

Influence of divorce on children's up brought and education in afikpo north local government of ebonyi state: Remedial measures for sustainable life styles

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Abstract

Introduction: This study presents the results of an investigation on the major causes of divorce in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, the influence of divorce on children's upbringing, educationally, socially and emotionally and suggested measures for the eradication of divorce which is a notable problem in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Seven clustered research questions with a total of 60 the following items and hypothesis guided the study. The design employed was the descriptive survey involving a questionnaire instrument. Purposive sampling technique was used in the study in order to use schools that have divorced cases in the study. A random sample of 480 SS 3 students 40 secondary school teachers, as well as 21 school guidance counselors, all drawn from 21 secondary schools in the L.G.A, was used as respondents. On the whole there were 260 males, 260 females respectively taking all males and females together well as data collected were analyzed analyses using some descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, weighted average responses, as inferential statistics like t-test statistics for testing the hypothesis stated in the study. Major findings in the causes of divorce include sterility, impotency, adultery, neglect of wives by husbands; influences of divorce on children include of education of children for trading and other, forms of petty business, exhibition of deviant behaviours like theft, prostitution, aggression, development of low self-esteem and feeling of rejection. Some suggested remedial measures include complete eradication of early and forceful marriages, unfaithfulness, neglect of wives and exhibition of true love and respect on the part of couples. Some recommendations made include that would-be-partners should be biologically harmonious through adequate testing of their genotypes, and avoidance of marriages arranged by relatives or friends without the consent of both parents.

Keywords: divorce, Afikpo.

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Marriage is the legal union of a man to one of more women so that they become husband(s) and wife/wives.

Marriage has been ordained by God right from the creation of the world (Genesis 2:18-24). Gough (1971), threw more light on the concept of marriage as: "A relationship established between a woman and one or more other persons, which provides that a child born to the woman under circumstances not prohibited by the rules of the relationship is accorded full birth status, rights common to normal members of the society or social stratum." Similarly, according to Notes and Queries (1979), "Marriage" is "a union between a man and a woman such that children born to both of them are recognized as legitimate offsprings of the parents". For Winick (1970), marriage is the established institution for starting a family. However, for Marchal (1978), marriage is "the judicially valid and socially recognized

assumption of the kinship roles of husband and wife". Marriage could be monogamous, polygynous or polyandrous. Monogamy is a marriage between one man and one woman. Polygamy obtains where two or more women are married to one husband. This is a fairly common type of marriage in Afikepo North LGA of Ebonyi State and Nigeria in general. Polyandry is a marriage practice whereby one woman is legally married to two or more men not as a group, but individually at the same time. According to Okunrotita *et al* (1986:17) and Nwanunobi (1992:32), this type of marriage is practiced by the marquesans of Polynesia and Todas of India. After marriage has been contracted and consummated, a family then comes into being. Maciver and Charles (1981), defined family as 'a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently précised and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children'. It may include collateral or subsidiary relationships, but it is constituted by their up springs as distinct unit. Therefore, the family has the following characteristics as opined by Maciver *et al* (1981): A mating relationship. A form of marriage or other institutional arrangements in accordance with which the mating relation is established and maintained. A system of nomenclature involving also as mode of reckoning descent. Some economic provision shared by the members of the group, but having a special reference to the economic needs associated with child bearing and child rearing generally, and A common habitation, home or household which however may not be exclusive to the family group. There are however different types of family which include, nuclear or basic family, polygynous family, stem family, joint (Lineal or grand) family and extended family. The stem family group is made up of only two related marriageable couples in the adjacent generation and their offsprings. The joint (Lineal or grand) family consist of two or more lineally related kinsfolks of the same sex, their spouses and offsprings who occupy a single homestead and are jointly subject to the same authority or single head (Maciver *et al* 181). The family performs various functions such as procreation, parental function, educational, protective, legal, religious, agent of socialization and disciplinary functions etc. In Ajuha's (1999) opinion the family ensures the continuity and increase in the family members. It provides the economic needs of the members and also sharpens the personality of the child, which makes the child socially and emotionally stable in the society. Married family or couple can be separated by divorce. Divorce is 'the termination of a valid marriage. It is a mechanism with which to deal with the inevitable problems caused by marriage. Divorce frees husbands and wives from their rights, mutual cares, common residence, sexual union and the companionship granted by marriage can no longer be

expected or claimed. According to Elias, Nwabara, Akoangbo (1975; 112-1113), there are two major types of divorce, namely: statutory divorce and customary divorce. Statutory divorce is the dissolution of marriages contracted under the law by the court, while customary divorce is the dissolution of marriage contracted under customary law. Unlike divorce in the formal court, there are no tabulated matrimonial offences upon proof of which divorce is granted. Generally, incompatibility between the spouses is enough. Among these are also adultery, loose character, laziness, sterility, witchcraft, cruelty and desertion. These are the major types of divorce that are obtainable in Afikpo LGA. Nwogugu (1974) also posited that the dissolution of a customary law marriage is only effective when the bride price is refunded or when the husband renounces his right to claim a refund of the bride price formally and unequivocally before the join family group. Onokah, (2003), opined that the general rule (in Mid-Western state of Nigeria) for instance under the indigenious customary law is that the amount refundable is the actual amount that was given. However, a general exception to the foregoing is that once a wife has gotten children for the husband, only a part of the amount given is refundable. The rationale here is that the woman has suffered "wears and Tears" through childbearing and it would be unreasonable to allow the husband recover the full amount of the marriage symbol. Nwogugu, (1990), also stated that non-judicial divorce is brought about by the unilateral action of a spouse in Nigeria, this procedure is open to either the husband or the wife. But in some areas, right of terminating marriage by unilateral action is conferred only on the husband. (Section B of the Biu in Adamawa state) Native Authority (Declaration of Biu Native marriage law and custom) order, 1974, which provides that husband and wife shall be deemed to be divorced, if:

- Upon the granting of a divorce by a court on the application of either husband or wife; or
- Upon oral repudiation of his wife by the husband in her presence before two adult male witnesses of full capacity;
- Upon repudiation of his wife by the husband in writing signed by himself and dated.

Nwogugu (1990) went further to say that under the Maliki School of Islamic law in Northern Nigeria; a discontented married woman may obtain her release from the marriage by means of "Khul". The "Khul" is dissolution of marriage obtained by the wife with the consent of the husband in return for the payment of compensation to him. The compensation may be paid by the woman's parents or guardian. Primarily, it is the wife that pays the compensation. Another non-judicial mode of dissolution

of marriage by one party under Islamic law in Northern Nigeria is by “talaq”. The “talaq” is a means of divorce, which is open only to the husband at his discretion. When the “talaq” is pronounced only once or twice, it may bring the marriage decisively to an end except during “idda” period (Ruxton 1976). The most popular means of marriage dissolution as found in nearly all cultures are Annulment and Separation (Nwogugu 1990). By Annulment the marriage is voided. This is as though the marriage has never existed. It is granted when a marriage is against public policy like a member of immediate family may not be allowed to marry each other. Annulment is granted in cases where marriage is induced by means of force or threats, and when the man is physically incapable to enter into sexual relationship such as impotence, unsound mind, epilepsy etc. It is supported to wipe out the marriage and the children if any become illegitimate. Separation on the other hand is usually basically where a woman does not want a divorce to occur. The man is obliged to her for her support and maintenance of her children. The couples do not therefore live together. In Afikpo North L.G.A., customary marriage could be dissolved by either party when the husband is refunded the bride price. Statutorily, section 15(1) matrimonial causes Act of Federal Republic of Nigeria, (1970), provided that “a petition for divorce may be presented by either party to the marriage on the ground that the marriage “has broken down irretrievably”. However, the Act stipulates that a judge should use his discretion to identify whether the behaviours of the respondent should attract a divorce or not.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Divorce cases in Afikpo North L.G.A have been significantly on the increase. Sporadic reports of family instability and marriage break ups in recent years in the local government area is really disturbing. Even the church has constituted marriage tribunals to help resolve problems arising from divorce. The L.G.A is not also left out in this exercise. The social welfare department of the L.G.A has been established to help resolve issues between couples that could lead to divorce in the local government. This study therefore has as its problem, the influence of these divorce situations on the proper upbringing of children of such disorganized families.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and highlight:

1. The various causes of divorce in the LGA
2. The influence of divorce on children’s upbringing emotionally.
3. The influence of divorce on children’s upbringing educationally.

4. The influence if divorce on children’s upbringing socially.
5. The measures that would be adopted to minimize the rate or eradicate divorce completely if possible in Afikpo North L.G.A.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to finding out the causes of divorce at the customary marriage levels only in Afikpo North LGA of Ebonyi State. The work is also limited to couples with divorce cases between 2005 – 2012 inclusive. The local government is made up of 8 autonomous communities with the inhabitants being predominantly petty trader, fisher men, pot makers, farmer’s poultry keepers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the major causes of customary marriage divorce in Afikpo North LGA of Ebonyi State between 2005-2012 inclusive?
2. What are the major influence of divorce on children’s upbringing educationally?
3. What are the major influences of divorce on children’s upbringing emotionally?
4. What are the major effects of divorce on children’s upbringing socially?
5. Which principal measures can be adopted to eradicate divorce completely in Afikpo North L.G.A?
6. What are the major views of females (women) with regards to causes of divorce in the L.G.A?
7. What are the major views of males (men) with regards to causes of divorce in the LGA?

Research Hypothesis

There will be no significant difference between the average responses of married males and females with regards to the causes of divorce in Afikpo LGA of Ebonyi State.

METHODOLOGY

The design employed in the study is the descriptive survey research. Purposive sampling technique was employed in order to use schools that experienced divorce cases within the period under survey (2005 – 2012, Data was collected principally using a questionnaire instrument as well as interview techniques that involved responses from elders in the communities that make up the L.G.A.

RESULTS

Obtained are as presented in tables 1 – 7 in order according to the research questions posed. Question No 1: What are the major causes of divorce in Afikpo North L.G.A. Answers to this research question are as presented in table no 1 below

Table 1: Causes of divorce in Afikpo North L.G.A.

S/N	Causes of divorce	SA	A	D	SD	Average	Total	Decision
1.	Lack of true love before husband and wife.	240	120	80	80	3.0	520	Agree
2.	Sterility of the part of the wives	245	130	70	80	3.01	520	Agree
3.	Importency on the part of husband	238	122	60	70	2.75	520	Agree
4.	Women emancipation	100	104	119	90	2.40	520	Disagree
5.	Adultery	241	128	70	70	2.97	520	Agree
6.	Early child/marriage	239	130	1020	48	3.13	520	Agree
7.	Forced marriage	237	138	75	70	3.01	520	Agree
8.	Neglect of wife by husband	245	122	90	63	2.80	520	Agree
9.	Infidelity and flotation	250	120	100	50	3.09	520	Agree
10.	Late discovery of each others incapacibilities	90	140	220	70	2.40	520	Disagree

From the table No. 1, it can be seen that the major causes of divorce amongst couples in Afikpo North L.G.A. are as many as shown in serial no 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. These factors cause divorce approximately with equal weights with the most being early child/marriage, forest marriage, sterility of wives and infidelity and flotation by either party. **Research question No 2:** Sought information on the major influences of divorce on children’s upbringing educationally. Results obtained are as show below.

Table 2: Influence of divorce on children’s upbringing educationally

S/N	Influence of divorce on children’s upbringing educationally	SA	A	D	SD	Average	Total	Decision
11.	Children are forced to forego education for trade.	280	179	52	9	3.4	520	Agree
12.	Children of divorced families don’t perform well in school.	48	101	157	214	2.00	520	Disagree
13.	Children of divorced families have lower rates of admission in secondary schools.	35	99	221	165	2.00	520	Disagree
14.	Children of divorced families have lower rate of admission into higher education.	57	100	144	219	2.00	520	Disagree
15.	Children from divorced homes repeat classes more frequently than do children of peaceful homes.	41	53	186	240	1.8	520	Disagree
16.	Children from divorced homes have high rate of dropout from schools.	94	136	111	179	2.3	520	Disagree

Therefore from this table number 2, the major influence of divorce on the education of children is that they are force to forego education for trade or business all other factors are not significant are shown in the table. **Research question 3:** Sought information on the major effects of divorce on children’s upbringing socially in the L.G.A. Results are depicted as in table No. 3 below.

S/N	Major effect of divorce on children upbringing socially	SA	A	D	SD	Average	Total	Decision
17.	Children from divorced homes lack parental care.	253	210	22	35	3.3	520	Agree
18.	Girls living in single parents families are sexually promiscuous.	118	246	66	90	2.8	520	Agree
19.	Boys, from divorce homes specially if they are living with their mothers respond with more hostility.	106	258	107	49	2.8	520	Agree
20.	Divorce can cause juvenile delinquency among the children.	250	205	52	13	3.3	520	Agree
21.	Divorce diminishes the capacity of children to handle conflicts.	143	240	93	44	2.9	520	Agree
22.	Boys from divorced homes living with their mothers have a difficulty in defining their own roles.	64	214	116	126	2.4	520	Agree
23.	Children are forced into early marriages.	138	230	89	63	2.9	520	Agree

Therefore from table number 3, the result shows that children upbringing are affected socially by all the factors mentioned in series number 17 to 23. **Research question No. 4:** Sought information on major influence of divorce on children’s upbringing emotionally.

S/N	Influence of divorce on children’s upbringing emotionally	SA	A	D	SD	Average	Total	Decision
24.	Girls living in single parent families are often aggressive.	75	237	143	65	2.6	520	Disagree
25.	Girls living in single parent families are sexually promiscuous after divorce.	102	189	116	113	2.5	520	Agree
26.	Boys, especially if they are living with their mothers respond with more hostility.	213	225	58	24	3.2	520	Agree

27.	Divorce can cause juvenile delinquency among the children.	87	223	122	88	2.6	520	Agree
28.	Divorce diminishes the capacity of children to handle conflicts.	87	223	122	88	2.6	520	Agree
29.	Boys living with their mothers have difficulty in defining their own roles.	102	189	116	113	2.5	520	Agree
30.	Children are forced into early marriage.	104	191	114	115	2.5	520	Agree

Results obtained shows that children from divorced home have similar problems socially and emotionally.

Research question No 5: Sought information on majors for the eradication of divorce in the L.G.A for self sustainability.

S/N	Causes of divorce	SA	A	D	SD	Average	Total	Decision
31.	Child/early or forced marriage should be avoided.	334	156	21	9	3.6	520	Agree
32.	Understanding the family background of spouse before getting married.	262	232	10	16	3.4	520	Agree
33.	Love at first sight should be avoided.	204	146	107	63	2.9	520	Agree
34.	True love, respect, faithfulness, understanding and patience should be the guiding principles in marriage.	393	100	12	15	3.7	520	Agree
35.	Would be partners must be both biologically and spiritually harmonious.	171	206	109	34	3	520	Agree
36.	Life aspirations of would be partners must critically be considered before marrying.	185	288	26	21	3.2	520	Agree
37.	Marriage should not be contracted based on the fact that both partners have had sexual intercourse earlier on.	165	186	99	70	2.9	520	Agree
38.	Marriage should not be arranged by friends or relatives without the consent of both partners.	291	161	30	38	3.4	520	Agree
39.	Do not marry anyone because of suicide threat and not of love.	254	163	38	65	3.2	520	Agree
40.	Married couples should avoid imitating their divorced parents.	260	177	52	31	3.3	520	Agree

From this table it can be seen that all the ten suggested major can be applied to eradicate divorce in the LGA with stoppage of early child/early marriage being most significant. **Research question 6:** Responses of 260 female teachers on the causes of divorces on the LGA.

S/N	Causes of divorce as opined by 260 female teachers	SA	A	D	SD	Average	Total	Decision
1.	Lack of true love between husband and wife.	175	67	18	-	3.6	260	Agree
2.	Sterility on the part of the husband.	69	134	51	6	3.0	260	Agree
3.	Importance on the part of the husband.	61	124	51	24	2.9	260	Agree
4.	Couples with parental records of unhappy marriages.	50	70	47	93	2.3	260	Disagree
5.	Adultery, infidelity and flirtation by either wife or husband.	136	92	11	21	3.3	260	Agree
6.	Late discovery of each other's incapacities.	48	120	56	36	2.7	260	Agree
7.	Preferential treatment by a spouse to his or her sister, brother, mother or father.	29	79	89	63	2.3	260	Disagree
8.	Misuse of the income of the wife or husband by one of the spouses.	56	79	87	38	2.6	260	Agree
9.	Maltreatment and neglect of wife by the husband and vice versa.	96	131	13	20	3.2	260	Agree
10.	Early/child or forced marriage.	76	119	20	45	2.9	260	Agree

From tables it can be seen that female teachers agree that all the items expect 4 and 7 as being major causes of divorce in LGA. **Research question 7:** Responses of 260 male teachers on the causes of divorces on the LGA.

S/N	Causes of divorce as opined by 260 female teachers	SA	A	D	SD	Average	Total	Decision
1.	Lack of true love between husband and wife.	143	69	24	24	3.3	260	Agree
2.	Sterility on the part of the husband.	98	118	42	2	3.2	260	Agree
3.	Importance on the part of the husband.	76	130	47	7	3.1	260	Agree
4.	Couples with parental records of unhappy marriages.	51	98	63	48	2.6	260	Agree
5.	Adultery, infidelity and flirtation by either wife or husband.	120	120	9	11	3.3	260	Agree
6.	Late discovery of each other's incapacities.	131	61	53	15	3.2	260	Agree
7.	Preferential treatment by a spouse to his or her sister, brother, mother or father.	73	76	66	45	2.7	260	agree
8.	Misuse of the income of the wife or husband by one of the spouses.	80	94	52	34	2.1	260	Agree

9.	Maltreatment and neglect of wife by the husband and vice versa.	147	87	17	9	3.4	260	Agree
10.	Early/child or forced marriage.	133	63	38	26	3.2	260	Agree

The result from this table show that all male teachers agree that all the items are major causes of divorce in LGA.

Result of Research Hypothesis

There will be no significant difference between the average responses of males and females with regards to the causes of divorce in Afikpo North L.G.A of Ebonyi state.

Table 8: Z Test of difference between means

	Mean	Standard deviation	Number	Standard Error	Z. cal.	2-Crit.
Male Responses	2.96	0.36	260	0.14	0.64	1.96
female response	2.86	0.36	260			

Therefore, married males and females do not differ in their opinions on the average on the causes of divorce in Afikpo North L.G.A of Ebonyi State.

CONCLUSION

The researcher therefore concluded that major causes of divorce in Afikpo North L.G.A of Ebonyi State amongst others are lack of true love between husband and wife, sterility, impotence, adultery, infidelity, maltreatment and neglect by the husband or wife, and early or forced marriage. Moreover, among the negative influences of divorce on children’s upbringing are that children are forced to forgo education for trade and they lack parental care. There are prevalent juvenile delinquencies among the children from divorced homes and as such children develop low self-esteem and feeling of rejection. Conclusively, some of the suggested measures which can eradicate divorce in this local government area avoidance of forced or early marriage, true love, respect, faithfulness, understanding and patience should guide every marriage. Would be partners should be both biologically and spiritually harmonious. Marriage should not be arranged by relatives or friends without the consent of both partners.

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