

# Divorce and Its Consequences on Family Development

Karake Musaja Vincent

**Abstract—** Divorce is a terribly-unpleasant experience that negatively affects all human relationships: parents, children, relatives, and friends. This devastating event affects parents' emotional, psychological, social and economic stability. It also impacts parents' relationship with their offspring. The objective of this article is to find what the root causes of conflicts that result in divorce in Christian families are and the impact of divorce process on family development.

To find the causes of the conflicts, relevant literature by authorities and scholars in the area of Divorce and Marriage was reviewed. Views on factors that affect both parents and their children were taken to be used and compared to results of data critically and synthetically analyzed and interpreted.

In the process to collect data, Qualitative Descriptive research design was used where questionnaire, study guide, and interviews were used to collect data. Basing on the research objectives, the data collected was coded, analyzed and tabulated. The data was then interpreted, being answers from 85 respondents involved in the study.

The findings of the research carried out contained in this article showed that among the major causes of divorce are: infidelity, sexuality difficulties among couples, drug abuse, incompatibility, economic status of the family, poor communication, and work-holism. The couple should always remember that forgiveness and respect to each other will go a long way towards fighting the spirit of divorce. It is recommended that the couple always work towards establishing and maintaining good, marital relationship. They should be extra careful how they behave before their children if divorce has actualized. Lastly, they should also be aware of the help that is always available through Counseling.

**Index Terms—** Divorce, Family, Consequences, Development.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The family is the basic unit of human society. Individuals become social beings through the influence of the family. The Bible confirms the importance of the family. It starts with God's institution of marriage and the family at the creation of mankind (Genesis 2:18-25) and ends with the prophetic statement of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). As to the choice of partners in marriage, societies practice Endogamy and Exogamy. Endogamy is the practice of marrying within one's group and Exogamy is the practice of marrying outside one's group. There are two forms of marriage: monogamy where one woman is married to one man at one time, and Polygamy which allows for multiple mates. Further, there are three forms of Polygamy. Polygyny which is a form of marriage that permits one man to have two

or more wives at one time. The second is Polyandry, a rare form of marriage in which one woman has two or more husbands. Polyandry exists in Tibet in Nepal, parts of China, part of northern India, among Bororo tribe in South America and among the Irigwe people of Nigeria (outlawed in 1968). Thirdly, there is Group marriage where several men and women share marital relationships (Hobbs and Blank, 'Sociology'). Out of these forms, Christians because of their understanding and convictions of the Holy Scriptures practice a marriage which is Monogamous and Permanent until the death of one partner. Christians believe this is the perfect will of God. It is the mind of God as far as marriage is concerned. This is supported by the act of God Himself joining of Adam and Eve. The marriage institution being founded, solemnized and finalized by God makes it to be a contract sealed by God and which only God can break if the seal should be lifted, which normally happens at the death of a spouse (Shearer D. L. 2002).

### • Problem Statement

Despite being hated by God (Malachi 2:16) and largely by African culture, divorce has become a common phenomenon, particularly in the West, and has attracted global attention. When it happens, divorce affects the entire family, both the parents and the children. The result of this is that the family will not realize its full potential and will not develop as intended, instead it will suffer consequences. It is the task of this study to find the causes of conflicts that bring about divorce, the impact that this has on family development, and how divorce can be stopped or minimized in the society.

### • Research objective

To find out causes of conflicts that result into divorce and the negative impact it has on family development and to find the solution to this situation.

## II. LITERATUREREVIEW

### • Introduction:

The literature review involves the identification of readings, locations, and critical analysis of relevant materials which are related to the problem under study (Odera P. Educational research methods, Kigali, 2006). In this case the material relates to causes of conflicts in the family and the negative impact it has on family development. The review of literature will be compared in what the situation on the ground was found to be. This was done through the analysis and causes of divorce and also the effects of divorce on children, family and the community in the six selected parishes of the ADEPR Church, which was the Case Study.

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The ADEPR church has a population of over 2million Christians and in each and every Sector there is a local church of ADEPR.

### • **What Divorce Is:**

Divorce is the legal ending of marriages, or separations, or dissolution of marriage. This is effected by the judgment or decree of court, either totally dissolving the marriage relations and other responsibilities of marriage, thus dissolving the bonds of the matrimony between a married couple under the rule of law of a particular country or state. Divorce is a traumatic experience. It is a family as well as a personal crisis whose process entails psychological risks as well as opportunity for the development of the stakeholders (Aprons et al., 1987). Divorce is an easy way out of a troubled marriage. However, many times those who divorce later regret their actions for doing so. Usually, there is a general breakdown of marriage relationship before a divorce is contemplated

as there have never been couples whose marriages are flourishing that decided to go for divorce.

Some basic facts need to be appreciated as far as the success of marriage is concerned. Entering marriage without a solid foundation or no foundation at all is one of the notable causes of marriage failure. That foundation is the love to each other. This is the reason why before two people rush into marriage, they must be sure that they love each other (Mok, Young S. Christian Family, 2015). The couple must also make sure that their love is growing as there are couples who start marriage relationships with genuine love but along the way allow crack in their marriage and their love dries up ending in divorce. Marriage, being no human arrangement but divine, the couple must always be near God for the marriage to succeed and to develop (Genesis 2:18-25). Its effectiveness, stability, and obligations are regulated not by humans only but more so by the marriage contract as enshrined and stipulated by God in the Holy Scriptures (Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-25).

### • **Conflicts in Marriage:**

Conflict is another cause of marriage failures and divorce. While some level of conflicts in marriage is inevitable, they need to be managed well otherwise they may end up in divorce. Unfortunately, there are couples who fail to manage conflicts that arise between them which will eventually bring about maladjustment between them, normally lead to couples denying each other sex and as long as couples do not satisfy each other sexually, it may lead to divorce. In fact, most of the extra-marital affairs seen today are from couples who are not satisfied sexually by their spouses or who are constantly denied sex by their spouses. There are couples who are so selfish that as long as they are satisfied, they do not bother whether their partners are satisfied (Young S. Mok, Christian Family, 2015).

**Addiction:** Too much addiction for anything is bad and it has been found out that addiction is also a leading factor behind the ending of a marriage. This is especially true of alcohol addiction. This is because alcohol addiction often does lead to its abuse which is often the cause of many problems in the family. Since living with an addicted person

is very difficult, some people choose the path of divorce.

**Boredom:** When married couples get bored of each other or of the life style they are leading, this often leads to the path of divorce. When there is boredom in marriage, couples eventually grow distant and get disinterested in each other. Among the contributors to boredom are inability to age gracefully, lack of mutual interests, intellectual incompatibility, social isolation, lack of community support, dependent adult children, insufficient financial resources, and absence of humor in the family. The first signs of boredom must be taken care of by trying new and interesting things to avoid the path to divorce.

**Isolation that leads to Loneliness:** The relationship between married people should bring intimacy. Situations that result into isolation might at the end of the day lead to divorce. Loneliness has been said to be the most serious disease of today's society. The feeling of loneliness is not about being alone in a physical space but something that goes beyond spatial level, and to feeling of the emotional and sentimental. Other things that create distance between humans are greed, selfishness, the urge to control and intolerance. These isolate man and make him lonely. The feeling of isolation or loneliness can cause depression, mental illnesses, and suicides. When in isolation, people cannot maintain healthy, human, relationships and generally comfort their feeling of loneliness or isolation with sex and gambling. Compulsive gamblers try to create intimacy with something other than human beings that is like horses but that does not solve the issue of loneliness. Human sins create the feeling of loneliness and separation from God, man, and nature. Salvation is about the recovery of the relationships. The most effective weapon Satan uses to sever the ties between married couples, brothers, and fellow Christians is the feeling of loneliness (cf. 1 Kings 19:10, 14). This feeling hardens and dries hearts and makes people say hurtful things (Mok, Young S. Christian Family, 2015).

### **Spousal Violence**

Perhaps more than any other piece of work, statistics from Canada's ground-breaking violence against women survey (VAWS) made it clear that in Canada violence against women in the family context is far from rare. Twenty-nine percent of all women who had ever been married or had lived with a man in a common law relationship had experienced at least one episode of violence by a husband or a live partner (Johnson, 1996). Furthermore, almost half (48 percent) of women who had been previously married or had lived in common-law relationship in the past had been assaulted or threatened in some way by previous partners. Relationships with violence are therefore more likely to end other than in a peaceful way and in some cases, the woman's decision to terminate the relationship results in violent response from her partner. As well, risk of deadly violence was substantially higher for separated couples than for married couples who were living together: between 1974 and 1992, rates of wife killings were six times higher for separated wives than for those still living with the accused at the time of the killing (Wilson & Daly, 1994). Many men increase the level of battering against their wives when the women take steps to leave (Johnson, 1996). Separating couples are therefore

particularly at risk. Moreover, the VAWS showed that in 39 percent of marital relationship with violence, victims said their children had been witnesses and that when the children were exposed to assaults on their mothers, in 61 percent of cases the women suffered physical injuries and in 52 percent of cases the violence was so severe that the victim feared for her life. It is clear that any treatment of the issues surrounding divorce, custody and access is incomplete without an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence. Failure to take these cases into account can only increase the emotional trauma of those involved or worse, increase their physical danger.

There are generally two forms of violent behavior of a spouse, namely expressive and instrumental. The expressive violence can be seen basically as a higher level of expression or function of one's emotions. This type of violence takes place when marital conflict begins to escalate. In this case of expressive violence precipitant event such as violating an important rule of the relationship is discovered, and the stages of escalating conflict and anger are also specifically verified. Therefore, expressive violence, although not identical is contributed by both spouses in the process of a worsening conflict. So, there is no victim or perpetration. Both parties are considered victims whose propensity to attack varies. This expressive violence immediately goes into stages of regret, as the act of violence does not coincide with the value system of both spouses.

The instrumental violence is a one-sided violence unleashed by one spouse to the other and generally called domestic violence. It is believed that those who witnessed or experienced extreme violence in childhood have a tendency to move freely from expressive violence to instrumental violence. The instrumental violence leads to temporary regret, but this is temporary and weak as the motive is not with the well-being of his or her spouse but is self-centred in nature and is basically a concern for him or her. Since the use of violence is within the realm of his or her sense of values, there is little or no motive for change.

As far as spousal abuse is concerned, there are specific actions. These include throwing objects at the other, pushing, holding and shoving, slapping one another, kicking, biting, hitting with fists, and at times hitting with an object. At times, there is reckless hitting and also threatening with knives, or guns. All these are serious causes that usually result in divorce.

**Infidelity:** In Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees He cites marital unfaithfulness as a ground for divorce (Matthew 19:9). This, however is not a matter to be rushed into. As the problem is looked into, presumably by church elders and parents, forgiveness and willingness to change by the accused party, must be given chance and preference.

**Communication:** Effective communication in marriage is absolutely necessary in order for them to understand each other better, to be closer to each other, to support each other, to strengthen each other, to raise their children the right way, and to solve issues within the family. In other words, conversation is a method by which to accomplish the goal of being a healthy family. Families that do not have effective communication normally have conflicts that lead to divorce.

**Others:** Other challenges that must be taken care of to protect marriage from divorce are Work-holism, Incompatibility, Lack of financial capacity, and Feminist ideas. Work-holism is addiction to work; over-working. In Japan, work-holism is called karoshi, which means death by over work, and it is estimated to cause 1000 deaths per year, and nearly 5% of Japan's stroke and heart death of employees under the age of 60 (Wikipedia.Org/workholism). Incompatibility is the inability of the two sides to exist in a harmonious relation with each other because of their different outlooks and beliefs. When the family is not able to have the needs met due to lack of enough money, the parents and more so the father, who biblically is the provider must come up with ideas to address the challenge. Continual lack may cause the family to feel neglected and it may negatively affect the wife and the children and could cause the family unit to shake. Feminist movement have some aspects with extreme ideas that clearly challenge biblical family order and value system. So, wives in or without the movement need to be discerning and reject ideas that may come to destroy their marriages.

#### • **Divorce and Family Development:**

Divorce does not come overnight. It will be preceded long before by bad relationships, quarrels and fights in the home. If, for instance, there was an alcoholic in the home, many problems related to drunkenness will be experienced in the family. 'The behavior resulting from alcohol abuse is what costs our homes, families, and jobs. Accidents, jail sentences, hospital admissions, suicides, murders, wife and child battering, are also often linked with alcoholic drinking' (Graham, Hugh. SAVED and SOBER, 1988, p.49-50). Obviously, this environment which precedes divorce is not conducive for development. There can never be good planning for family projects, no good management, and no good accountability of resources can be done. Indeed, in such environment the family cannot develop socially, financially, psychologically, spiritually even health-wise. It can be said without doubt that divorce environment is a killer of development. At actualization of the divorce, property and resources will be shared every spouse getting less than what they owned jointly, some funds being transferred for the upkeep of children and legal fees and costs if the divorce was processed through the court. Every spouse becomes poorer.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### • **Introduction**

This section presents the methods that the researcher used in carrying out the research; it points out the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques and data collection techniques. The section further presents the sources of data, administration of questionnaires, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, data analysis and interpretation.

#### • **Research design**

Research design is a detailed outline of how an investigation took place. It typically included how data was collected, what instruments were employed, how the instruments were used and the means for analyzing data

collected. It specified such things as how to collect and analyze the data (Kara, 2012). A descriptive and analytical research design was used with a purpose of describing and analyzing the views collected from respondents.

**• Population**

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query (Creswell, 2012). It is for the benefit of the population that researches are done. However, due to the large sizes of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. This is the reason why researchers rely on sampling techniques where the sample representing the population is used.

**Table of sample size of the study**

CATEGORY OF PEOPLE FROM SIX PARISHES OF ADEPR	SAMPLE
KACYIRU	16
GATORE	13
NYARUBANDE	19
MUKARANGU	15
KAGOMBA	12
BYUMBA	10
TOTAL	85

**• Sampling frame**

A set of information used to identify a sample population for statistical treatment. A sampling frame includes a numerical identifier for each individual, plus other identifying information about characteristics of individuals, to aid in analysis and allow for division into further frames for in-depth analysis (Kara, 2012). The sample must be representative of the population from which it was drawn and it must have good size to warrant statistical analysis. The main function of sample is to allow the researchers to conduct the study to individuals from the population so that the results of their study can be used to derive conclusions that applied to the entire population.

**• Instruments**

This included the methods that the researcher used to collect data from various sources and they included questionnaires, interviews and documentary review. The researcher ensured that the research instruments used are reliable, consistent and free from any bias. Questionnaires and interview guide contained clear and accurate questions.

**• Questionnaires**

The researcher formulated questions that related to members of the 6 parishes of ADEPR Church. The questions were both closed and open-ended so as to provide respondents with opportunity to freely give their views. Questionnaires had questions covering all study objectives.

**• Interviews**

An interview is a conversation between two or more people where questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit facts or statements from the interviewee (Creswell, 2012). The researcher used interview guide to respondents according to their preference and time availability. Interviews were held

with church members and pastors from six selected parishes of ADEPR Church.

**• Documentation**

This included the methods that the researcher used to collect data from various sources and they included questionnaires, interviews and documentary review. The researcher ensured that the research instruments used are reliable, consistent and free from any bias. Questionnaires and interview guide contained clear and accurate questions.

**• Data collection procedure**

Data collection instruments were administered by the researcher who approached respondents at their time of convenience. The researcher introduced himself to respondents and told them the exact purpose of the research before requesting them to express their views on issues raised in the questionnaire.

**• Tabulation**

In order to ensure validity and reliability, the researcher carried out a pilot test by 10 questionnaire forms were given to respondents to express their views on the questions raised. The respondents were part of the population but may not necessarily have been part of the sample size. This was done to verify clarity of the questionnaire. The researcher ensured that the set questions were related to the study objectives.

**• Ethical issues on the research**

Data analysis is the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of data. The basic steps in the analytical process consist of identifying issues, determining the availability of suitable data, deciding on which methods are appropriate for answering the questions of interest, applying the methods and evaluating, summarizing and communicating the results.

The collected data was presented using tables and figures while interpretation and analysis was done based on percentages and frequencies of respondents' views. Percentages and frequencies were ascertained using statistical methods. Coding of respondent's views was done. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the information they gave and that it would be used for research purposes only. The respondents were free to answer or to decline to answer any questions without feeling of compulsion or coercion.

**• Results and Discussion**

Generally, divorce is a traumatic experience that is not good for the family and it should by all means be avoided because its consequences are bad to be lived with both to the people involved in divorce, their children, their families, their friends, the society they live in and the country at large. The consequences of divorce being so bad, the church, the family, the civil society and the government need to come up with what they can do in order to counsel, correct and finally stop conflicts that eventually lead to break down of families if unchecked.

Social consequences of illiteracy as a result of divorced parents:

Illiterate persons face greater obstacles in terms of social inclusion, not only on a personal level (social inclusion difficulties, precarious work, high rates of diseases, etc.) but

also within the family (child nutrition, hygiene, health and schooling, among others) and at a societal level (lower productivity, high health care costs). The social and economic impact of illiteracy: Analytical model and pilot study the social consequences of adult illiteracy can be divided into the following categories: health, education, economics and social integration and cohesion.

Illiterate person or persons with only rudimentary reading and writing skills have great difficulty understanding and therefore putting in practice – messages designed to encourage healthy behavior and the risk prevention in various areas of daily life (Dexter, LeVine and Velasco, 1998).

Research has also shown that illiteracy limits knowledge and practices necessary for self-care – particularly among women. This has a negative impact on household health, hygiene and nutrition (UNESCO, 2006).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This article emphasizes on the identification of the major causes of divorce in Christian families and how they impact family development. The research was carried out using sampled questionnaire forms given to 85 people from all the six selected churches of ADEPR Church through the country with an intention of identifying the root causes of conflicts that result in family divorce. Among the issues that create conflict in the families include infidelity, sexuality amongst couples, drug abuse, incompatibility, and economic status of a family, work-holism, feminist movement, gambling and others keep their thoughts and emotions to themselves. On the other hand, many adults suffer in silence too. The analysis of the collected data shows that women may feel that they are at a much greater disadvantage because they may not have a work history and may have to find employment for the first time, move from home they have lived in for years into an apartment or back in with her parents, find new school for their children or they may have been totally dependent upon their husbands for support and love. Furthermore, the analysis shows that a woman may suffer from lack of confidence, lack of self-esteem, and she may feel pressure at time from their ex-husband to be there for him if he needs her.

Also, the analysis from the collected data shows that men also face severe problems from divorce. A man may feel hurt and guilty over having to move out of the home he has shared with his ex-wife and children. Therefore, eventually a man may struggle with the loneliness anxiety, feelings of anger, despair, and jealousy especially if he was not the one who wanted divorce.

#### V. RECOMMENDATION

- Marriage or family being a divine institution by virtue of being instituted by God it means that for its success, blessings and prosperity, it is imperative that God's guidelines on marriage and family are obeyed. Therefore, it is recommended that pastors and church men come up with series of teachings that communicate God's mind on the family.
- Let people, inside and outside the church be equipped with knowledge of the attacks directed by Satan towards the

marriage institution, know how to handle them, and let them be told in black and white the consequences of divorce.

- It is recommended that the couple always work towards establishing and maintaining good marital relationship.

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