

Still Single?..Why..How Come?..Then What?!!!

The Whys & How's of the so-called Egyptian Dilemma!

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For many years I've been trying to find some accurate statistics which can help shed light on the marriage and divorce trends in Egypt but in vain went my trials.

Finally at the beginning of the year 2007, I stumbled onto a lot of useful information. On the one hand, I believe that this information needs much more work for verification and analysis. On the other hand though, I found that some of this information would be useful in analyzing the apparent factors which trigger instability in our Egyptian society which we all see in our every day life; starting from the increase in the number of singles over 35, to the high divorce rate, to the sexually stimulating video clips & pornographic sites which triggers heightened desire in many people without being realistic of the real life situations, to "Urfi" marriages which are on the rise, to the ongoing polygamy debates etc...all of which are alarming issues of great concern to all of us.

Working as a life and relationship coach and even before taking this path as my main career, I have been monitoring, analyzing and questioning lots of phenomenon related to singles as well as couples alike and decided to share with you my findings specifically the main reasons for the endless loop of pain which singles & couples alike are going through in our dear Egyptian society.

According to my findings, there are several reasons behind this. One of the major reasons for this so called dilemma is the Parents overpowering involvement in their sibling's affairs not only during childhood and adolescence, nor just before marriage, but also when & if marital problems arise between the couple. Another apparent reason is the couple's Hidden Agendas for Marriage with males & females having different agendas which are all of course unspoken about with each other. The Lack of Marital Education which entails many topics but specifically proper sex education is in my opinion one of the reasons for the alarming



trend in our Egyptian society. Last but not least, is of course the Society's Pressure on individuals which causes a lot of them to act in ways that are not in accordance with their true wishes & desires but in accordance to what society thinks in proper only.

I believe that all of the above reasons are equally important & therefore it is very difficult to rank the reasons in any specific order as each reason contributes greatly to the problem & they are all inter-related and differ from one case to the other.

In every issue of "JD" magazine, I will discuss one of the above reasons in more detail.

But before I am able to do so, it is essential to start by first getting a clear picture of the real life figures of our population by looking at the statistical information available & analyzing it hence this is my aim in this article.



The breakdown of the male vs. female population according to age:

Age	Males	Females	Total
Under 10 years	8,975,536	8,461,832	17,437,368
From 10 to less than 15 years	4,908,718	4,559,117	9,467,835
From 15 to less than 40 years	14,740,427	14,348,016	29,088,443
From 50 to less than 60 years	5,757,757	5,493,787	11,251,544
Over 60 years	2,126,162	1,976,330	4,102,492
Total population at home	36,508,599	34,839,062	71,347,661

According to the above mentioned data, the good news is that the total population under 15 years old is 26,905,203 of which are not of marrying age (this count is according to year 2006 statistics).

As you can see in the chart, the general ratio between males and females still allows each man to marry only one wife contrary to some men's justification that there are fewer women than men; therefore they should use the right to polygamy which Islam granted them. This analysis also contradicts many people's justification that since the number of women are less then, polygamy should be the solution for the Egyptian singles' dilemma.

Of the remaining 46,229,942 eligible for marriage (starting from 15 years till over 60 years), the following analysis sheds some light:

Total Number of:	Year 2006
Males who have never married (from age 18) & females (from age 16)	13,659,314
Married people	29,189,966
Divorced people	437,953
Widowed people	2,942,709

However, some issues which still remain unclear despite the above mentioned statistics is the fact that it is not clear whether the number of married people was calculated counting each man and woman separately or according to the number of divorces (which includes both together in one contract). The worst case scenario is that the number of divorced people in the year 2006 is (437,953 x 2); thus the number of singles as a result of divorce is 875,906 which represent 3% of married people.

This is an attempt of understanding not under-estimating the problem neither exaggerating the trends. So if this assumption is correct, then the number of singles would be 13.6 million who have never been married before (including a sum who are not of marrying age yet) + 0.86 million (out of divorces) + 2.9 million (widowed) = 17.5 million singles (from above the age of 15 till over 60 years old) in the year 2006.



Another Analysis which shows the ratio of female to male singles above age 35 as of the year 1999 is shown in the below statistics table:

Year 1999	Total Number
Single females above 35 years old	3,000,773
Single males above 35 years old	6,000,000
Number of divorced (males and females)	364,361
Total Population	64,000,000

The only data I found related to Egypt's number of Marriage contracts was the following:

Year	No. of Marriage Contracts	No. of Divorce Contracts	%
1999	520,000	74,000	14%
1990	405,000	67,000	17%

According to this data the good news is that the divorce rate has decreased as a percentage of the number of marriages despite its increase in number. It is then safe to say that the percentage is yet to be over threatening as opposed to divorce rates in other parts of the world.

This analysis is only a start to help us realize & increase our awareness of divorce trends, and late marriages in Egypt.

Stay tuned for my upcoming article which will discuss the first reason for the Egyptian Dilemma in more detail:

Parents Overpowering Involvement in their Sibling's Affairs.

To wrap up, it is evident that the old methods in dealing with singles, couples and divorced people here in Egypt is not working any more & this is the main reason why we are shocked, surprised, shaken & alarmed when we hear or see the prevailing social trends. Some people may see these alarming changes as the end of the world; but I see these changes as challenges of a new era where some focus needs to be given to building families on concepts that may have existed long ago but which need some fine tuning, modification, exploration and alteration to suit this era in which we live in and to suite people's ever changing needs.

As educators, counselors, psychologists, social workers, trainers, & life coaches, we should all be dedicated to help raise awareness to this so called **Egyptian Singles Dilemma** by providing the proper education to individuals so as not repeat the mistakes of our past generations, & to avoid stubling into the same old destructive patterns- It will be hard to undo what has been done & it will be a long road before we see any changes, but a million miles start with one step.

Resources used to gather the statistics in this article:

* http://www.capmas.gov.eg/pls/indcs/cns_st_007?lang=1&lname=

* <http://www.balagh.com/woman/trbiah/sd0mvzjk.htm>

* Egypt's State Information service issued 4th April 2007.

* http://www.asyeh.com/asyeh_world.php?action=showpost&id=R1482