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**TOPIC:
MARITAL INSTABILITY IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATION ON
GROWING UP CHILDREN**

A TERM PAPER

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TITLE PAGE

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to the Almighty God for his wisdom,
Steadfastness and strength in writing this term paper

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My warmest gratitude goes to Almighty God who is the fountain of wisdom & knowledge. I am indeed very grateful to those who in their various ways made this work a success

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PREFACE

This term paper is about marital instability in Nigeria and its implication growing up children. Chapter one dwells on introduction, overview of marital instability, definitions of terms and forms of marital instability.

Chapter two talks about the causes of marital instability. Chapter three goes to explain the implication of marital instability on growing up children. Finally chapter four gave a suggestion on how marital instability can be avoided and it also give summery and conclusion of the work.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

It is a universal cultural idea that life should be orderly and that families, like clocks, should run smoothly, quietly leading to continuity of life. But this did not seem to be so in many societies, where all forms of marital instability is other of the day. Various forms of marital instability, which reflect disruptive events that undermine the continuity, cohesiveness, and predictability of family life from the child's perspective, have been shown to increase children's vulnerability to psychological problems (Ackerman, Kogos, Youngstrom, Schoff, & Izard, 1999). For example, residential changes, parental illness, parental romantic relationship transitions, and changes in caregivers are specific disruptive events that have been associated with a wide range of maladjustment among both children. Thus, any single disruptive event, such as divorce, is part of a larger constellation of marital instability characterized by parental marital transitions, frequent moving, income and occupational changes, and disruptions in family routines.

For this above mentioned reasons, this term papers try to shed more light on the forms of marital instability, it causes, it effect on children as well as possible solution to it.

1.1 An overview of marital instability

Marital instability is caused by different problems, like poverty, impotency, parental influence, lack of trust and so on. Its effect on children are numerous like peer group influence, illiteracy, lack of love etc. In order to solve this marital problem, Government should make compulsory laws guiding marriage and there should be proper orientation before marriage.

1.2 Definition of terms

- Marital – The word marital is derived from “marriage”. According to Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary, marriage is a legal relationship between husband and wife.

Umeh (1986) as quoted in a project work by Achi Chukwudi defines marriage as the final stage of love between the opposite sex who find solace in each other and agree as well as to take full responsibilities of themselves and environment with aims of tackling their problems as one person devoid of disunity for better or worse till death take them apart.

Again, marriage can be defined as the coming together of man and woman aim at satisfying their individual desires, needs and values. In various societies marriage is an important phenomenon, it confers status on the individual. It constitutes the yardstick for determination of responsibility. Rules governing the institution of marriage are always prescribed by all societies and ensure that

all offspring are fully protected. It is the starting point for the formation of family.

- Instability: instability in an ordinary sense means a situation where things are no longer the same. Advanced learner's dictionary define instability as the quality of a situation in which things are likely to change or fail suddenly. it also define it as a mental condition which somebody's behavior is likely to change suddenly
- Implication: implication simply means a possible effect or result of an action or adverse effect of an action.
- Children: children are young human beings who are not yet an adult and are still growing
- Marital instability: marital instability simply means disorganization of marriage, in other words; it is the misunderstanding or a disagreement of husband and wife and lack of harmony in the homes of married couples.

Coode (1961) as cited in a project by Ezennaya Grace define it as a breakdown of orderliness and solidarity in the family unit, a dissolution or violation of a pattern manner of roles or when one or more family member fail adequately to perform their roles and obligation.

Posmo Brown (2004) defines marital instability as when couples are unable to resolve conflict. The same pattern of dispute occurs repeatedly and there are no new ways of dealing with the problem, the tendency is that

instability will creep in and such instability can threaten the entire relationship resulting in bitter quarrel, emotional withdrawal, lack of affection and divorce.

Marital instability is a social problem that is capable of causing everlasting sorrow on the children, the couples and even the society at large.

1.2 Forms of Marital instability

There are many forms of marital instability, they includes: separation, divorce and death and so on.

Separation is a form of marital instability. Separation means when husband and wife decided to live apart when they are still legally married. This decision may be from either of the couple, when he/she feels that their marriage is no longer working fine or moving smoothly. Marital instability may also arise as a result of divorce. Divorce occurs when husband and wife end their marriage legally. This may be as a result of disharmony, maltreatment and lack of love, lack of effective communication, lack of quality time, lack of shared spiritual values etc. Death of either of the spouse may also constitute marital instability.

CHAPTER TWO

CAUSES OF MARITAL INSTABILITY

2.1 Impotency on either of the spouses

Impotency is one of the causes of marital instability. This is the situation where the husband can not impregnate the wife because of lack of erection and which does not allow fertilization to take place. This problem also arises from the wife if she is unable to produce children. Childlessness is a very great problem in marriages, especially in Nigeria where traditionally some people's aim of getting into marriages is to raise children who will bear their names in future. As a result of that, any marriage that does not bear issue does not mostly survive. In most cases the man may be forced to marry another wife or to look for means of getting a child no matter where the child comes from.

2.2 Poverty and economic problems

According to Agusiobo Victor (1995), as quoted in a project work by Udoh Vivian "he said that one of the major problems that contributed to the instability of marriage is poverty." Marriage according to him, no matter how well intention becomes, that when marriage lacks material needs for sustenance, it becomes a problem. In some homes the maintenance of the wife and children becomes so difficult that the wife have no option than to seek those these things needed outside their homes. For instance the woman may start having extra

marital affairs in trying meet up with their family needs. And this can result to disagreement there by leading to marital instability.

2.3 Parental influence

This is another of the causes of marital instability. It contributes to marital instability in many ways. It could be interference from the wife or husband parent's side; especially of mother in-law. The mother in-law often is been too protective of their children thereby creating trouble between the couples which can later lead to instability of the marriage. They (parents) want to look into every thing and to make sure that their sons are not cheated. They want to make sure that their daughter in-laws do not use up all their sons money on expensive wrappers and all that. The parent especially mothers, on the other hand will make sure that their daughter gets all the respect due to them without asking her if she gave enough respect to her husband's people.

2.4 lack of Trust and personal lapses

One of the commonest causes of marital instability is lack of trust. Some marriages are contracted nowadays without genuine mutual understanding between couples. Some wife are found of accusing their husband falsely, whenever their husband stay out late, the only thing that will come into their mind is that their husband has gone to see another woman, even when the husband comes back and explain, the wife will still be doubting him .

In some homes, husbands suddenly change their character towards their wife, he no longer cares about the welfare of the wife like before or he starts complaining on any slight thing the wife does, this sudden change might be as a result of extra marital affairs on the side of the husband In such home where trust is lacking, its result is always marital instability.

CHAPTER THREE

EFFECT OF MARITAL INSTABILITY ON THE GROWING UP CHILDREN

3.1 Peer group influences

Influence of peer group on children from unstable home is very enormous. When parents are not in good terms, they will not have time to bring up their children in a proper way, thereby the children learn from their peer group. The children do whatever their peers does not caring to know if it is wrong or not. They may learn all sorts of vices like armed robbery, drug pushing, prostitution etc from their peers.

3.2 Lack of love.

Children from divorce or separated homes usually lack love. Love is the basic ingredient which forms the basis of all life on earth. It is a feeling which cannot be quantitatively measured but which nevertheless is vital for the coexistence of all forms of living beings on this planet.

Love between parent and children forms the basis for any upbringing. It is not merely confined to the likes of upbringing but goes a long way in deciding the emotional quotient of an individual. There are several ways in which parents can show their affection and love toward their children, some of them are: **saying I love you**

These three simple plain words can lend a huge assurance to your children. Although many would argue that saying is not everything, but saying conquers half the battle! The words bridge the emotional gap which exists between parents and their children. A simple "I love you" goes a long way toward developing and then strengthening a relationship. Development of some rituals such as a bedtime stories or a game of baseball with your kid. Such a gesture makes him / her believe that you as a parent are beside him / her. Love they say is Life, children from unstable homes may not have opportunity to all these parent-child relationships and this can lead to emotional breakdown.

3.3 No sense of direction

Another effect of marital instability on growing up children is lacks direction. Children whose parents are separated or divorced are usually exposed to all kinds of problem. They usually have no sense of direction in doing things in the right way and have no one to correct them. The child that lacks sense of direction develops habits such as deliquesces, vandalism, pocket picking child labour and some of the social ills which pose threat in the society.

3.4 Growth of illiteracy

When there is marital instability, it affects the life of the children. This is so because in a family where there is instability in marriage, the children in that family will be emotionally depressed, and this may be so due to inadequate

provision of all that they needed for their educational upbringing. In a situation where they manage to enroll in schools, you found out that they are not performing well. Even when they are able to perform well they get intimidation from their peers.

CHAPTER FOUR

REMEDIES TO MARITAL INSTABILITY

4.1 Proper orientation

Any body who has attained the age of marriage and wants to marry should seek proper counseling either from old couple or from an expert in marriage issue. These people will be able to give and tell them the dos and don'ts of marriage, Which will enhance the blissfulness of their marriage

4.2 Maturity before marriage

There should be law in Nigeria stipulating the age which one must attain before going into marriage; this is to ensure that they can handle any problems that arise from their marriage. Also parent should not force their children into early marriage because of material gain

4.3 Summary and Conclusion

Summary

With greater percentage of humanity chose marriage and for life, stick to their partner. But so do not want to cause problems in their family. In Igbo culture, marriage is much valued because the Igbo's believed that marriage is something that every man and woman must undergo without hesitation because it has been ordained by God. This is the reason why couples should practice a source of self restrained one to other mate and also try to love each other. To keep love alive, couples need patience and forgiveness. Callousness due to resentment

must be avoided. Couple should keep their heart open and when ever they offend each other, they should simply say sorry to each other. Couples should remember that the more the spouse allow uncontrollable anger to rent itself against a mate, the more likely anger is to be utilized as a destructive problem solving technique. Let it to be understandable issue to men and women that for their marriage to be successful and worthy of emulation, the foundation should be dug with spades of tolerance and it must be built on the rock of kindness, with the cement of understanding and concrete of forgiveness and when such building is completed, the roof should be made of selflessness and love.

Conclusion

Marriage is the oldest institution one can imagine and just like any other institution it has its rules and regulation. This rules and regulation are such that if one party deviate from them, it affect not only the family where the two people come from but the children are particularly affected as well as society at large.

Marital instability poses a big threat to the children and disorganized their lives. The family seems to be in danger of loosing its central institutional place in human affairs in the light of marital instability. The children are always the victim of any marital instability in any society. The suffering of these children start immediately marital instability occurs between their parents in the family. In the case where the marital instability leads to divorce the situation becomes more problematic for the children in that society. Most society can afford to turn its

back on marital instability. The family is too indispensable a unit, a social structure and too necessary a means for the transmission of culture to the oncoming generation to be allowed to fall apart. Thus, this term paper is a step in the right direction and brings to the lime light the consequences of marital instability on children and as well as provide solution to the problem.

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