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# The Surge in Divorce Rate in Southeast Aceh: An Analysis of Key Factors and the Role of Social Media

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**Abstract**

The rising divorce rate in Southeast Aceh Regency in recent years reflects social challenges that require comprehensive analysis. Data from the Kutacane Syar'iyah Court indicates that the number of divorce cases in 2025 has exceeded the total cases recorded in the previous year, highlighting increasing vulnerability within family institutions. This study aims to examine the primary factors contributing to the surge in divorce rates in Southeast Aceh and to analyse the role of social media in shaping marital conflict dynamics. The research adopts a qualitative approach using literature review and secondary data analysis derived from religious court decisions, official judicial reports, and relevant scholarly sources. The findings reveal that economic hardship, lack of spousal responsibility, criminal-related issues, and weak interpersonal communication are dominant factors leading to divorce. Additionally, social media contributes to the escalation of marital conflict by reducing direct communication and increasing the potential for interpersonal tension. These results suggest that social media is not the sole cause of divorce but functions as a supporting factor that accelerates the emergence of domestic conflict. In conclusion, reducing divorce rates requires integrated efforts through strengthening family resilience, enhancing digital literacy, and increasing the involvement of social and religious institutions in family guidance and counselling.

**Keywords**: *Divorce; Southeast Aceh; Economic Factors; Social Media; Family Resilience.*

## A. Introduction

Divorce is a social phenomenon that continues to increase in Indonesia and is an indicator of the weakening resilience of the family institution. The family, which is normatively positioned as the smallest social unit and the foundation of society, faces serious challenges along with rapid social, economic, and cultural changes. From a sociological perspective, the increasing divorce rate cannot be understood solely as a failure of personal relationships, but rather as a structural symptom related to economic pressures, value transformations, and changing patterns of social interaction in modern society (Soekanto, 2014).

Nationally Religious court data shows that the divorce rate in Indonesia has been on an upward trend in recent years. Domestic disputes and arguments are listed as the dominant causes of divorce, followed by economic factors and low partner responsibility in fulfilling family roles (Religious Courts of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023). This condition indicates that domestic conflict is

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increasingly complex and no longer stands alone, but is intertwined with broader social and cultural factors. Changes in the family's economic structure, increased participation of women in the public sphere, and shifting expectations regarding marriage have contributed to shaping new dynamics in husband-wife relations (Khairuddin, 2017).

This phenomenon is also reflected at the local level, particularly in Southeast Aceh Regency. Data from the Kutacane Sharia Court shows that as of mid-October 2025, there were 364 divorce cases recorded, surpassing the total number of divorce cases for all of 2024. The predominance of divorce cases filed by wives indicates unequal marital relations and increased legal awareness among women in defending their rights. This surge demonstrates that divorce in Southeast Aceh is not merely an individual phenomenon but has become a social issue that impacts family stability and child welfare (Kutacane Sharia Court, 2025).

Several previous studies in Indonesia have examined the factors causing divorce. Research by Manna, Doriza, and Oktaviani indicates that economic pressure, ineffective communication, and the presence of a third party are the main factors leading to divorce in Indonesian families (Manna et al., 2024). Other studies confirm that prolonged conflict and failure to fulfill social roles as husband or wife are the main triggers for marital breakdown (Rahman & Hamdani, 2022). From an Islamic family law perspective, divorce is often viewed as a last resort after efforts to maintain a marriage have failed (Nuruddin & Tarigan, 2016).

However, most of these studies still prioritize economic and psychological factors as the primary focus of analysis. The development of information technology, particularly social media, has not been extensively studied as a variable influencing divorce dynamics, especially in the local context (Siswi dkk., 2025). Yet, social media has significantly changed communication and social interaction patterns. High levels of social media use have the potential to reduce the quality of face-to-face communication, trigger digital jealousy, and open up new areas of conflict in marital relationships (Nasrullah, 2018).

Several contemporary studies have shown that social media can exacerbate domestic conflict through uncontrolled information dissemination, excessive online interaction, and increased opportunities for digital infidelity (Putri & Abdullah, 2023). In religious communities, social media use without adequate digital literacy can even potentially conflict with family values and the principle of marital responsibility (Sohrah, 2023). However, studies specifically linking the surge in divorce rates in Southeast Aceh to the role of social media as a contributing factor to domestic conflict are still very limited. This limitation indicates a research gap in national academic discourse.

Based on these conditions, this study formulates the following main questions: first, what factors contribute to the increasing divorce rate in Southeast Aceh Regency; and second, what role does social media play in intensifying domestic conflict that leads to divorce? This study aims to empirically analyze the dominant causes of divorce and examine the role of social media as a social variable influencing family stability at the local level.

Academically, this research is expected to enrich studies of family sociology and social media studies in Indonesia by presenting locally based data analysis. Practically, the results are expected to contribute to religious courts, policymakers, and social and

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religious institutions in formulating strategies to strengthen family resilience and prevent divorce in the digital age.

## B. Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design. This approach was chosen because the study aimed to deeply understand the main factors influencing the surge in divorce rates in Southeast Aceh Regency and the role of social media in the dynamics of domestic conflict. A qualitative approach is relevant for examining social phenomena related to family relationships and behavioral changes resulting from advances in communication technology.

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data, namely divorce case data recorded at the Kutacane Sharia Court during the 2024–2025 period. This data includes the number of divorce cases filed by petition and divorce by *talaq* (divorce), as well as official information regarding the factors causing divorce. Data collection were conducted through a document, text, and archive discussing divorce, family resilience, and the influence of social media on marital relationships.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This model was used to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between economic, social, and social media factors and the increasing divorce rate in Southeast Aceh (Miles et al., 2014, Manan, 2021). To maintain data validity, this study employed source triangulation by comparing empirical data with previous research findings.

## C. Findings and Discussion

According to official data from the Kutacane Sharia Court, the number of divorce cases in Southeast Aceh Regency experienced a significant increase in 2025. As of October 15, 2025, 364 divorce cases had been registered and processed by the court. Of these, 261 were divorce cases filed by the wife, while 103 were divorces by divorce *(Talaq)* filed by the husband (Kutacane Sharia Court, 2025).

The number of divorce cases has surpassed the total number of divorce cases for all of 2024, which was only 264. With still time remaining until the end of 2025, this data indicates that the divorce rate in Southeast Aceh will continue to rise before the year ends. Case data also shows that the most common reasons for divorce are related to economic issues, including the inability to meet household needs and failure to fulfill financial support responsibilities. In addition to economic factors, there are also divorce cases caused by drug abuse, involvement of one party in a criminal case, and the husband's imprisonment (Siswi dkk., 2025).

In addition to these factors, several case files have found evidence of social media use as a factor in domestic conflict. Social media activity is said to be linked to reduced communication between couples, reduced attention to family, and increased disputes that ultimately lead to divorce (Kutacane Sharia Court, 2025). Not only divorce cases, but the overall number of cases received by the Kutacane Sharia Court has also increased. As of mid-October 2025, 723 cases were recorded, including inheritance disputes, joint property disputes, marriage confirmations, marriage dispensations, and criminal matters (Kutacane Sharia Court, 2025).

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**Key Factors Influencing the High Divorce Rate in Southeast Aceh**

The family was created as a fundamental institution that serves to maintain order in human life. The existence of the family is a consequence of human nature, which has a natural tendency to be attracted to the two sexes, namely men and women. This nature forms the basis for the formation of marriage bonds, which then give rise to the family structure. Rejection of the family as a social institution can essentially be interpreted as a denial of the natural laws established by God. This principle is affirmed in the Qur'an, which states that the formation of the family is part of the divine provisions for human life.

Marriage plays a fundamental role in human life, as through a legal marriage bond, the relationship between a man and a woman gains dignified social and moral legitimacy, in line with the human status as a respected being. Domestic life built through marriage is directed to take place in a peaceful, serene atmosphere, and is based on affection between husband and wife. Thalib explains that marriage aims to form a family life involving husband, wife, children, and parents, thus creating a safe and peaceful living environment (*sakinah*), a relationship filled with love *(mawaddah),* and an attitude of mutual support and affection (*rahmah*) (Thalib, 1974).

In building a family, every couple fundamentally hopes for the integrity and sustainability of their household. However, social reality shows that the divorce rate continues to rise. Changing social views in society have also influenced this situation, where divorce is no longer perceived as taboo or shameful, but rather is considered an increasingly common phenomenon. The increasing conflict within households leading to divorce has become a prominent social issue in contemporary society. In certain circumstances, divorce is seen as a last resort as a solution to various family problems that can no longer be resolved through efforts to maintain the integrity of the household.

Al-Humaid, a lecturer at *Jami'ah Islamiyah Al-Madinah*, outlined several important factors contributing to divorce. He believes that most of these factors are preventable and can be addressed. However, there are certain circumstances that leave no alternative but divorce as a solution. He classifies the causes of divorce into three main categories: factors originating from the husband, factors originating from the wife, and external factors influenced by the families of both husband and wife (Almanhaj, 2025).

In principle, Islamic law views the basis for the permissibility of divorce as being based on one primary reason: prolonged domestic conflict that has reached a level that endangers the continuation of life together. This condition, in Islamic jurisprudence terminology, is known as *syiqaq*, namely a sharp disagreement that is difficult to reconcile and has the potential to cause harm to one or both parties. This concept is emphasized in the words of Allah SWT in QS An-Nisa' [4]: 35, *''And if you fear a dispute between them, then send a mediator from the man's family and a mediator from the woman's family. If they intend to reconcile, Allah will surely grant success to the husband and wife. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing and acquainted.''*

Divorce is the end point of an unstable marriage, where a husband and wife choose to live separate lives. The decision to divorce is not a spontaneous act, but rather the result of a long process involving careful consideration and input from various parties, especially family and close relatives. In practice, divorce is generally

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preceded by prolonged conflict or disputes. This event has significant consequences for all family members, including husband, wife, and children, and also impacts the surrounding social environment. However, not all divorces have negative implications (Faizah et al., 2021). Under certain circumstances, divorce is seen as the best alternative for both parties to move on to a better life, so its impact is not only detrimental but can also have positive effects for the parties involved (Latief, nd).

The factors underlying divorce can generally be classified into two main groups: internal and external. Internal factors encompass various issues arising from within the marriage, such as economic pressure, recurring conflict, domestic violence, and deviant behaviours like alcohol consumption or gambling. Meanwhile, external factors refer to causes originating outside the marital relationship, one of which is infidelity.

1. **Internal Factors**

**Economy**

One of the main factors contributing to the rising divorce rate in society is the socioeconomic conditions of families. Economic factors are generally related to the inability to adequately meet household needs or demands that exceed available income. This imbalance between income and expenses often triggers recurring disputes and can ultimately lead to divorce. Therefore, managing family finances requires good cooperation between husband and wife, prioritizing shared interests over personal ones. Domestic problems are ideally resolved through communication and internal deliberation before they escalate into protracted conflict. In addition to the foundation of affection that binds family relationships, meeting economic needs is also a crucial aspect in creating a harmonious and peaceful household life. In this context, the division of roles between husband and wife, both in providing for income and managing the household, is a supporting factor in creating family stability (Siswi dkk., 2025).

Economic problems are a major factor that often triggers divorce in Indonesia. Financial instability in a household is often exacerbated by deviant behaviour, such as gambling, which impacts individuals' psychological and emotional well-being. This behaviour has the potential to cause mental health problems, especially among the productive age group, thus deteriorating marital harmony and increasing the risk of conflict that could lead to divorce (RRI, 2025).

Economic problems in a household are not always solely caused by poverty. In reality, some families with limited financial resources are still able to maintain their household integrity, while families with relatively stable financial conditions experience disintegration. This shows that economic stability does not automatically guarantee the sustainability of a household. Therefore, mutual understanding, appreciation, and respect among family members are crucial factors in maintaining harmony. Various problems that arise in a household can essentially be resolved through open communication and wise decision-making, so divorce should be considered a last resort, not the primary solution.

Economic problems in the household often trigger other issues that lead to prolonged conflict between husband and wife. These ongoing disputes have the potential to disrupt household harmony. Normatively, the primary responsibility for meeting the family's needs rests with the husband as the breadwinner. However, in

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practice, there are situations where the husband experiences limitations in meeting the family's economic demands. This situation can be further exacerbated if there is a lack of mutual respect and understanding between husband and wife. Economic problems are often cited as the reason for marital discord, which in some cases is also related to a weakening of religious values and commitment within the marriage. Therefore, before deciding to end a marriage through divorce, a husband and wife should seek dialogue and deliberation to find the most appropriate solution for the household's survival.

The high economic demands of today push many married couples to work together to meet household needs. This situation often creates new problems, especially when there is income inequality between partners or when one partner, particularly the husband, is unemployed. These differences in economic circumstances have the potential to trigger marital disputes if not accompanied by good communication and a mutually agreed-upon division of roles.

One of the essential prerequisites for building a household is the availability of a clear source of income to meet the family's economic needs. The sustainability and stability of a family are largely determined by a stable financial situation, while economic imbalances often trigger conflict within the household (Mufidah, 2008). In this context, the husband is generally seen as having the primary responsibility for meeting the family's economic needs. However, reality shows that the rising prices of goods and services, influenced by the prolonged economic crisis, are not always accompanied by increased income. Limited income, and even job losses due to layoffs, place a heavy burden on families. Such economic situations often trigger tensions within the household and, in some cases, lead wives to file for divorce (Dariyo, 2003).

Various studies show that a family's economic standing plays a significant role in the structure of household life, including in maintaining the stability of religious values. From an Islamic perspective, economic sufficiency is seen as a supporting factor in maintaining the steadfastness of faith. This aligns with the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who emphasized that conditions of poverty have the potential to lead a person to moral and faith vulnerability. In social reality, severe economic pressure can push individuals to make extreme decisions that conflict with religious beliefs, including actions that threaten the continuity of faith. Therefore, economic well-being serves not only as a means of fulfilling material needs but also contributes to maintaining spiritual integrity. Adequate economic conditions enable individuals to practice religious life more stably and encourage the formation of positive social attitudes, such as caring and generosity (Andri, nd).

**Continuous Dispute**

Persistent disagreements are a major factor in divorce. Divorce generally occurs when domestic conflict has recurred and can no longer be resolved through peaceful means. Disputes often dominate the causes of divorce, alongside economic factors. Domestic conflict often begins with seemingly simple issues, such as children's needs, daily financial issues, or differing views on family responsibilities. However, disputes that initially seem minor can escalate into more serious conflicts if they recur without constructive resolution. When the domestic atmosphere is no longer filled with peace and happiness, this condition can lead one party to feel unable to maintain the marriage, leading to divorce being the preferred solution (Susylawati, 2008).

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**Domestic violence**

Domestic violence (DV) is a form of gender-based violence that arises from social constructions regarding the relationship between men and women. Domestic violence cannot be equated with mere disputes or arguments within the household. Differences of opinion between husband and wife are normal, given the meeting of two individuals with different backgrounds, desires, and expectations within a marriage. However, domestic violence has far more serious characteristics because it is rooted in unequal relationships, views that demean human dignity, and the standardization of unequal gender roles. This violence can occur to anyone living in a household, including wives, husbands, children, other family members, and domestic workers. However, women are more often victims of domestic violence, primarily because gender relations in marriage are still heavily influenced by a patriarchal culture that places women in a weaker position.

Violence can be understood as any act that causes suffering or pain. The concept of pain itself has not always been explicitly defined. If pain is positioned as a condition that is contrary to health, then the definition of health as stipulated in Law No. 17 of 2023 concerning Health can be used as a reference. This law defines health as a state of physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being that enables individuals to live productive lives (Law No. 17 of 2023). A similar definition is also put forward by the World Health Organization (WHO), which views health as a perfect condition from a physical, mental, and social perspective, not merely the absence of disease or disability (Iskandar, 2016). Thus, health encompasses various dimensions, namely physical, mental, social, and economic. If any of these aspects are not met, an individual or group can be categorized as unhealthy. Consequently, pain, including that caused by violence, can also occur in various dimensions, including in the context of domestic violence (KDRT). In practice, domestic violence is often associated with various forms of destructive behavior, such as infidelity, alcohol or drug use, gambling, family neglect, physical and psychological violence, and protracted disputes. These factors often intertwine and influence each other, making reconciliation difficult, and divorce ultimately the preferred option for victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence (DV) is an act that occurs within the household and causes suffering, whether physical, psychological, or sexual. The household itself is understood as the smallest social unit in society formed through marriage and generally consists of a husband, wife, and children. Provisions regarding DV are regulated normatively in Article 1 paragraph (1) of Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence, which defines DV as any act against a person, especially women, that results in physical, sexual, psychological suffering or misery, or neglect of the household, including threats, coercion, or unlawful deprivation of liberty within the household environment. Violence that occurs within the household has a serious impact on all family members, especially the wife and children. For children, life in a disharmonious family environment can affect their psychological development, potentially forming a hard, emotional, and unstable character. Meanwhile, for wives, violence can cause prolonged trauma that makes it difficult to rebuild their household life. When a sense of security and protection is no longer

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obtained within the bounds of marriage, divorce is often seen as a step taken to stop ongoing violence in the household.

2. **External Factors**

**The Presence of a Third Party**

Interference from third parties in a household generally refers to the practice of infidelity, which is a significant factor in divorce. The emergence of infidelity in a marriage can be influenced by various factors, including economic pressure, moral crisis, and a lack of religious understanding regarding the rights and obligations of husband and wife. This lack of understanding of the purpose of marriage causes some couples to interpret marriage narrowly, merely fulfilling biological needs, without linking it to religious values and moral responsibility (Rasdianah, 2018). In the contemporary social context, infidelity tends to occur more frequently and is no longer considered an extraordinary phenomenon. However, infidelity is not a solution to domestic tensions; instead, it has the potential to create new, more complex problems, including psychological suffering for the injured party. Therefore, household problems are ideally resolved through open communication and constructive dialogue between husband and wife, with mutual evaluation of each other's roles and responsibilities, so that the goal of marriage to build a harmonious and loving life can be realized.

**Influence of Social Media**

Social media has become an integral part of modern life. While it offers numerous benefits, uncontrolled social media use has the potential to negatively impact marital relationships and even become a contributing factor to divorce. One such impact is the emergence of digital infidelity. Social media makes it easier for individuals to communicate with various parties outside their current partner, including ex-partners or new partners. Digital infidelity can take the form of online flirting, emotional attachment to others through social media, or the exchange of sexually suggestive messages or content. This situation has the potential to undermine trust in a marriage and trigger serious conflict that could lead to divorce.

Furthermore, social media addiction also has a significant impact on marital harmony. Excessive social media use can reduce the quality of communication between partners, create feelings of neglect, and reduce the quality of time spent together. If this condition persists, the relationship between husband and wife can become strained and vulnerable to discord. Another factor that contributes to worsening marital relationships is the reduction in privacy and trust. The habit of sharing household problems in public social media spaces can trigger outside interference, create discomfort for partners, and exacerbate conflict due to negative comments or judgments from others. Furthermore, the influence of social media friendships also plays a role in shaping individuals' perspectives on marriage. Exposure to negative narratives about marriage, justifications of infidelity, or the belief that divorce is an easy solution can impact marital stability, especially if individuals lack boundaries and adequate digital literacy.

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**Efforts Made by the Government to Reduce the Divorce Rate in Southeast Aceh**

The government's efforts to reduce the divorce rate in Southeast Aceh are being implemented through various integrated legal and social policy strategies. Normatively, the Indonesian government has regulated domestic conflict resolution mechanisms through legislation, particularly the Marriage Law, which emphasizes the importance of mediation before a divorce is finalized. In religious court proceedings, mediation is mandatory for judges and family mediators, aiming to foster reconciliation between husband and wife and seek a peaceful solution before a divorce is granted (Law No. 1 of 1974). This policy reflects the government's preventative approach in responding to the increasing number of divorce cases.

At the regional level, the Southeast Aceh Regency Government also implements family development programs through government technical work units and in collaboration with religious institutions and community organizations. This approach includes family law education, premarital counseling, and family harmony development, focused on improving psychosocial literacy and building family resilience (Southeast Aceh Regional Secretariat, 2024). These programs are designed to enhance couples' ability to manage internal conflict, strengthen communication skills, and reinforce family values that form the foundation of household resilience.

This also includes improving access to services for couples experiencing marital difficulties. Integrated mediation services and legal aid are provided to couples facing marital conflict, both through religious courts and legal aid institutions in collaboration with local governments (BPHN, 2023). This type of intervention aims to provide couples with professional support in resolving marital issues, so that resolution efforts do not rely solely on divorce.

Furthermore, the government is encouraging the involvement of religious and community institutions in strengthening social and moral values as part of a divorce prevention strategy. Through counseling, lectures, family training, and the establishment of family forums at the village and *gampong* levels, the Southeast Aceh District Government is collaborating with the Ulama Consultative Assembly and other religious organizations to raise public awareness about the importance of maintaining family unity (Ridwan, 2024). This non-governmental involvement is seen as an important component in a collaborative strategy to strengthen family resilience.

Furthermore, the government is also working to expand dialogue on the role of social media in marital life. Family digital literacy programs, implemented through relevant agencies, aim to raise couples' awareness of the negative impacts of social media use on marital relationships and provide skills in managing healthy technology use within the household.

Through these various efforts, the Southeast Aceh Regency Government is not only handling divorce cases reactively through the judicial system, but also proactively implementing policies and programs focused on prevention, education, and family development. While these efforts have been successful, challenges such as limited resources, low levels of community participation in development programs, and rapid social change remain the focus of evaluation to improve the effectiveness of government interventions.

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## D. Conclusion

This study shows that the surge in divorce rates in Southeast Aceh is influenced by a combination of economic factors, protracted domestic conflict, domestic violence, infidelity, and uncontrolled social media use. Social media plays a significant role in increasing the potential for conflict through digital infidelity, declining communication between couples, and weakening trust in marital relationships. These findings enrich studies of family sociology and Islamic family law by demonstrating that divorce dynamics stem not only from internal household factors but also from changes in technology-based social interaction patterns.

The implications of this research are both academic and practical. Academically, the results emphasize the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to analyzing divorce, particularly by integrating perspectives from Islamic law, sociology, and media studies. Practically, these findings can inform local governments and religious institutions in formulating divorce prevention policies, such as strengthening premarital guidance, family counseling, and digital literacy programs based on Islamic values.

This research recommends that further studies explore the quantitative role of social media in marital stability in more depth, as well as the effectiveness of local government policies in reducing divorce rates. Thus, further research is expected to provide a more comprehensive contribution to policy development and strengthening family resilience at the local and national levels.

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