule a pre-trial hearing for the suits, usually no later than thirty days in advance. According to sub-section 3, the Court will determine the issues at hand between the parties during the pre-trial hearing and, if feasible, try to mediate a settlement or reconciliation. The court will frame the issues to be tried in the litigation and set a date for the recording

of evidence, usually no more than 30 days, if no compromise or reconciliation can be reached at this point.

A compromise or reconciliation between the parties is attempted by the Family Court Judge at the end of the trial but prior to the announcement of the verdict. In this case, the Family Court judge serves as a conciliator or mediator between the parties in dispute (Huq, 2001, p.13). In order to hear appeals from the family court, family appellate courts are created, with one district judge in each court who will hear the appeal from the family court as spelt out in 18 of the Family Courts Act, 2023. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) ought to have been allowed in the appellate stage as well. This is due to the fact that alternative dispute resolution (ADR) at the appellate stage significantly reduces the backlog of cases by limiting the scope of execution suits, additional appeals, and revision procedures. Again, in this process there is neither the provision for the requirement of couple therapy nor the inclusion of professional counselor throughout the conciliation process.

Integration of Couple Therapy in the Divorce Procedure of Bangladesh

In the present world the reasons of divorce are different types among which many of them are psychological that can be resolved by applying various couple therapies based on the need of the situation. But, in the law of Bangladesh, the need of marriage counselling is not recognized neither within 90 days after notice nor during trial and post-trial stage under the MFLO, 1961, and the Family Courts Act, 2023 respectively. Therefore, the couple also doesn't feel like complying with this important life-saving measure, though very few sought personally. But many countries in the world, acknowledge this requirement before divorce. For instance, most divorce cases in Malaysia involve a request for the court to order the parties to attend marriage counselling during the divorce proceedings if one of the spouses (the Plaintiff, who filed the divorce complaint, and the Defendant, who was served with the complaint) feels that marriage counselling can save the marriage.

Generally, the parties may be ordered to attend up to three (3) counselling sessions by the court ("Requesting Marriage Counselling in Divorce Proceedings," n.d.). Counselling must be requested within ninety (90) days of the divorce action starting for divorces filed under the divorce code's no-fault and "mutual consent" provisions ("Requesting Marriage Counselling in Divorce Proceedings," n.d.). Marriage

counselling is not legally necessary in Malaysia prior to submitting a joint petition, often known as a mutual divorce. Before you can apply for divorce, you must attend marriage therapy conducted by a recognized conciliatory organization if you are filing for a single divorce.

According to one study, marriage therapy is more effective at reducing marital dissatisfaction than no treatment at all. After therapy, the typical augmentation rate is almost 40%. Those who attended marital treatment have about a 70% likelihood of their relationship improving, up from the control group's estimated 30% enhancement rate (Tam, 2023). According to one study, marriage therapy reduces marital dissatisfaction more effectively than no treatment at all. After therapy, the augmentation rate is typically about 40%. For those who attended marital treatment, the likelihood of their relationship improving rises from roughly 30% (the control group's estimated enhancement rate) to almost 70% (Kepler, 2015, p.11).

In Iraq and Iran divorce counselling is meant to help the couple resolve their issues and return to a shared life (Naeemah, 2022). This choice might be the result of a couple experiencing an emotional divorce and now taking the decision to get a divorce seriously, or it could be the result of some little issues that have grown into major ones because they were not addressed (Naeemah, 2022). These days, it is required for divorces, particularly those that are finalized by agreement, to include divorce counselling (Naeemah, 2022).

The role of judges in resolving disputes and filling in the gaps in Bangladeshi family law is described by Alamgir Muhammad Serajuddin in his book *Judicial Activism and Family Law in Bangladesh*. Judges, he claims, not only interpret and apply the law, but also create it (Alam, 2014, p.45). When interpreting the law and deciding on the parties' rights, the courts ought to consider the altered social and economic context (Alam, 2014, p.45). *Ijtihad* began to be employed with the aid of doctrinal legal reasoning, based on classical but modernized concepts such as public interest (*istislah*), welfare (*maslaha*), necessity (*maslaha*), presumption of continuity (*istihsab*), and juristic preference and equity (*ishtihsan*) to solve contemporary legal issues in a fair and situation-specific manner (Hoque & Khan, 2007, p.208).

So, it is not difficult to include the requirement of marriage counselling or couple therapy in the legal process of divorce by the court as well as by the legislature of the country that may to some extent minimize rate of divorce of the country.

Conclusion

Divorce rate in Bangladesh has been steadily increasing because of numerous societal, economic, psychological, and individual reasons. Divorced folks are often less happy than married adults. Women are more likely than men to experience depression following divorce. They exhibit more psychological anxiety, less overall psychological well-being, and worse self-esteem (Kepler, 2015, p.11). However, couples are not required by law to attend counselling before filing for divorce in Bangladesh. Though there is provision for conciliation after serving notice to the parties, no professional counselor is included in the arbitration council mandating couple therapy for the parties under Muslim Family Law Ordinance, 1961. Again, conciliation before trial and conciliation before delivering final judgement have been prescribed in the Family Courts Act, 2023, where no room for marriage counselling or couple therapy has been inserted. Such requirement of couple therapy is available in many countries in the world. Marriage counselling helps in resolving disputes between partners. It helps them identify the underlying source of their interpersonal disputes (VR Associates Law Firm, 2024). Instead of ending their marriage with a divorce, it offers them an opportunity to strengthen it (VR Associates Law Firm, 2024). Incorporating couple counselling into the divorce process may promote reconciliation, minimize emotional distress, and protect the well-being of children and couples as well. Moreover, it can to some extent minimize the rate of divorce in Bangladesh if it can be applied at the divorce process as well as making it available for the couple during the time of marital relation at free of cost from the government, if possible. So, couples will benefit from such therapy by receiving expert assistance in resolving marital disputes, reducing rash divorce decisions by promoting introspection and reconciliation, and fostering a pleasant separation when reconciliation is not feasible. Moreover, introducing a provision requiring couples to attend at least three counselling sessions during the mandatory 90-day reconciliation period after filing for divorce or at least three counselling session pre-trial and trial stage. In this case, the Union Council shall refer couples to licensed counselors or certified family therapists or include the expert in the council. And again, there may have provision for court-mandated counselling sessions before a divorce decree is granted by the family court, or the court shall include the counselor in the conciliation process. Therefore, requiring marital counselling as part of the divorce procedure in Bangladesh is a proactive approach to support mental health and improve family bonds. Careful legal changes can lower the divorce rate and promote healthier relationships.

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