

TEXT SIMPLIFICATION OF LEGAL ENGLISH: LAWS ON WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT In this paper we briefly review the features that lead to higher complexity in legal English texts, and we investigate which method of text simplification would be most beneficial for the comprehension of legal language. The particular target audience is lay men and women in Pakistan who speak English as an additional language and the texts concern laws that protect women’s rights. After consultation with specialists, we selected eight representative laws from a corpus containing laws that protect women’s rights. Next, we simplified those laws using different formulas. Comprehension increased significantly for both female and male participants but some text simplification formulas were more helpful than others. The empirical findings are the first set of results on text simplification for a wide audience of non-native speakers from a non-western society. They are useful providing guidelines to legal draftsmen and writers and researchers in the area of text simplification.

1 INTRODUCTION

Studies reveal that legal English is complex in nature because it is written for a specialist community (Tiersma, 1999, Gibbons, 2004 & Mattila, 2006). The Plain English movement, see for example Bailey (1996), has been making efforts to promote simple English by offering guidelines to simplify legal texts. In this light, many governments and business organisations emphasize writers to write in simple forms. Similarly, there have been efforts to convert some complex legal documents into simple language. However, such efforts have not been made with the aim of facilitating readers of a specific gender to access critical information. Moreover, existing simplification studies have not been comprehensively tested experimentally.

To transform societies, gender inequalities need to be minimized especially

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in the areas where gender discriminations are clearly visible. In most such cases women do have legal protection, but the benefits from such legal protection are in risk of becoming minimised due to lack of awareness. One major reason of this lack of awareness is that even educated individuals (whether male or female) may be unable to fully comprehend the complex language of laws that protect their rights.

To address this problem, we intend to experiment different simplification formulas with reference to laws that protect women's rights, taking the case of Pakistani society as it is typical in terms of gender discrimination issues.

We tested different simplification formulas empirically using a text comprehension test as a tool: Extent of comprehension was measured both in the original version of laws and various simplified versions. The findings are useful for simplifying the existing laws and drafting the new ones. User-friendly versions of laws that protect women's rights would widen readership in this context, which may contribute towards an amelioration of gender inequalities.

2 BACKGROUND: TEXT SIMPLIFICATION AND LEGAL TEXT

In this section, we briefly review studies on the complexity of legal English and we continue by considering different simplification accounts of legal texts.

2.1 *Features of Legal English*

Literature related to the description of legal language reveals that legal English is complex in nature. One way of describing legal language is to point out the linguistic features of the legal language at different levels: lexical, syntactical and discoursal etc. Melinkoff (1963), Crystal and Davy (1969), Bhatia (1983, 1993, 1994), Throne (1997), Tiersma (1999) and many others have worked along these lines. Berk-Seligson (2002:15) indicates that Danet (1980a: 447-81) "in her review of the literature of language in legal process, provides an excellent synthesis of the linguistic features that have been found by other scholars to be characteristic of Legal English". This synthesis, as quoted by Berk-Seligson, has three levels: lexical, syntactical and discourse. At the lexical level, nine features are characteristic of legal English: 1) technical terms 2) common terms with an uncommon meaning, 3) words whose origin is Latin 4) polysyllabic words, 5) unusual prepositional phrases, 6) doublelets-that is, combinations of a word of Anglo-Saxon origin with a word derived from either French or Latin ("will and testament"), 7) formality (the use of "shall" in place of "will"), 8) vagueness (lack of specificity, such as the phrase "all the rights and remedies available") and 9) over precision (the use of absolute terms such as "all" and "none"). At the syntactic level, legal English has the following

eleven features: 1) nominalizations, 2) passive constructions, 3) conditionals, 4) unusual anaphora, 5) the deletion of a relative pronoun, such as “who,” “which,” or “that”, and a form of the verb “be” in a relative clause (“all the rights and remedies [which are] available to a secured party”) 6) high frequency of prepositional phrases and their unusual placement between the subject and predicate of a sentence, 7) lengthy sentences, 8) unique determiners, 9) impersonality 10) a wide variety of semantically negative words, (“never,” “unless,” “except,” and words containing the prefix “un-”), 11) parallel structure in the linking of words and phrases by means of conjunctions “or” and “and” (“now or hereafter,” “to be immediately due and payable”)

Further, it has been pointed out that at the level of discourse, legal language is characterized by two general features. First, legal English has a lack of cohesion. Because of the limited use of anaphora, it is characterized by what would seem to be lists of sentences strung together, similar to the style of writing found in reading primers. Second, legal English is overly compact. Each sentence contains a great deal of information, and this information is not restated afterward in a different manner to help the reader absorb it. This is in marked contrast to ordinary written English, which strives to aid reader comprehension through rephrasing” (Berk-Seligson, 2002:17).

It is important to mention that syntactic and discorsal features are, in many ways, interconnected.

2.2 Text simplification accounts

We divide text simplification accounts into four categories: a) common simplification devices found in the Plain English movement, b) distinct simplification devices proposed and discussed by various linguists, c) empirical studies related to simplification, and d) machine simplification.

2.2.1 Plain English movement

Plain English is a movement in the UK and the USA which started in the late 1970’s as a reaction to the ambiguous language used in government and business communication. The works of Bailey (1996), Cutts (1995), Cutts & Maher (1986), DuBoff (1992), Maher (1996) and many others are relevant in this context. Overall, these writers stress on clarity and conciseness by detailing principals: write short sentences, divide information in manageable chunks, prefer active voice, use personal pronouns, avoid nominalizations, keep subject verb object together and in order, use everyday language etc. In a nut-shell, the Plain English literature emphasizes on writing that is “shorter, clearer and quicker at getting to the point”.

At the same time, plain language is not without critics (Masson and Waldron 1994:68). Aiken (1959), Prather (1978), Black, (1981), Ross (1981) and Bhatia (1993) present arguments against simplification of legal texts. Some arguments presented by these critics are: that complex ideas require complex words, there is no guarantee of better comprehension, using simpler language and abandoning legal terminology could introduce uncertainty in documents that are well understood, simplification of legal texts is “tampering” with legal texts.

2.2.2 Other simplification devices

Bhatia (1987) points out that *Textual Mapping* is a device which makes legal text easier to comprehend. This device aims to make the text more accessible to a wider range of audience. Information load is reduced and postponed by breaking the text into various chunks. This device is similar to one of the devices mentioned in the plain English literature. However, unlike plain English principal, syntactic and lexical structure is not replaced.

Indicating Statement of Purpose & Intention at the start of the legal text is another technique proposed by Conard (1985) to make the text comprehensible without changing its original form. “The first thing that any law-reader wants to know is what the law is about. Does it affect him or doesn’t it? Most laws fail ... to answer this question. ... If he keeps on for a few lines more, and understands what he reads, he will at last find out what the law is about” (Conard, 1985: 62). The example quoted, in this context, is: ‘*This law applies to everyone in the United States who has any dealing with foreigners*’. In this method, statement of purpose or intention is sometimes given in the form of sub-heading(s) and/or additional notes. The drawback of this method is that in some cases intention could become a point of debate. To address such a problem, Conard puts forward an additional technique of *Giving Illustrations*. Conard points out that it is always helpful to add notes or additional illustrations as part of the access structure of the text. These illustrations could be from real cases from past judgements or imaginary cases. These illustrations do not interfere with original form of the text as they stand outside as additional aid to comprehension of complicated legal intent.

Similarly, *Caption* is a device popularly used in public documents as pointed out by Bhatia (1993). Various kinds of captions are given at different points in the text to catch reader’s attention as the purpose of this technique is to inform and educate ordinary readership. This technique is mostly used in pamphlets.

Kelly (1988:64) uses the technique *Questions & Answers* to achieve greater comprehension by rewriting a legal text in the form of questions and answers. He generates questions having answers in the text. Each question is followed by

an answer. This is similar to the style of *Frequently Asked Questions* visible on some websites. This technique works well with specific texts, but all legal texts do not have the potential to be converted into questions & answers format. The above mentioned *caption* technique also has the same limitation.

According to Lewis, Horabin & Grane (1967), information displayed through *Flow Charts & Logical Trees* is an effective version of presenting legal information. They are of the view that written information does not always have to be a flowing prose. In this context, abandoning the prose format for non-linear alternatives such as logical trees or flow charts and tabulated presentations can often improve comprehension and usability of public documents. This technique could work well where the content matter deals with instructions or logical or chronological progressions of some kind, but might not work effectively in other types of texts.

Diagrammatic Display of Information is proposed by Bhatia (1993). This method is different from *Flow Charts or Logical Trees*. In this method, lexical and syntactical structure of the text does not change. Information is presented in a distinct lay out; in the form of a diagram. Text is divided into different parts. To read the text, the reader is required to focus his attention in the light of directions available in the form of arrows that are created within the diagram. The arrows lead the reader to move from one chunk of information to the other. However, the reader may opt to focus on the basic structure of the sentence by skipping complicated details at the first glance. The reader may then come back to any more complicated details after understanding the main idea and/or the main structure. Within the diagram, information is divided by creating two sides of the diagram (left & right), or by creating different boxes that contain chunks of the text. Bhatia (1993), who proposed this model, points out that learners are to be sensitized to the kind of diagrammatic display of information before giving them the task of reading as this model is specifically designed for specific learning situations relating to English for Academic Legal Purposes (EALP), where proficiency in reading unsimplified legal texts is required. For lay audiences, this model might cause difficulty as the nature of the diagram in itself seems complex to some extent.

2.2.3 Empirical studies

In this section, we will report some behavioural studies on text simplification of legal texts.

Masson & Waldron (1994) report empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of three kinds of simplification of standard legal contracts for increasing comprehension among naive readers. Three versions of legal texts were created. In the first version they removed or replaced archaic and redundant

terms. In the next version, simplified words and sentence structure were introduced, and in the final version, legal terms were defined or replaced with simpler terms. The results revealed that comprehension, as measured by paraphrasing and question-answering tasks, was reliably enhanced by the use of simplified words and sentence structure, but absolute levels of comprehension were still low. An evaluation of false responses revealed that, quite apart from the constraints of language, non-experts have difficulty understanding complex legal concepts that sometimes conflict with prior knowledge and beliefs.

In a report of two studies on simplification of consumer credit contracts, Davis (1997) showed that both increased readability and reduction of information load were significant factors in improving comprehension in both high and low income groups. Davis also recognized the inherent difficulty of the task of changing consumer behaviour.

The chief area of empirical investigation has been the effects of simplification on juror comprehension. Charrow & Charrow (1979) conducted an experimental study in this area in response to problematic issues concerning jury instruction. In two experiments, their study was to test three hypotheses: (1) that the standard jury instructions used in this study-when viewed as discourse are not well understood by jurors; (2) that certain linguistic constructions are largely responsible for the incomprehensibility; and (3) that if the problematic linguistic constructions are appropriately altered, comprehension will dramatically improve, notwithstanding the “legal complexity” of any given instruction. The results of their experiments support the hypotheses. In another case study, participants’ comprehension improved from 51% with the standard instructions to 80% after two rewrites (Elwork et al., 1982).

Other similar studies have been carried out by Diamond (1993), Kramer and Koenig (1990), Severance, Green, and Loftus (1984), Severance and Loftus (1982) and Steele and Thornburg (1988). These investigators achieved significant improvements in juror comprehension.

2.2.4 Machine simplification approaches

In this section, we look into machine related simplification and comprehension assistance accounts. While none of these approaches have focused on legal text, they may nevertheless provide useful suggestions for our project.

An innovative machine simplification project called Practical Simplification of English Text (PSET) was carried out by Carroll et al. (1998) to assist language impairment with reference to aphasics’ reading of newspapers. The researchers developed a system which automatically simplifies English newspapers’ texts available on net. The system combines state-of-the art language processing tools with innovative research on simplification. The architecture

of a model that simplifies has been presented. The system has an *analyzer* which provides a syntactic analysis and partial disambiguation of the text, and a *simplifier* that subsequently adapts the output of the *analyzer* to aid readability. Both the *analyzer* and *simplifier* have sub-components.

Siddharthan (2006) formalised the interaction that takes place between syntax and discourse during the simplification process. The research describes how generation issues like sentence ordering, cue-word selection, referring expression generation, determiner choice and pronominal use can be resolved so as to preserve conjunctive and anaphoric cohesive relations during syntactic simplification. The results of an evaluation of this syntactic simplification system have also been presented. The research is significant because the usefulness of syntactic simplification in making text accessible to a wider audience can be undermined in case written texts lack cohesion.

Another text simplification research that deals with long and complicated sentences was carried out by Chandrasekhar (1996). The project takes into account the significance of parsing systems by considering two alternatives to full parsing which could be used for simplification. The first approach uses a Finite State Grammar (FSG) to produce noun and verb groups while the second uses a Supertagging model to produce dependency linkages. The impact of these two input representations on simplification process has been taken into account.

The research of Peterson et. al. (2007) is useful in future work on automating the simplification process. They describe a corpus having two versions: original and abridged. They figured out differences in terms of use of number of sentences, sentence length, various parts of speech and some other aspects.

In addition to the above mentioned accounts of simplification through machines, significant other works are also available in this area. The use of machines in text simplification and comprehension assistance is a recent and growing trend, but the available studies relate to areas other than law.

2.3 Overview of existing research

There have been a number of efforts to simplify legal language as it is evident from the above literature. The present investigation is an extension of this line of research that focuses on four factors that have received little or no attention: First, we focus on Pakistan, a non-western society. While it is possible to assume that text-simplification will function independently of social norms and expectations, there is no evidence that this is the case as previous research has focussed on western societies. Second, we focus on legal texts concerning women's rights, which is a domain of critical importance of societies with gender inequalities. The existing empirical studies are mainly in the area that

relates to restricted audiences as such studies were carried out in the context of jury instructions or with reference to simplification of business contracts etc. Our research is for a much wider audience, namely educated men and women that may have the need to understand legal texts. Third, we turn to educated male and female speakers of English as an additional language. While the research reviewed above has focused on native speakers, this would be the first attempt to test if simplification techniques work with non-native speakers as well. Finally, the simplification techniques that we applied are an innovative mix of existing proposals, which are inspired by but not identical to previous research.

3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this project, we want to investigate three issues: (1) whether there is an effect of simplification on comprehension; (2) whether visual and textual simplification are equally helpful; and (3) whether simplification is equally beneficial for men and women.

3.1 Method

We have created a set of four versions of a legal text using different formulas to increase comprehension. Each version expresses the same propositional content but is different from others in terms of visual marking (colours) and/or simplified text. The four versions in the set have been designated:

- i. original without colours
- ii. original with colours
- iii. simplified without colours
- iv. simplified with colours

3.2 Creation of texts

In this section, we will describe the process of creation of text versions. To create a set of legal text versions, we followed the following procedure.

For *Original without Colours* (the un-modified version) laws that protect women's rights in Pakistan were collected with the help of professionals, and subsequently put together making a corpus. From this corpus, some laws that were typical in terms of syntactic, lexical and discourse features were selected. The passages were selected to contain sufficient information in order to answer two comprehension questions, one open-ended and one close. Eight laws were

chosen, and as stated above, no syntactical, lexical and organisational change was made.

For *Original with Colours* visual changes were made in the text without changing the syntactic, lexical and discourse features of the text. These changes were made by colouring some parts of the text. This involved splitting information between coloured and non-coloured parts of the text to divide information load and provide assistance in understanding the complex syntactic structure. Through this technique, the reader reads the coloured portion of the text that contains the Subject, Verb and Object of the sentence first, and the non-coloured portion which contains the other parts of the sentence is postponed to the second reading which is done as a whole: coloured and non-coloured together. This version based on the idea of splitting syntactic constructions into different units have been put forward by Bhatia (1993).

For *Simplified without Colours* we turned to insights from plain English literature i.e. the works of Bailey (1996), Cutts (1995), Cutts & Maher (1986), DuBoff (1992), Maher (1996). The original without colours version was simplified at the levels of lexis, syntax and discourse (according to the guidelines in section 2.2.1). In brief, this version had short sentences, simple vocabulary and reader-friendly organisational structure. This version has marked differences from the versions mentioned above where lexical, syntactical and discourse organisation remained unchanged.

For *Simplified with Colours* we used the simplified version above, but information was split between coloured portions of the text and non-coloured portions of the text as in the original with colours version. This was done to divide information load as the above mentioned literature review supports that reducing information load is helpful in increasing comprehension level. Again, the reading task is divided into two steps. First, the reader reads the coloured parts of the text and then the reader is asked to read the coloured and non-coloured portion together. This provides the reader access to full information. Input takes place from “easy to difficult” content matters. Presumably, this version is the easiest one in the set of versions we created, and an innovative one too.

3.3 *Designing the experiment*

The test had four versions of the same laws. Eight laws (Law 1 to Law 8) were given in the test. Each law had two comprehension questions. Question 1 was close ended where the subjects were to tick a choice: True or False. Question 2 of each law was open-ended where the subjects were to write answers. Both questions were meant to check comprehension. As the total laws in each version were 8 in number, and each law had two questions (open and close), the total

number of questions for each version was 16. The duration of the test was 45 minutes. Clear instructions along with the purpose of the test were given at the start of the test. To avoid cut & paste with reference to answers related to open questions, subjects were required to write answers in their own words. The test comprised of two sheets: Sheet A & Sheet B. Sheet A contained texts: Law 1 to Law8 and Sheet B was an answer sheet that contained questions. True and False option was given after each close question, and for open answers, blank lines were provided after each question. (See Appendix A to Appendix D for four test versions i.e. Sheet A of each version, and Appendix E for Answer Sheet i.e. Sheet B.)

3.4 Marking criteria

The objective of the test was to check comprehension through close and open questions. Each fully correct answer was assigned 1 full mark, making the total of 8. As the close questions were of True/False type, for each question, a student could score either 1 or zero. On the other hand, open questions were evaluated upon the extent of comprehension ranging from 0.00 to 1.00. For example, the student who revealed 50% comprehension would be awarded 0.50 marks in that particular answer. It is relevant to mention that only communicative competence was taken under consideration, and language accuracy (i.e. the grammatical accuracy of the answer) was ignored.

Before the start of marking, a scoring key was created (See Appendix F).

3.5 Population Groups

Sample population comprised of educated lay persons having no prior legal education at any level. Nor did they have any experience in the use of typical legal language. All the participants had similar English language proficiency levels: having C grades in functional English in the most recent O-Levels exams conducted by Cambridge International Examination board through the British Council in Pakistan. The participants had just joined various educational institutions for further education in a variety of disciplines. Mostly, men and women study in different institutions at this stage. However, institutions of co-education also exist. For the present research, data was collected from both types of educational institutions. The population size consisted of 96 subjects: half male and half female. Each version of the test was given to 24 participants: 12 male and 12 female. For both male and female, age group ranged from 18 years to 20 years having average ages of 19.02 and 18.72 for women and men respectively. The youngest participant, in the males, had an age of 18 years and 5 days. On the other hand, the eldest one was 20 years and one day old.

In the female group, the youngest participant was 18, whereas the eldest was 20 years and 9 days old.

3.6 Test administration

As similar proficiency level was required for the ones taking the test, therefore, the test was executed at different institutions as any one institution did not have 96 subjects together with the same proficiency level. By visiting different educational institutions and interviewing teachers and administrators, 8 institutions were finalized for test sites. In each institution 12 participants were given a version of the test. Therefore, test version (Original or simplified, with or without colours) was a between-participants variable. This was done so that participants would not see more than one type of text for two reasons: first, a contrast between text versions may have heightened their attention to the test; and second different text versions required different reading instructions (attention to the coloured parts first in the versions with colour). The following Table 1 & Table 2 report the institutions tested and the test version that was administered:

INSTITUTION	NO. OF PART.	SEX	TEST VERSION
Govt. College for Women Multan	12	F	Original w/o Colours
Govt. College Bosan Road Multan	12	M	Original w/o Colours
Jinnah Highs School (Girls) Multan	12	F	Original with Colours
Jinnah Highs School (Boys) Multan	12	M	Original with Colours
Beaconhouse School System Main Campus (Girls) Multan	12	F	Simplified w/o Colours
Beaconhouse School System Main Campus (Boys) Multan	12	M	Simplified w/o Colours
Bloomfield Hall Upper & Middle School Multan	12	F	Simplified with Colours
La Salle College	12	M	Simplified with Colours
Total Participants	96		

Table 1 Institutions and number of participants from each institution, their sex and type of text version of the test

	TEXT VERSION	TEST PARTICIPANTS
1.	Original without Colours	24
2.	Original with Colours	24
3.	Simplified without Colours	24
4.	Simplified with Colours	24
	Total	96

Table 2 Total participants in each version

3.7 Analysis of the results

The mean scores for each version of the test are reported in Table 3 below.

	v. 1		v. 2		v. 3		v. 4		AVG.	
	<i>Mean</i>	S.E.	<i>Mean</i>	S.E.	<i>Mean</i>	S.E.	<i>Mean</i>	S.E.	<i>Mean</i>	S.E.
Close Q.	1.03	0.03	1.18	0.02	1.72	0.03	1.81	0.03	1.43	0.04
Open Q.	0.39	0.02	0.43	0.02	0.84	0.02	0.91	0.02	0.64	0.03

Table 3 Mean scores for each version of the test (maximum score for Close Q is 2 and for Open Q 1. S.E. is the standard error of the mean).

The average score for men and women were almost identical, (1.43 and .63 in the close and open questions for women, and 1.44 and .65 respectively for men). In order to properly explore the effect of gender, simplification, institution of study and age, we performed a logistical regression analysis on these data. Version (1 - 4 as per table B), Sex (Male or Female), and were entered as predictors of response (correct or incorrect for Close Questions or % of correctness for Open Questions). For Open Questions version was a significant predictor of correct responses (coefficient $B = .99$, $t = 3.88$, $p < .001$; all other predictors were not significant, $t < 1.01$, n.s.). A similar picture emerged for Close Questions, where version was a significant predictor of correct response (coefficient $B = .89$, $t = 3.61$, $p < .001$; all other predictors were not significant, $t < .77$, n.s.).

Further pairwise comparisons by means of two-tailed t-tests were performed to reveal which version of the text facilitated comprehension most. For Close Questions, the simplified versions (with or without colour) gave rise to a higher number of correct responses than their corresponding non-

simplified versions (original with or without colour), with version 4 (simplified with colour) being the version with the highest rate of correct responses overall (notice though that the difference between version 4 and version 3 was only marginally statistically significant). Moreover, the version where the only modification was to add colour (version 2: original with colour) was not significantly different from the original version without colour. An identical picture emerged for Open Questions. The results of the t-tests are reported in table 4.

	CLOSE QUESTIONS		OPEN QUESTIONS	
	t value	p value	t value	p value
version1 - version2	-1.4	0.17 n.s.	-1.1	0.33 n.s.
version1 - version3	-14.45	***	-20.23	***
version1 - version4	-20.67	***	-22.31	***
version2 - version3	-14.91	***	-19.13	***
version2 - version4	-16.74	***	-21.23	***
version3 - version4	-2.04	0.05	-1.99	0.09

Table 4 Pairwise t-tests for Close and Open Questions (n.s. = not significant; ***=difference significant at the .001 level)

4 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Overall, three main results emerged from this study. First, that it is possible to modify legal English text to facilitate lay people's comprehension of the content. Second, simplification by means of reformulating text according to the guide-lines of Plain English has a robust effect on comprehension which is higher than the effect of highlighting aspects of the text by the use of colour. Finally, the beneficial effect of simplification was the same for both sexes, and regardless of the age or the institution of study of the participants. This last finding suggests that it is possible to use one formula to simplify text for a wide audience.

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Appendix A: Original without Colours

Sheet 1: Reading Task

Time Allowed: 1 hour

Instructions:

This test comprises of two sheets that you have been given: Sheet 1 & Sheet 2. Sheet 1 contains information that you are supposed to read. Sheet 2 contains questions based on the information on Sheet 1.

Sheet 1 comprises of eight different laws: Law 1 to Law 8. After reading each law, answer the relevant questions on Sheet 2.

Law 1

(1) Where a minor contracts a child marriage any person having charge of the minor, whether as parent or guardian or in any other capacity, lawful or unlawful, who does any act to promote the marriage or permits it to be solemnized, or negligently fails to prevent it from being solemnized, shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to one month, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both:

Provided that no woman shall be punishable with imprisonment.

(2) For the purpose of this section, it shall be presumed, unless and until the contrary is proved, that where a minor has contracted a child marriage, the person having charge of such minor has negligently failed to prevent the marriage from being solemnized.

Where a minor contracts a child marriage any person having charge of the minor, whether as parent or guardian or in any other capacity, lawful or unlawful, who does any act to promote the marriage or permits it to be solemnized, or negligently fails to prevent it from being solemnized, shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to one month, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both:

Law 2

Whoever threatens another with any injury to his person, reputation or property, or to the person or reputation of any one in whom that person is interested, with intent to cause alarm to that person, or to cause that person to do any act which he is not legally bound to do, or to omit to do any act which that person is legally entitled to do, as the means of avoiding the execution of such threat, commits criminal intimidation.

Law 3

(1) If any husband fails to maintain his wife adequately, or where there are more wives than one, fails to maintain them equitably, the wife, or all or any of the wives, may in addition to seeking any other legal remedy available apply to the Chairman who shall constitute an Arbitration Council to determine the matter, and the Arbitration Council may issue a certificate specifying the amount which shall be paid as maintenance by the husband.

(2) A husband or wife may, in the prescribed manner, within the prescribed period, and on payment of the prescribed fee, prefer an application for revision of the certificate, to the Collector

concerned and his decision shall be final and shall not be called in question in any Court.

(3) Any amount payable under Sub-section (1) or, (2) if, not paid in the due time, shall be recoverable as arrears of land revenue.

Law 4

In the event of death of any son or daughter of the propositus before the opening of succession, the children of such son or daughter, if any, living at the time the succession opens, shall per stripes, receive a share equivalent to the share which such son or daughter, as the case may be, would have received if alive.

Law 5

Whoever brings or levels or gives evidence of false charge of fornication against any person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to fine not exceeding ten thousand rupees.

Provided that a Presiding Officer of a Court dismissing a complaint under section 203C of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 and after providing the accused an opportunity to show cause if satisfied that an offence under this section has been committed shall not require any further proof and shall forthwith proceed to pass the sentence.

Law 6

(1) No man, during the subsistence of an existing marriage, shall except with the previous permission in writing of the Arbitration Council, contract another marriage, nor shall any such marriage contracted without such permission be registered under this Ordinance.

(2) An application for permission under Sub-section (1) shall be submitted to the Chairman in the prescribed manner together with the prescribed fee, and shall state reasons for the proposed marriage, and whether the consent of existing wife or wives has been obtained thereto.

(3) On receipt of the application under Sub-section (3), Chairman shall ask the applicant and his existing wife or wives each to nominate a representative, and the Arbitration Council so constituted may, if satisfied that the proposed marriage is necessary and just, grant, subject to such condition if any, as may be deemed fit, the permission applied for.

(4) In deciding the application the Arbitration Council shall record its reasons for the decision and any party may, in the prescribed manner, within the prescribed period, and on payment of the prescribed fee, prefer an application for revision, to the Collector concerned and his decision shall be final and shall not be called in question in any Court.

(5) Any man who contracts another marriage without the permission of the Arbitration Council shall,

(a) pay immediately the entire amount of the dower whether prompt or deferred, due to the existing wife or wives, which amount, if not so paid, shall be recoverable as arrears of land revenue; and

(b) on conviction upon complaint be punishable with the simple imprisonment which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both.

Law 7

(1) Any man who wishes to divorce his wife shall, as soon as may be after the pronouncement of talaq in any form whatsoever, give the chairman a notice in writing of his having done so, and shall supply a copy thereof to the wife.

(2) Whoever, contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1) shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both.

(3) Save as provided in sub-section (5) talaq, unless revoked earlier, expressly or otherwise, shall not be effective until the expiration of ninety days from day on which notice under sub-section (1) is delivered to the Chairman.

(4) Within thirty days of the receipt of notice under Sub-section (1), the Chairman shall constitute an Arbitration Council for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation between the parties, and the Arbitration Council shall take all steps necessary to bring about such reconciliation.

(5) If the wife be pregnant at the time talaq is pronounced, talaq shall not be effective until the period mentioned in Sub-section (3) or the pregnancy, whichever later, ends.

Law 8

Whoever kidnaps or abducts any woman with the intent that she may be compelled, or knowing it to be likely that she will be compelled, to marry any person against her will, or in order that she may be forced, or seduced to illicit intercourse, or knowing it to be likely that she will be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine; and whoever by means of criminal intimidation as defined in this Code, or of abuse of authority or any other method of compulsion, induces any woman to go from any place with intent that she may be, or knowing that it is likely that she will be, forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with another person shall also be punishable as aforesaid.

Sheet 1: Reading Task**Time Allowed: 1 hour**

Instructions:

This test comprises of two sheets that you have been given: Sheet 1 & Sheet 2. Sheet 1 contains information that you are supposed to read. Sheet 2 contains questions based on the information on Sheet 1.

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(5) If the wife be pregnant at the time talaq is pronounced, talaq shall not be effective until the period mentioned in Sub-section (3) or the pregnancy, whichever later, ends.

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If the care taker promotes, allows, or fails to stop child marriage, he or she will be punished, or fined or, both. Punishment shall be simple imprisonment which may extend up to one month. However, women are exempted from imprisonment. Fine could extend to Rs. 1000/-

If the caretaker claims that he did not come to know that such a marriage was going to take place, he will have to prove his innocence. Or, his innocence should have been proved through any other source. If his innocence is not proved, he will be considered guilty.

Law 2

This law defines criminal intimidation i.e. threatening behavior that is considered as a crime.

Details:

1. If somebody compels another person
 - To do anything which he is not legally bound to do
 - OR
 - Not to do anything which he is legally entitled to do

2. And, in this context, threatens to cause physical injury, or damage to the property and/or reputation of a person being compelled, or to any of his near ones.

Such a person commits a crime known as criminal intimidation.

Law 3

A husband is to provide living expenses of his wife. If a husband has more than one wives, he is to provide living expenses to all the them. Moreover, all the wives should be treated equally in this context.

Remedies are available if the husband fails to pay the living expenses. In addition to other remedies, one remedy is getting a certificate that fixes the money which the husband must pay. This remedy is available in the following situations:

1. The husband has one wife who seeks remedy
2. The husband has more than one wives, and any of them seeks remedy
3. The husband has more than one wives and all seek remedy

The following is the procedure of getting the certificate:

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Law 4

If any son or daughter dies before the death of a parent who owns property, the children of such son or daughter shall receive a share equivalent to the share which the son or daughter would have received if alive.

Law 5

Leveling false charges pertaining to adultery against any person is a crime. Similarly, giving or bringing false evidence, in this context, is also a crime. Anyone who does so will be punished and fined. Details:

- Punishment: imprisonment maximum up to 5 years
- Fine: maximum up to Rs. 10, 000/-

The accused will be provided an opportunity to defend himself before the judge. The reference to relevant law is: 203C Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

Law 6

A married man cannot go for another marriage without the Arbitration Council's written permission. The Arbitration Council is a body that looks into the matter from the following angles:

1. Whether the consent has been obtained from the existing wife/wives
2. Whether justification exists for remarrying

Marriage contracted without the permission of the Arbitration Council cannot be registered.

Procedure of Permission from Arbitration Council

- For another marriage, the man shall apply to the Chairman in a prescribed manner stating:
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- The Arbitration Council, if feels satisfied that the proposed marriage is necessary and just, may grant permission. The Arbitration Council can also impose certain conditions for the proposed marriage. It is necessary for the Arbitration Council to write reasons in the decision.

Appeal

If any party is not satisfied with the decision of the Arbitration Council, the aggrieved party can apply for revision to the concerned Collector. This revision application should be made in a prescribed manner and within the prescribed time. Further, the prescribed fee is also to be paid. The Collector's decision will be final and will not be challengeable in any court.

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During this time, if the parties reconcile, and subsequently the man withdraws the divorce, the divorce will become ineffective. Contrary to it, if the parties don't reconcile, the divorce will become effective.

The details related to the date from which the divorce becomes effective can be divided into two categories:

1. When the wife is not pregnant at the time of pronouncement of divorce
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For category 1, the divorce will become effective after 90 days from the start date of the husband's notice to the Chairman.

Category 2 can be further be divided into two parts:

- a. if the pregnancy ends before 90 days of the husband's notice, the divorce will become effective after the completion of these 90 days.
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Law 8

No one can compel any woman to marry against her will. Similarly, no one can force, persuade or trap a woman for illegal intercourse with anyone.

A person shall be punished with life imprisonment and shall also be fined who kidnaps or abducts (takes away by fraud) a woman with the intention that 1) she will agree to, or 2) chance exists that she will agree to

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Also, no one can make a woman move from one place to another for illegal intercourse with someone, or persuade or force her for this purpose by means of

- threats of criminal nature (as defined in law), or
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Also, no one can make a woman move from one place to another for illegal intercourse with someone, or persuade or force her for this purpose by means of

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- misuse of authority, or
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Life imprisonment is the punishment, in this situation, along with fine.

Sheet 2: Questions

Instructions:

This question sheet is based on Reading Task of Sheet 1. Each law has two questions: Question 1 and Question 2. For Question 1 of each law, you are required to tick the appropriate box: True or False. For question 2 of each law, you need to write the answer.

Law 1

1. For child marriage, punishment is the same no matter the care taker is a man or a woman.

True	False
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2. In what circumstances is a care taker of a child punishable for child marriage?

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Law 2

1. Threatening a person to defame him if he refuses to do something illegal is a criminal intimidation.

True	False
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2. What constitutes criminal intimidation?

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Law 3

1. To get a fixed amount of money from the husband as living expenses, the wife must prove that she is the only wife of the husband. True/False

True	False
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2. What is the significance of the Arbitration Council?

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Law 4

1. Suppose A is the owner of a property. A has two sons: B & C. B and C have their own children. B dies before the death of A. Then, A also dies, and his property is to be given to his legal heirs. In this situation, C will get greater share than B's children because C is still alive.

True	False
------	-------

2. Suppose any son or daughter dies before the death of a parent who owns property. Then, the parent who owns property also dies. How will the property be divided among the legal heirs?

Law 5

1. Presenting some other person in the court for false evidence pertaining to adultery is not a crime. True False
2. In what circumstances is a person punishable according to Law 5?

Law 6

1. After receiving the husband's application for another marriage, the Chairman himself nominates the representatives of both the parties to constitute the Arbitration Council.

True False

2. What role does the Arbitration Council play when a person is going for another marriage?

Law 7

1. If the pregnancy ends after 90 days from the start date of the notice sent to the chairman, divorce becomes effective at the end of the pregnancy. True False

2. Which procedure is to be adopted by a man to divorce his wife?

Law 8

1. Forcing a woman to marry someone against her will is not a punishable crime unless it is done through threats of criminal nature.

True	False
------	-------

2. In what circumstances a person misusing his authority is punishable according to Law 8?

Sheet 2: Questions

Note:

Question 2 of each law was open-ended. Therefore, for answer to question 2, essential points required in the answer have been provided in this answer key.

Law 1

1. For child marriage, punishment is the same no matter the care taker is a man or a woman.

True False

2. In what circumstances is a care taker of a child punishable for child marriage?

Ans: If he/she:

1. promotes child marriage,
2. allows child marriage, and
3. fails to stop child marriage

Law 2

1. Threatening a person to defame him if he refuses to do something illegal is a criminal intimidation.

True False

2. What constitutes criminal intimidation?

Ans: Compelling another person to:

1. do something which he is not required to do
2. stop doing anything that he is to do by law

And, in this context, causes i) physical injury, ii) damage to property, iii) damage to reputation

Law 3

1. To get a fixed amount of money from the husband as living expenses, the wife must prove that she is the only wife of the husband.

True False

2. What is the significance of the Arbitration Council?

Ans: 1. judges whether a certificate should be given to wife that reveals a specific amount that a husband must pay to his wife.

2. Subsequently, issues the certificates if required.

Law 4

1. Suppose A is the owner of a property. A has two sons: B & C. B and C have their own children. B dies before the death of A. Then, A also dies, and his property is to be given to his legal heirs. In this situation, C will get greater share than B's children because C is still alive.

True False

2. Suppose any son or daughter dies before the death of a parent who owns property. Then, the parent who owns property also dies. How will the property be divided among the legal heirs?

Ans: The grandchildren will get the share equal to the share the children would have taken in case of alive parent.

Law 5

1. Presenting some other person in the court for false evidence pertaining to adultery is not a crime.

True False

2. In what circumstances is a person punishable according to Law 5?

Ans: If he: i) levels false charges of adultery against anyone
ii) gives false evidence of adultery against anyone
iii) brings false evidence of adultery against anyone

The accused is to be provided an opportunity to defend himself/herself

Law 6

1. After receiving the husband's application for another marriage, the Chairman himself nominates the representatives of both the parties to constitute the Arbitration Council.

True False

2. What role does the Arbitration Council play when a person is going for another marriage?

Ans: The Arbitration Council decides whether permission is to be given or not in the light of the following criteria
Whether:

1. ex-wife's consent obtained
2. justification exists

The Arbitration Council can also allow with certain conditions

Law 7

1. If the pregnancy ends after 90 days from the start date of the notice sent to the chairman, divorce becomes effective at the end of the pregnancy.

True False

2. Which procedure is to be adopted by a man to divorce his wife?

Ans: He must:

1. pronounce divorce and give notice to the chairman within 30 days
2. Send copy of the notice to his wife as well
3. wait for Arbitration Council's reconciliation measures
4. follow the given dates from which the divorce date becomes effective by law

Law 8

1. Forcing a woman to marry someone against her will is not a punishable crime unless it is done through threats of criminal nature.

True False

2. In what circumstances a person misusing his authority is punishable according to Law 8?

Ans: When by misusing his authority, he:

1. makes her move for the purpose of illegal intercourse
2. forces her for the said purpose
3. persuades her for the said purpose