

Factors affecting the stability of marriages in Gombe North, Gombe State, Nigeria.

Abstract.

This review research is aimed to study causes of marital instability in societies as it's continued to effect the growth and development of every societies in which development families and life-long commitment depend on the successful marriages because of its connection to the socialization, security and psychological well-being of an individual as a member of society. The study concern with contemporary issues that are directly or indirectly influencing marital relations with view to discuss and highlight their effect on the affected individuals and society in general.

It is important to seek solution for the collapse of marriages in our societies in order to address some of the problems facing the societies which include deviant behavior, immoralities, and criminalities among others. Some of the factors identified and discussed below include; attitude and commitment of the couples, cultural condition of the marriage, social media platforms and family and friends intervention.

Key words: Marriage, marital stability, marital instability, couples.

Introduction

The term marriage is a key social institution in any given human society. It involves relationship between two or more individuals recognized by the laws and customs of the society that fold up with certain rights and duties among them. (Westermack, 1921). Marriage on the other hand, refers to an important institution that influences one's social world by first regulating sexual activities of the members of its society and their socialization. The couples who became parents are assigned with the responsibilities of taking care of the children and also train them about the norms and values of the society in order to produce a responsible members of the society. (Gunjan, 2019).

Social scientists attempted to define marriages differently for instance, (Giddens 1997) defined marriage as a 'social recognized relationship and approved sexual union between adults (man and woman) that carry certain rights and obligation'. The definition emphasizes on the relationship between two or more adults but this definition in some societies should not be applied because the issue of age at marriage is falling dramatically, adolescent marriages are on the rise for examples in developing countries, marriages are arranged not really considering the age of the couples. (Iknur and Banu, 2014).

Ember and Ember (2010) defined marriage as ‘a sanction union between people that establishes certain rights and obligation between them, their children and relatives’. They see marriage as an agreement between people who share certain responsibilities that include the right to property, labor, childbearing, and status among others.

Mazunda (1996) observes that; ‘Marriage is a social union of male and female for the purpose of establishing household, sex relation, procreation and providing care for the offspring.’ For him, marriage is a relationship that established sexual satisfaction and raising of children, but this definition has been criticized by others definitions where others argued that marriage is not only an institution regulating sexual intercourse and kept by conjugal affection or an arrangement for bringing up children, it is a partnership between couples for economic and social cooperation and formation of family. (Murdock, 1949).

Marital stability is a situation in which couples experiences healthy marital relationships and several factors are attributed to such relationships particularly when couples learn to sacrifice a lot to maintain their relationships which include trust, love, time, understanding, loyalty, sincerity, honesty, patience and companionship. (Okorodudu, 2010). Marital stability today is affected by many factors and it is becoming worrisome and witnessing instability globally. (Maciver and Dimkpa, 2012). As it continue affecting the cognitive, personality and socialization of the children which later effect the development of society. (Duke-Natrebo, 2014). As such, Social scientists developed interest in studying factors influencing the stability of marriages in different societies. This study is also motivated to study factors that causes instability of marriages particularly in northern Gombe, Gombe state, Nigeria.

There are number of factors responsible for marital instability but couples who acknowledge define purposed of their marriage deriving more benefit from their marital relation (Jimoh, 1999). Those whose attitudes toward their marriage are misperceived between them tend to be inconvenient in their marital relationship. Virtually Women are influenced by expectations, motivations, sexual satisfactions, and needs satisfactions are being met by their husbands and when their expectations are not achieved, they tend to be disobedient stubborn, not-cooperative to their partner. (Onoyase, 2013). Therefore, understanding the purpose of marriage and attitudes of a partner have positive impact in the stability of marriages. When a couple is familiar or clearly understand his/her responsibilities as a husband or wife i.e. knowing each other’s like dislike, hope, dreams, roles help the marital relation (Gotman and Silver, 1999). But at times

couples are just motivated by love, family and friends influences to get married not psychologically prepared for the marriage and this development is attributed to so many marital problems in our society today.

Every society has its own unique way of organizing and celebrating marriages pattern, (Scott, 2003). In Northern Gombe of Nigeria for instance, marriages are arranged in form of Islamic culture and the first condition in organizing marriage is proposal by the groom family and acceptance by the bride family as “offer and acceptance” (Ahmad, 2009), while during wedding ceremony there is a need for representatives of the families as witness to meet and arrange the marriage based on dowry, physical fitness, psychological health as well as maturity of the newly-married spouse, (Ahmad, 2009).

Other minor cultural conditions were introduced recently with its relevance on the status of the family these include provision of textiles, make-up materials, jewelries, perfumes, shoes and bags and other things for the bride from the groom as “LEFE” as well as provision of other cultural materials from the groom family to the bride family. On the other hand, the bride family provides furniture, electronics, and kitchen-wires among others. The contemporary culture introduced, cause lot of financial spending for both families which resulted in debts not only for the families but even for the newly married couples particularly the groom, who suffer a lot and find it difficult to start his marital life and this significantly affect the stability of their marriage.

More so, Social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, among others are introducing people with new forms of cultures by creating sites in which people with different background and culture are interacting with one another, (Shabnoor and et al 2016). As we are all aware social media has enormous impact on our society, (Neelamalar and Cehitra, 2009). Some social media sites have transformed the way people communicate and relate with others by rendering the opportunity for people to connect with new and old friends, colleagues, mates, and celebrities through helping them to share content, pictures, audios, videos, among others as well as changing their life style, (Shabnoor and et al 2016). This development that emerged, in connecting different people does not only affect societies but rather different forms of individual’s relationships include marital relationship by not only influencing the behaviors of couples but exposing them to outsiders and making them to be addicted which they spend a lot of time in social networking sites that may divert

their concentration to their partner. However, the advent of social media increased the public interest in celebrities even developed into “culture of celebrities” (Chikezie, 2017). Couples are also affected by the celebrity’s culture through the social media, (O’Rorke, 2006). In an attempts to emulate their role model in different aspect of life, the marital life becomes expensive and difficult to sustain between couples which resulted in misunderstanding, worries, and stress that may cause marital instability.

Marital decision making is made only for the married-partners thus the relevancy of their families will not be ignored but involvement of the family members and friends into marital affairs may cause tension, confusion, pressure on couples and their marital relations. (Katherine, 2018). However, family and friends involvement into marital decision is not only affecting the marital relation but also the psychological mind of the couples, (Bradley and et al 2016). Couples are expected to be loyal and obedient to one another but when one lacks ability to make strong decision in their relationship rather reporting his/her partner to the parents, friends or other people will frustrated his/her partner and make him/her disobedient. (Billingsley and et al 2005) It has become good that many couples believe that, it is the best means to settle issues between them without a third party, (Gotman and Silver, 1999).

Marriage life should be with mercy, compassion, tranquility but if the opposite is the case, couples should persue all remedies to rebuilding relationship. (Bradley, 2016). They need to seek for amicable settlement of their differences for peace to reign and not all their issues should be thrown at the doorsteps of friends, families and other external influences however, they should try to keep their marital vows in order to guide against unwarranted marriage break-up, (Rolloff and Ifert, 2000). The stability in marriages is not only affected by the external forces but the financial status of the couples particularly the husband, who is responsible to take care of the family. (Shahina, 2009). When a man is unable to meet up his financial obligation due to the poverty, it will significantly affects the stability of marriage thereof and it would be good in attempting to address marital instability in society, to create employment opportunities for people such as vocational skills for them to generate incomes in order to take care of the family’s needs thus, the society should ensure or make it mandatory for every one that intend to get married and should have source income either from his occupation or business. However, the society should encourage counselling programmes that would enlighten newly married couples

about the marital life and how to discharge their duties as couples this would help in promoting marital stability in our society. (Maciver and Dimkpa, 2012).

The rate of divorce in our societies is increasing all times and it becoming worrisome. (Akinbobola, 2021) Societies or Government need to intervene in the marital life and reconciles aggressive couple for instance, marital cases that are in courts, Judges should intervene by always giving room for reconciliation among affected couples for possible settlement. This will go a long way to reduce the rate of collapsed marriages in our society.

In conclusion, Societies are suffering from the consequences of marital instability, many children are affected by the marital problems of their parents which not only affecting their socialization but also their psychological well-being, education achievements, occupational performances among others. It also leads children to criminal behaviors such as drug abuse, alcoholism, prostitution, deviance and so on which to some extent impacted on the development of society. Therefore, addressing marital instability requires everyone to partake in addressing this challenge for the success of society as whole.

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