

**Factors that contribute to high rates of divorce among females  
in Zanzibar: The Case of Urban West Region - Unguja**  
**Mhaza Gharib Juma**  
**M.A. (Demography)**  
**University of Dar es Salaam, College of Social Science, 2007**

This study which investigates factors that contribute to high rates of divorce in Zanzibar, was conducted in Urban West Region in Unguja Island. A total of 10 shehias were selected in the region using a simple random sampling method. From each shehias, 20 respondents were randomly selected. The study used primary as well as secondary data. Primary data were collected using interview schedule for respondents and key informants whereas secondary data were obtained from the Chief Kadhis' office, Ministry of Labor, Youth, Women and Children Development and the University of Dar es Salaam library. Primary data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The current overall median age at marriage in Zanzibar is 18.0, and education seems to have strong correlation with age at first marriage. The main cause of the high rates of divorce in Zanzibar is adultery which along with laxity in religious teachings, barrenness, in-laws, beatings, drug abuse and alcoholism. Divorce rates between urban and rural have very minor differences. In order to reduce the rate of divorce in Zanzibar, the minimum age at marriage should be raised to 20 years for girls. This should give girls enough time to complete compulsory primary education as well as secondary education. Secondly, deliberate efforts should be taken to raise women's status so that they can be able to choose whom and when to marry.