

**FAMILY DYNAMICS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES FOR
BATTERED WOMEN IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARE EDO STATE**

BY

OKOEGUALE COURAGE PRINCE

SSC2106103

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

SEPTEMBER, 2025

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**A PROJECT WRITTEN AND SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES.**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF BARCHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) IN SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,**

BENIN CITY.

SEPTEMBER, 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by **Okoeguale Courage Prince** with Mat. No. **SSC2106103** in the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Science, University of Benin, Benin City in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Social Work.

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Date

Dr. (Mrs). H.E. Helen
Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

To the resilient women of Egor Local Government Area, whose strength and courage in the face of adversity inspire this work, and to my family, whose love and unity fuel my commitment to fostering healing and hope.

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I am deeply grateful to God Almighty for granting me the strength, wisdom, and perseverance to complete this project. His grace has been my guiding light throughout this academic journey.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Charles Mfon whose insightful lecture and expertise shaped this study on family dynamics and conflict resolution for battered women in Egor Local Government Area.

I am profoundly thankful to the women of Egor who shared their stories, providing the heart and purpose of this work.

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My appreciation goes to [Local NGO/Organization, e.g., Women's Empowerment Network Edo, for their invaluable resources and community collaboration. I also thank my family members especially my parents, brothers, sister in law for their unwavering support and encouragement, and my colleagues Christabel Bright and mercy for their thoughtful feedback and discussions that enriched this project.

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ABSTRACT

Family violence ensues in various forms of which domestic violence is one among other forms of abuse and aggression that produce crises in the family. Drawing from crisis theorists, Lindeman families have various kinds of crises such as abuse and violent behavior (DV), infidelity, economic distress, illness and disability, death and grief. Here, we will discuss family violence with domestic violence undertone. When abuse and violent behavior happens within the family circle, it is termed as family violence or domestic violence. It ranges from couple, intimate partner abuse (DV) to child (physical assault, neglect, emotional abuse), and elderly abuse. Abuse is any harm done to a person which can be physical, psychological, or sexual in nature.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1 Background to the Study

Crisis has always been a part of the human experience since the beginning of time. In recent times, domestic violence (DV) has been identified as a form of family violent behavior crisis confronted by family counsellors or therapists. Within the family circle, at schools, and work places abuse and violent behavior are serious crises that too many people especially women are confronted with in our society. Any life event that surpasses the individual's accessible managing dexterity is conceptualized as crisis. A family is said to be experiencing crisis when an event or situation upsets the normal functioning of the family requiring a change in the family system to bring it to normalcy or a state of symmetry.

Crisis thus, refers to an insight or undergoing of any life occurrence or circumstances as an excruciating difficulty that exceeds the person's existing means and coping skills (James, 2008). For this reason, crisis is "a state resulting from impediments to life's goals that are both situational and developmental" (Gladding, 2021). Accordingly, crisis in this article is theorized as a harsh change in the course of events. It is a turning point during which the trend of future actions is affected. As our society evolves in augmenting complexity, so too do family crisis and relations

crises that afflict human existence, namely; family crisis compounded with DV. The family crisis develops sometimes due to events outside the family such as economic downsizing, war, and flood. At other times, it occurs within the family system like conflict that erupts in aggression and ill-treatment: DV, divorce, alcoholism, the loss of a family member (Weigel, Weigel, and Blundall, 1987). DV is portrayed as a pattern of coercive behaviors that may include repeated mauling and injury, psychological abuse, sexual assault, progressive social isolation, deprivation, and intimidation. These behaviors are carried out by someone who is or was involved in an intimate relationship with the victim (Duluth Model, 1980). Sometimes, a family crisis develops out of a series of smaller external and internal events that build up to the point at which family members cannot cope. Internal crises tend to demoralize a family, increasing resentment, alienation, and conflict. So, family crisis can be induced by both external (natural disaster) and internal or personal crises such as drug addiction, infidelity or debilitating illness. Furthermore, family crisis can spring from interpersonal crises like when a spouse cheats on a partner, over-interference of in-laws in the couple life.

Family violence ensues in various forms of which domestic violence is one among other forms of abuse and aggression that produce crises in the family. Drawing from crisis theorists, Lindeman (1944; Caplan, 1961; Gilliland and James, 2003), families have various kinds of crises such as abuse and violent behavior (DV),

infidelity, economic distress, illness and disability, death and grief. Here, we will discuss family violence with domestic violence undertone. When abuse and violent behavior happens within the family circle, it is termed as family violence or domestic violence. It ranges from couple, intimate partner abuse (DV) to child (physical assault, neglect, emotional abuse), and elderly abuse. Abuse is any harm done to a person which can be physical, psychological, or sexual in nature.

However, Mediation is a practical solution-oriented approach to solve problems for disputing parties (Wang, 2014; Ugorji, 2012). It can be useful to address family divorce disputes, child welfare negotiations, school-based conflicts, discrimination complaints, nonviolent crimes or civil offenses, health care negotiations, public policy debates, and even business-related conflicts. Interestingly one of the basic roles of social work is to facilitate the interaction between individuals and systems to properly examine social problems, of which marital conflict is a topical concern. Marital conflict has been linked to the onset of depressive symptoms, eating disorders, male alcoholism, episodic drinking, binge drinking, and out-of-home drinking (Martsin, 2012; Grinnell & Unrau, 2011). Marital conflict or violence is a social problem. This is so in the sense that it constitutes a devastating experience for every member of the family system especially the wife and husband and their families. It disrupts virtually every aspect of the family, damaging the physical and emotional

wellbeing of the couples and frequently resulting in the separation of the husbands and wives.

Childlessness among couples is also often associated with marital dispute. (Ikwen 2007, Otuji 2010, Genda 2020), for example, believe that the traditional aim of contracting marriage, especially in most African societies (including Nigeria), is procreation. When this is not possible within a short period, conflicts resulting from sudden outbursts become the order of the day, making marriage an unhappy union. For these scholars therefore, barrenness, infertility or childlessness is the cause of marital conflict.

Another conception, especially by Unachukwu (2015) is interference from couples' relatives. It is the contention of these scholars that when couples are not allowed to take decisions that concern them and their immediate families, frustration and alienation from the family create cracks that ultimately destroy the marital bond. This school of thought further argues that in-laws are almost always interested in what is happening in the marriage dyad of their children to the extent that they even attempt taking decisions for them. The male's parents are usually more prone to this sort of behaviour, and when the female becomes frustrated and reacts to the situation, she would be branded and issued threats ranging from asking the male to marry another wife to outright divorce of the troublesome or heady wife. When this happens, conflict in the union becomes the order of the day.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

In Nigeria today, the rate at which marital couples experience divorce and re-marriage is quite alarming (Dada & Idowu, 2016). Many families have been and some are still seriously at war with themselves simply because of their failure to arrest, manage or resolve conflicting issues between couples or families. Many families in Egor local government area are going through a lot of stress and hardships as a result of marital conflicts. The effects on the children, couples themselves and Egor as a community are devastating, as had been observed by the researcher. This observation had put a burden on the researcher to carry out this study. Marriage relationships are said to have become generally strained in recent past, especially among literate couples, as indicated by scholars like Obe, (2017) and Carew (2017). Efforts have, however, been made by scholars, churches, professional organisations, etc. to curb this menace. Yet, the incidence of marital conflict and disharmony appears endemic as the stabilising of personality role of marriage and the family wanes at alarming rates. Scholars, teachers, churches, etc. are at a loss on the options available for identifying the causes of this situation in their attempt to proffer solutions. Otuji, 2010 and Ode 2001 feel that marriages, especially among the literate class, have been under serious threat of disintegration. This situation is said to be caused partly by age at marriage, childlessness or barrenness and extended family interference. This situation

has serious implications for the stability of the family with consequences on the children's personality, growth and adjustments.

Marital dispute affects the society, going by the rate of divorce and the direct impact on the children, who, in most cases, grow to be social misfits and a nuisance. This situation appears to be nation-wide, as studies by Agim (2017) Obe (2018) and Carew (2019) of couples in Begiaka area of Cross River State, in Iga Okpaya districts of Benue state and University of Maduguri and of Borno State respectively confirm. These studies conclude that educated couples, despite their education, still have discrepancies in their views on issues that are conflict-prone. The effects (social, economic, political, personal and cultural) of this situation have remained worrisome to scholars and planners as well (Landis 1977, Nwobi, 1995 and Ume 2010). The end result of any marital dispute is a breakdown of the union or divorce, home desertion, juvenile delinquency, truancy, school drop outs, lukewarm attitude to study, indiscipline, etc (Igbo 2017, Nwobi 2017, Igbo 2010,).

Problems that could have been handled succinctly and co-operatively by couples are often allowed to degenerate to crisis levels, which, in turn, result in emotional dislocation that often leads to marital dispute . This situation generates fear and impedes proper adjustments among couples (Philips, 2021; Manicini 2021 and

Undie 2017). This study is therefore hinged on the incessant occurrence of marital dispute among couples in Edo State.

1.3 Objectives of The Study

The main objective of this study is to evaluate family dynamics and conflict resolution strategies for battered women in Egor Local Government are Edo State.

The specific objectives are to:

1. ascertain the socio economic determinants of marital conflict in Egor Local Government Council.
2. find out expectations and misconceptions literate couples have on marriage in Egor Local Government Council
3. examine the intervention strategies to help family deal with the problems of marital conflict
4. find out the roles family members play to influence cordiality and strengthen marital stability in couples
5. examine the impact of age on marriage with occurrence of conflicts in marriage

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. What are the socio economic determinants of marital stability amongst couples in Egor Local Government Council?

2. What expectations and misconceptions do literate couples have of marriage in Egor Local Government Council?
3. What counselling needs are required to help couples perceive remote causes of management skills deficiency and deal with the problems?
4. What roles do family members play to influence cordiality and strengthen marital stability in couples?
5. What relationship does age at marriage have with occurrence of conflicts in marriage?

Scope of the study

This study seek to evaluate family dynamics and conflict resolution strategies for battered women in Egor Local Government are Edo State. The study was carried out in Egor Local government area of Edo State. The study was conducted in five communities. The study was limited to married couples. It focused on the cause of martial conflict and the strategies for conflict resolution. The study covered a period two years 2021 to 2024 through which information was sought and presented.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Marital conflicts concern many people: from the religious to community leaders, from the social welfare workers to counsellors. This research work is geared

towards deliberation of literate couples who find it difficult to manage seemingly solvable marital conflicts. This study has potential to be of immense value to those who work in the social welfare office of local, state or federal Government. It will provide this category of persons (Social welfare officers) insight on trouble-prone areas of marital conflict in homes of literate members of the community, and help identify the right counselling tool with which to positively address these problems.

The findings of this work would also be of great assistance to both pre- and post-marital counsellor in conflict resolution and management. It is also hoped that the findings would be used as tools by marriage and family counsellors in assisting married spouses in their area of weakness and strength. It is therefore envisaged that counsellors will find the outcome of this work essential, for a healthy family is a prelude to a healthy and peaceful nation.

Educational planners and designers can also benefit from this study by the insight they will gain on the attitudes, signs and ways of addressing marital conflicts. Information obtained can impact on curriculum development and upgrade teaching and learning, especially since the subjects in this study are literate persons. As such, educational planners in post-primary schools and other institutions of higher learning will be awakened to their responsibility based on the revelations likely to be made by the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In order to locate the present research within the existing frame of knowledge and direct its focus, it is necessary to review the literature related to the issues being researched upon. The review is done under the following headings: the concept of marriage, in-laws' roles in marriage, the traditional concept of marriage, the Christian concept of marriage, the motivation for marriage, the concept of conflicts, types of conflicts, the causes of marital conflicts, the role of third parties in marital conflicts, the effect of conflicts on the couple, siblings and society, the counselling implication of marital conflict, constraints to effective family counselling in Nigeria and the need for marital counselling in schools, summary of the review and its bearing on the current study.

2.2 The Concept of Marriage And Family

The terms “marriage” and “family”, though difficult to separate, are not exactly the same. Nwoye (2023) posits that it is necessary to dichotomise the two words for the purpose of simplicity and understanding. Martison (2020) argues that there could be confusion in literature among the authorities due to the snail-shell relationship which exists between marriage and family. He further contends that the

arrival of a child in a marriage makes the marriage and family two social systems operating under the roof at the same time as a subsystem of marriage and marriage as a subsystem of family.

Though the two terms (concepts) seem inseparable and are often used interchangeably, they possess features that mark them out as different. This is because the features of marriage as a heterosexual union of consenting adults cannot be said to be the same with family, which is basically a social grouping that has people who are either consequentially and conjugally related or both ways related.

Oyedepo (2016) contends that the concept of marriage was instituted in the Garden of Eden by God. Making reference to the Holy Book, the Bible, she quotes from Genesis 2:8 as follows, “And Lord God planted a garden in the eastward of Eden and there He (God) puts a man and a woman He had formed”. Following the Biblical injunction, the concept of marriage started from the beginning of man. However, the theory of evolution antagonises this argument. Roels (2019) concedes that God arranges from the very beginning the institution of marriage. That is, one man and one woman are arranged to come together in faith and love. Notwithstanding, the forms of marriage in the contemporary world seem to vary from the marriage between Adam and Eve, as the Bible and its adherents maintain.

David (2022) asserts that marriage is a legal union between a physically mature man and a physically mature woman within a cultural setting and within the prescribed norms of such a society.

The concepts of marriage and family vary from culture to culture and society to society. However, it may be contended that the union of a man and a woman all over the globe involves sex and procreation. Hornby (2018) defines the term “marriage” as a legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. This, which represents the English definition of marriage, has been mirrored outside culture and custom, hence the definition is purely a linguistic one devoid of ethical connotations. The concept of marriage and family attracts many experts from all walks of life. Festy (2022) views marriage as a cohabitational union of man and woman. It appears he views marriage as a social system, which operates under one roof. In the same vein, Undiyaundeye (2020) sees marriage as a statutory expectation of a young man and woman who are supposed to pledge their love for each other to live as husband and wife under marriage ordinance.

Marriage is something deeper than the mere union of a man and a woman under the same roof. Nwoye (2021) perceives marriage as a sacred and a permanent contract which is assumed to be enacted when two people decide on their own accord and in the presence of at least two witnesses to exchange the formal consent to live a life of vocation of love and sharing for the purpose of promoting their mutual growth

and welfare as persons in their journey together through life. Nwoye (2021) has identified permanence and sanctity in the institution of marriage. In the utopian world, the term “Marriage” hinges as reflected in the term, on love, “For better, for worse”, a ritual type of phrase on the altar among the couples. None of the people involved envisages conflicts and dissatisfaction at the beginning. The words “permanent” and “love” lure the Christians, Muslims and cultural settings to guarantee the procreation and sustenance of family within the institution of marriage.

The concept of marriage institution has been viewed by Beattie (2014) as something deeper and more concrete than a mere legal sexual union between a man and a woman. In this view, the offspring within the marriage circle are actually forming a subsystem within the marriage, hence the concept of family. Gomwalk (2017) contends that in a marriage contract, a certificate is issued to the man and woman who are involved in this contract of marriage union. Gomwalk (2017) must be referring to the Church and Court marriages alone, ignoring the traditional customary marriage where certificates are not issued before the contract is made between the spouses among the elders and families of the spouses.

In the African context, marriage is one of the most important occasions in one’s life. The other occasions are one’s birthday and one’s day of demise. Of course, a new-born baby does not know what is happening nor is the dead person aware of anything. The most exciting day in African context is the very day one marries.

Marriage, therefore, is not a private affair. It involves the families, the kith and kin of the intending couples, including the community at large. Onyejiaku (2017) points out that marriage is so exciting that the road cannot be all roses just as a coin has two phases. In the garden of love, as one adage describes the situation of the newly married couples, the other side of the coin is not envisaged.

Moss and Gingles (2016) posit that the marriage of young people may not be strictly accepted as marriage; rather it could be co-habiting since certain rites and or ceremonies that legitimize marriage are absent. This is to say that not all unions are marriages. In the study area, such “marriages” are not uncommon and are often caused by pregnancy as young people get themselves involved in love relationships. This situation has serious implications for the adolescent parents whose education is often truncated, especially the girl who would have to remain at home to give birth and take care of the child. Some marriages are therefore not properly constituted and may not be considered marriage in its strictest sense. Some marriages procreate while others do not; hence while some unions end up only as marriages, others become families (Sprey, 2022).

Sprey (2022:151) also contends that “Marriage, after all, continues well beyond one hundred game trials; for it is a relationship; one of the very few in our culture that is supposed to last”. Taking marriages as a game of which only a few are meant to last is contrary to the religious and cultural views of marriage in terms of permanency.

Marriage is supposed to be in existence till death separates the spouses and not a game of trial or temporary situations, especially in the African and Christian traditions. Guillemo (1983) opines that marriage is a compromising union of man and woman which poses developmental life cycle tasks that require individuals to address issues of intimacy and reciprocity. One may share the idea of compromising. The married people have to compromise as they continue to reciprocate each other in the cohabitation.

Baseden (2016) points out that marriage is a social institution in which a man and woman are bound to stay together as husband and wife under a recognised constitution. This view of marriage may be vague in most African societies since it is not forever and there is no blue print as regards to the customary marriages in Africa.

However, Denga (2022), advises that there is much need for marital adjustments among the couples in order to maintain stability in marriage and family cycle. Denga's research on marriage stability sees the term "marriage" as a game of discovery which continues till death does the spouses part or breakdown may come due to the inability of the partners to adjust to each other's way of living and prevailing circumstances beyond their control. Family is seen as a continuation of marriage, which comes as a blessing to the marriage, but not the initial purpose of marriage. The initial purpose of marriage is love-sharing and companionship among the married couples, which motivates people to marry.

2.3 Conflicts and Marriage Relationship

Conflicts in human relationships and socialisation among marriages have often resulted in distress, depression and even in diseases like sexually transmitted diseases, HIV or AIDS and in divorce and other forms of crises. How best can counselling methods help in resolving such issues? Is it possible for those involved in sour experiences as they interact to be given effective and resolving counselling means to assist themselves? From the beginning of creation, people have always had interest in each other, in forms of human socialisation such as friends, lovers, acquaintances and even as husbands and wives. The end results of such associations could be marriages, friendships, and groups of like minds, societies and nations who associate as a noble folk. This practice could be as Mailumo (2018) succinctly puts:

1. Communities and organisations actually advertise for relationship
2. Nations offer citizenship to their members.
3. A man goes on his knees to propose to a woman for marriage and promise her heaven and earth and happy living thereafter.
4. People in different sweet human relationships pledge love. The Christian religion teaches that one must love even one's enemies to deserve the kingdom of God.

A manifestation of the value of association is in organisations' payment of benefits to dismissed staff except for extreme situations where victims forfeit everything. In the same vein, divorce attracts payment as part of disengagement

benefits when a relationship turns sour. People suffer anger and pain when their cognitive ability fails in handling human relationship. There is no evidence to show that people will stop the search for each other either at individual or group level even as existing relationships are threatened. Mailumo (2018) explains that there is a magnetic force revolving round men and women, which if poorly managed, as regards setting of poor moral standards or poor exchange of values of their performance and behavioural approach, could remain a source of problems in human relationship.

Most people have fallen victims of unacceptable circumstances. Examples are, people falling from high offices due to poor moral standards, issues of sexual harassment and the complex damaging effects of divorce on several segments of society are also common knowledge in this regard. Most of such processes and products of defective human relationship and socialisation have given birth to cognitive methods in marital conflicts and management. How best these methods can be employed and achieved a desirable result for healthy psychological marital cohabitation

In-Laws' Role in Marriage

In-laws in marriage relationship refers to the relatives one acquires through marriage. These in-laws are relatives of either the husband or wife. Those who constitute in-laws in this context are parents and siblings of the couples. In a large group, members of extended family, for example, nieces, nephews, cousins, and

grandparents are also regarded as in-laws. The desire to have a home makes a young man and a young woman to come together as husband and wife. Evans-Pritchard (1973) notes that among the Nvers of the Northern Sudan, a young man talks of a home with reference to his family of procreation. The moment one leaves home to marry, something happens to the bond that holds parents and child, because a child remains emotionally attached to his or her parents for life. Freud (1949) and Undie (2017) point out that parents often get involved in arranging their children's marriages to help the children overcome this attachment.

The fact that parents are involved in the marriage negotiation and the subsequent innate desire to help their children settle down quickly, lead to intrusion into the privacy of the couple, which could occasionally cause misunderstanding. Shyrack (1968) opines that: although parents' intrusion may cause strife in the home, these inlaws are often unaware that their presence is causing someone pain, some may claim objectivity in their intrusion in the couple's marital life— feeling that it is their legitimate rights to interact with their children Undie (2017). As the in-laws interact with the young couples, problems such as jealousy, bad socio-cultural practices and negative attitudes to infertility and all-female children could emanate or be aggravated.

Infertility

When a man gets married, the anticipation by family members is having children in the nearest possible time. As the marriage progresses if there is no sign of pregnancy, worries set in for the couples; the period of waiting for pregnancy is a time of anxiety and unsolicited advice and suggestions from relatives and friends. The woman who is unable to become pregnant is the focus of discussion by the in-laws. The in-laws never care to know who is the cause of the barrenness but would simply accuse the woman either of infidelity, teenage abortion or witchcraft. The woman is called names and the man would be asked to look for another wife for he was “marrying a man”. Society appreciates fecundity; anyone who falls short of achieving this aim encounters enormous difficulties in marriage. The problem of barrenness is especially excruciating in polygamous homes. Hannah the wife of Elkana in the Bible suffered most humiliating experience annually at Shiloh (1 Samuel Chapter 1& 2:1-21). Njoroge (2016), is of the view that a childless woman is not only just tormented by co-wife/wives but also by the extended family members, especially the in-laws.

Socio-Cultural Practices

Some cultural practices in the society breed problems between the in-laws and the couple. One of such practices is giving of names to children. If a child is given a name without the consent of the parent in-laws, hell is let loose. More daring is the idea of giving out a child into marriage without consulting the in-laws who are the grand parents or uncles of the would-be wife or husband involved.

Gentui (2016) reasons that names play a significant role for the individual and the society. In the Nigerian context and the world over, a woman after marriage is expected to change her father's name and adopt her husband's family name. This change, she maintains, has many implications. One of these is loss of identity. If the woman refuses to oblige to this change, she is seen as uncompromising and not good enough a wife. Gentui (2016) believes that a woman should be seen in her own capacity as a person, and not in terms of her marital status. When these issues are given much credence by in-laws, they make it difficult for the young couples to live an adjustable life in marriage.

From all that has been mentioned, it is noted that in-laws, most often, see only the negative aspects of their sons or daughter in-laws. It would have been most beneficial to their children if they appreciated the virtues of their in-laws and de-emphasised the little faults since no human being is faultless. In-laws should learn to accommodate new members of their family and give them the opportunity to learn in marriage. Daughter-in-laws should also learn not to listen to gossips in order to live peacefully with their in-laws. It is only when young couples resist the influence of neighbours and friends' tales about in-laws that they can truly appreciate them and have a better judgment of their ideas. If, on the other hand, in-laws appreciate the positive sides of their children's marriage, it would be more beneficial to even the continuity of the family (Obe 2017).

2.4 The Christian Concept Of Marriage

Christianity came with the establishment of schools and churches. The church doctrine on marriage stipulates that in marriage only two are united and joined by bond of marriage. Christ taught more on this when referring to these words as being uttered by God “so they are no longer two but one” (Matt.19:6). He immediately confirms the stability of the bond which was proclaimed long ago in the scripture: “What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6).

According to Lewis (1985), unity and indissolubility are considered the most essential properties of marriage and the natural aims of marriage become impossible when unity is destroyed in any marriage relation existing between couples. This can be caused by polygamy or polyandry or when permanence is removed through divorce, the unity and dissolubility cannot be justified on the basis of the sacramental nature of the reality: they are in the first place, founded on the anthropological characteristics of marriage as such bridegroom give and received each other, has in itself an inner tendency towards definitiveness and exclusiveness, Gangwari (2016). The person who gives himself or herself to another no longer belongs to himself or herself but the other. The marital bond of faithfulness is therefore, on the basis of its inner being, disposed to be definitive and exclusive.

Unity then means “an exclusive and total union between man and one woman”. Gangwari (2019) explains that: Unity means the marriage is between one man and

one woman. It means that the man or the woman cannot marry another person, as the marriage must be between a man and a woman and not a man marrying a man or woman marrying a woman. The contending refers thus: marriage is designed to be practised exclusively by one man and one woman. God intends monogamy to be the rule in marriage not polygamy or polyandry. Washikda (2016) holds that the unity of marriage, distantly recognised by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity, which must be accorded to a husband and wife in mutual and unreserved affections. Once the marital bond is lawfully and validly established, it is permanent and cannot be broken by any human authority (civil or ecclesial) except death. Absolutely, Canon 1141 of the new Code declares: “A marriage which is ratified and consummated cannot be dissolved by any human power or by any cause other than death. This law includes other Christians who are validly baptised when marriages contracted among themselves are ratified (unions). When a ratified marriage is subsequently consummated sexual intercourse performed in a human manner, the union becomes absolutely indissoluble.

In line with the traditional concept of marriage, the second Vatican Council Fathers proclaimed that: “marriage and married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children”. Indeed, children are the supreme gift of marriage and greatly contribute to the good of the parents themselves. God himself said “it is not good that man should be alone (Gen. 2:18) and from the beginning he

made them male and female” (Matt. 19:4). Wishing to associate them in a special way with his creative work he charged them, “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28). Without intending to underestimate the order end of marriage, it must be said that true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it is directed to disposing the spouse to cooperate valiantly with the love of the creator and saviour, who, through them, will increase and enrich his family from day to day.

The conscious exclusion of children by the spouse in their marital union is sinful in the eyes of the church. Tagwana (2017) observes that heterosexual relationship within a marriage is a legitimate means through which couples express their love for each other. Nevertheless, it should at the same time be open to procreation which is the natural consequence of the union. Any sexual union devoid of the intention of procreation, reduce the gift of human sexuality to “mere sex”, a commodity of consumption, pleasure and exploitation. Ayuba (2016) who conducted a research interview with Muva tribe of Adamawa, again posits that Christian marriage fulfils the essential elements of the mutual well-being of the spouses. It presupposes co-habitation and embraces companionship, love, affection, control, mutual help and sexual union. The selfless and reciprocal self-giving of couples to each other promotes their natural spiritual well being. It is the intimate communion of life and love that guarantees the good of their children born out of the union.

However, the union does not depend solely on children to be sustained. Pope John Paul II, says even when children are not born of a marriage, the bond of togetherness should be equally strong enough to uphold the marriage. In fact, physical sterility may be indicative of a vocation to serve mankind in other social necessities.

The second Vatican Council teaches that marriage does not lose value without procreation, though very important but can still be achieved. A marriage can be said to be successful if personal relationship of the spouse grows to maturity and perfecting each other. Unlike the customary marriage, Christian marriage is a sacrament with distinctive characteristics. Once contracted, it cannot be dissolved till death.

2.5 Age of Marriage And Occurrence Of Conflict

The age of a marriage relationship comes from the time the couples celebrate their love life together either according the traditional, church, mosque or court doctrines. This relationship progresses from one stage to another until they part to see no more. Marriage has three stages during a couple's lifetime. These are: (1) the beginning stage (2) the expanding stage (3) the contrasting stage.

At the beginning of a marriage love is usually predominant and conflict may not come in much except in the area of understanding with each other in the area of some lapses by either of them before the marriage like stepchildren's interference in

their love affairs. Ume (2010) observes that changing trends in the family formation may change the couple's ways if not properly handled by the couples.

The influence of family values has a part to play here. The review of existing evidence on conflict handling in marital relationship depends largely on what each person wants and the orientation therein. The orientation on what the couple's expectations are provides a soft ground for their landing and adjustment. This affects the positive or negative way of handling and resolving conflicts as they come either to expunge or linger on, leading them to a bad position in the family interaction. In agreement with the foregoing, Genda (2020) contends that couples' family and religious ties affect the behaviour towards being determined to make a success in a relationship whatever the stress they perceive. Marital stability is presumed to be linked to perceptions of the fairness of the marital relationship.

2.6 The Motivation for Marriage

The idea of love-sharing and the need for companionship (since man is a gregarious being) motivate many people to marry. However, a good number of spouses enter the marriage contract without proper aims. This is the view of Smalley and Scott (1979) who, in line with Burr (1973), noted that some people enter the marriage contract without rational and realistic expectations, which may be thwarted in due course, hence marriage dispute.

Thus, Burr (1973), Smalley and Scott (1979), later, Obe (2017) contend that many men and women enter marriage contract with confused ideas and expectations and with a focus for themselves. Burr (1973) and Obe (2017) for instance, argue that when those misconceived expectations have been thwarted, marital conflicts, which may lead to marital breakdown, surface in such marriages. In their own contributions, Bagarozzi and Reuben (1968) point out that some couples are motivated by romantic and erotic notions and not critical examination of the proposed opposite sex they intend to marry. One observes in the study area that some boys and girls are triggered into marriage by the material wealth of either side and when these material things are not forthcoming, marriage problems crop up, which may lead to divorce. Some teenagers are motivated to marry by infatuation, which is not genuine love, and when this temporary love fades away, problems arise in the marriage. In line with the foregoing, Etta (2020) observes that marriages based on “cupboard love” are prone to dissolubility as against indissolubility in Cannon law.

Onyejiaku (2019) points out that developmental stresses and storms push some teenagers into marriage without actual needs and real intention to marry. The urge of sex in men between the ages of 15-22, according to him, is very high. He concedes that sexual urge at this period is higher in boys than in girls, who exhibit their emotional feelings indirectly. Many broken homes today are a result of marriages based on from these types of motivation. In consonance with this, Mouris

(2020) observes that marriage focus should not be on flesh but on genuine love for spouses as they come together.

Adolescent period is the period when the youngsters make many mistakes. Onyejiaku (2019) opines, “sexual intercourse lure many males to marriages which they (males) are not really prepared for”. His advice therefore is that marriage counselling should start not only in school but from home and that parents . Parents should guide and counsel their wards as regards the consequences of illegitimate and indiscriminate sexual intercourse, especially on the issue of HIV/AIDS. In this regard, Mallum (2017) succinctly presents that the following as the primary motives for most marriages in Africa:

1. Companionship
2. Procreation
3. Assistance
4. Social requirements/expectation
5. Self actualization

Companionship

An individual needs company for social existence and for effective symbiosis. Pam (2017) suggests that people need the contributions of a life lubricant for peaceful co-existence. She further says if the human mind acts without the lubricating agents to

soot it, the entire human social existence shall dry off as burnt food in a frying pan. This then suggests why companionship is highlighted as one of the motives for marriage as a whole and in particular in the study area.

Procreation

This is a statutory expectation in African traditional setting and in fulfillment of our creator's prophesies. Ayaliwhu (2017) opines that the expectation of couples shortly after marriage, especially in Africa, is procreation, that is, childbirth, which is one paramount reason for marriage in Africa. This expectation, if not managed properly, could cause anxiety that may affect conception and often create conflict and suspicion among couples. Couples should therefore wait patiently for the child that will come as the marriage progresses and not to force or overwork itself.

Assistance

Couples, as a matter of fact, need each other's assistance. It could be financial or otherwise. If two people are living together as spouses, they rely on each other for survival. There could be division of labour for life to move forward. The wife takes care of the flaws of the husband and vice versa, (Oyedepo, 1988).

Social Requirements/Expectations

The society expects that every grown up adult man or woman should get married when of age. Based on this premise, Agim (2017) believes, any adult man or woman who is of age to marry and has refused to do so need not be given a post of

responsibility since he or she has not gone through the test of facing social responsibilities.

Self-Actualisation

An individual's aim of survival is self-actualisation and self-fulfillment. Obe (2017) contends that one of the achievements of a successful married man or woman is self-actualisation. People who are married make a conscious attempt to contribute their best quota to achieve maximum positive returns on output as they share their lives together.

One of the best ways of selecting a life partner is through courtship. So, parents, religious leaders or marriage counselors should give adequate information on courtship, especially during premarital counselling of intending couples.

2.7 Premarital Counseling and Marital Stability

Premarital counseling provides a couple with opportunity to dig up any potential pitfalls that could hinder their marriage from lasting a lifetime. It causes people to consider and discuss things that would increase the likelihood of the success of their marriage as noted by Baker (2015). Usually couples enter marriage with predetermined ideas on how conflict should be handled, the way money should be managed, and how religious issues should be addressed, how many children they should have, and what it means to love someone. Pre-marital counseling then offers expert suggestions on how to handle all these issues (Shumm et al., 2010). Premarital

counseling is as old as man himself, as all societies around the world offer counseling services of some sort before and during marriage relationship (Futris et al., 2011). They see premarital counseling as a form of advice that benefits couples who are planning to married.

Premarital counseling is not a form of therapy according to Futris et al. (2011); it is couples' education on skills that they will need to support them in having a happy, healthy and lasting marriage. It helps couples identify and communicate about their fears, desires, beliefs, values, dreams, needs, and other issues that would be avoided and never be discussed without premarital counseling(Marang'a,2013). Individuals, who take part in premarital counseling compared to those who do not go through premarital counseling, tend to have a happier marriage. According to Kepler (2015), there is a 40-50% chance of divorce among couples who do not go through premarital counseling. He posited that premarital counseling either secular or faith-based has a goal of supporting marriage to endure life challenges.

A research done by Farnam, Pakgohar and Mir-Mohammadali (2011) among 200 couples in Ireland found premarital counseling education to have a significant effect on marital satisfaction. This argument concurs with Kepler (2015) who argued that premarital counseling education has a significant effect on marital satisfaction. However, he emphasized that in order for such classes to be effective the educators

must pay close attention to participants' needs, demands and problems. Farnam et al. (2011) highlighted aspects of premarital counseling as family planning, personal health, sexuality, and communication and conflict resolution skills.

Results from a research done by Yoo & Bartle (2012) suggest that empowering couples with effective communication skills enhances their emotional stability and increases sexual intimacy which more often than not increase their marital satisfaction. Carol and Doherty (2014) concur with Yoo & Bartle (2012) as she argues that premarital education is effective in enhancing quality communication. It equips couples with conflict management skills which enhances quality relationships.

The goal of premarital counseling flows directly from the purpose of marriage which is fellowship, companionship, mutual respect and good communication as revealed by a research done by Wilmoth and Smyser's (2010) among 2010 religious churches in Mississippi State University. Their research findings support Adler (1931) findings as quoted by Wilmoth and Smyser (2010) who suggests that marriage is not merely an action taken by two people but also involves a connection of the past with the future. Kepler (2015) also highlighted that the primary goal of premarital counseling includes a shift from singlehood to married life which require development of communication skills, increase to marital stability and satisfaction so

as to enhance the companionship and intimacy between the couple. The goal of premarital counseling according to Kiuna and Kiuna (2012) is to establish cooperation relationship not only for the good of the couple but for the wellbeing of all connected to couple's lives.

The key emphasis in Adlerian theory is empowering couples with problem solving skills to help them prevent problems later in marriage (Kepler, 2015). According to Wilmoth & Smyser (2010), pastors who employ premarital assessment questionnaires (PAQs) are more likely to prepare couples better for marriage compared to those who do not use such assessment tools. According to their study only 29.1% of the 2010 counselors' use (PAQs). The finding suggests that a large majority of clergy do not use assessment or instruments that are appropriate for premarital education.

Schumm et al. (2010) found out premarital counseling quality was strongest predictor of successful premarital outcome in a religious setting. They continued to say that length of premarital counseling is variable. They highlighted that one session is not enough and they proposed eight to nine sessions. The content covered in most premarital counseling session includes communication, commitments, conflict resolutions, egalitarian roles, sexuality, personality issues and finances. While the discussed literature has highlighted a lot benefits of premarital counseling, eleven benefits stood out: improved communication, better handling of marital mistrust,

competent ways of handling in-laws, enhancement of marital satisfaction, reduced divorce rate, enhancement of intimacy, conflict management skills, handling of issues related to family of origin issues, personality issues, management skills, finance management and long-term goals setting.

2.7.1 Premarital Counseling and Effective Communication Among Couples

Communication in marriage is vital for a happy marriage. Without good communication, all advice in the world is likely to fail to help rebuild a bad marriage relationship. Communication according to Kiuna and Kiuna (2010) is the key to unlock marital problems. Couples must communicate with one another in ways that reveal their deepest feelings and their underlying needs in order to establish fulfilling relationships (Sauerheber & Bitter, 2013). Communication either good or bad affects whatever goes on between humans. It can be through words, verbal or written; non-words-symbols, sounds, or silence, facial expressions-jeers or smiles; touches-nurturing touch or lack of touch, playful touch, or coercive touch; and/or a combination of these elements in recurrent pattern (Yoo & Bartle., 2012).

Positive communication is one of the characteristics of a stable marriage and family according to Kiuna and Kiuna (2010). However, communication does not always equal to agreement among couples and families. Family members have differences and conflicts, but if they speak directly and honestly about them without blaming each other, their relationship is likely to remain intact. Dysfunctional marriages or families

on the other hand, are either overly critical or hostile in their communication with each other or deny problems and avoid verbal conflict. Although verbal hostilities are not productive, neither is avoidance of problems. Futris et al. (2011) research reveal that communication in healthy marriages and families has several benefits, for example partners good listening skills and humour. Humour is a characteristic of positive family communication and a healthy marital relationship. It involves the ability to pay attention to what others are thinking and feeling. Communication is not just talking, but listening to what others have to say (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). Honest communication that is open creates an atmosphere of love and admiration for one another that allows family members to express their differences freely. It is through communication that couples can resolve the unavoidable problems that arise in some marriages.

Poor communication is found in unhealthy family relationships just as effective communication is found in healthy families. Poor communication is a common complaint of families who have difficulties in sustaining their marriages as often reported by marriage and family therapist (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). Poor communication is usually indirect and unclear that can lead to numerous family problems that include, frequent family conflict, lack of intimacy, weak emotional bonding and ineffective problem-solving strategy. Shumm et al. (2010) argues that

premarital counseling can be a good way of helping couples become aware of areas of incompatibility such as values, life goals and ways of dealing with conflicts.

Ineffective communication can also give birth to mistrust in relationships. According to Miller et al. (2014), marital suspicion appears to underlie many social interactions, it accounts for the stability or dispute of a wide variety of human relationships therefore it is not surprising that it is present among married couples. Suspicion in marriage is the act of suspecting something, especially something wrong, with one's spouse on little evidence or without proof. Misunderstandings among couples encourage the seeds of emotional suppression according to Miller, et al (2014). Flirting 'harmlessly' with people of the opposite sex, having lunch or drinks after work with members of the opposite sex, discussing your work problems, sharing jokes and gossip with colleagues or friends of the opposite sex but not with your partner can lead to marital suspicion which can easily breaks the bond of marriage just as adultery does (Miller et al., 2014). Premarital counseling empowers spouses with suspicion thoughts on how to communicate and discuss it and the two works to out the way forward (Marang'a, 2013)

2.7.2 Premarital Counseling and Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction according to Farnam et al (2011) is the individual happiness with marriage that depends on intra-personal concepts. Often religion serves as a great resource for couples to achieve marital satisfaction (Duba et al., 2012;

Ellison et al., 2010; Mahoney, 2010). Wilmoth and Smyser (2010) argue that marriage preparations improves marital satisfaction as it increases one's commitment to his or her spouse which is associated with lower rate of divorce. Kepler (2015) concurs with this argument as he stated that marital dissatisfaction can lead to divorce and can affect people of all ages, race and culture.

Premarital counseling decreases marital dispute . According to Tambling and Glebova (2013), many states in the United State of America offer counseling programs for couples who wish to be helped however services are not utilized despite their availability. One possible reason of not using the services is that the programs are not trusted by the couples to meet their needs. Marital satisfaction also demands that couples enjoy intimate sexual satisfying relationships.

Sex related subjects addressed during premarital counseling are most helpful topics because intimacy in any marriage is paramount. According to Farnam et al. (2011), sex provides intimacy, closeness and bonding when couples have been too busy to make love for extended periods of time, they can feel a mysterious relational distance. Since the topic of sex is generally taboo in Africa, it is often ignored however; this topic in the context of marriage has been accepted and it should provide couples with a platform to discuss practical things like sex and birth control. Many new couples are blind-sided when they first enter into a sexual relationship. A sense

of trust and being accepted, being pursued and desired are important factors in marriage relationship.

According to Kepler (2015), factors behind marriage failures includes, lack of communication, disagreements on child-rearing styles, infidelity, expectation differences, lack of commitments, employment and finance management issues among others. Ability to effectively communicate is fundamental in any relationship because it guarantees that couples understand one another. Futris et al. (2011) cited that, couples who participate in premarital counseling experience greater level of marital satisfaction and are unlikely to get divorced. They also tend to have fewer negative interactions and experience high level of pleasure in their marriage and less negative interactions.

Another test of conflict resolution skills among married couples is the extent to which they can handle in-laws' interference. In-laws consist of relatives, especially the parents of one's husband or wife. In-laws are generally perceived as "enemies" by many couples, because some of them deliberately and most times, unnecessarily interfere with their children families (Kepler, 2015). Except in a few cases, many couples would rather keep their in-laws at a distance. But, as much as many couples would want to, the extended family practice in the African culture may not permit it. However, the Bible in Genesis 2:24 and Mark 10:7-8 say that 'a man and woman must leave their parents and cleave to one another becoming one' and thereby create a

new family. This new family is not an extension of the parental family. From the biblical point of view, it is a new unit, which often contradicts the traditions of the society. However, in-law relationships often described as ambiguous, and this ambiguity stems from the fact that couples belong to three different families: the new family the couple has started plus both partners' families of origin. As a result, in-law relationships often cause hostility and stress between spouses who have emotional and psychological loyalties to their families. Premarital counseling is likely to help the young partners to shift their loyalties from parents to each other.

Usually, if there is an in-law problem and the husband's family is controlling, then it is the husband (with support from his wife) who needs to lay down boundaries for his family. In like manner, if it is the wife's family that is controlling, it is the wife's responsibility (with support from her husband) to lay down boundaries for her family. Regardless of which set of in-laws the interference comes from, it is an assault upon the sanctity of the marriage outlined in the Bible. As such couples, who allow their parents to interfere with their marriage, are not living up to their responsibility to love and protect each other.

In-laws are not the final arbiters of the relationship however; the husband and wife are. A couple therefore has a right to privacy and when that privacy is violated, they have the responsibility to see to it that it is protected. In-laws do not have an inalienable right to suggest on how their children's marriage should be conducted.

Kepler (2015) posited that premarital counseling has proved helpful in managing in-laws' issues; it equips couples with problem solving skills to enable them handle marriage problems including in-laws.

Additionally, while some couples are able to work through their issues more effectively others find it impossible leading to divorce. Dew and Huston (2012) posited that, disagreements and poor communication style are both contributors of divorce. This is specifically true when couples are disagreeing about finances (Dew & Huston, 2012). In addition to communication, financial issues have been research focus however it is still under studied compared to the influence that everyday finances have on family life. Studies have disclosed that financial issues are significant predictors of divorce (Amato & Rogers, 2017; Britt & Huston, 2012; Dew & Huston, 2012). When spouses are incapable of resolving contrasting, money demands or has conflicting goals for spending or saving, disagreements tend to arise. Husbands and wives report that their financial arguments are more difficult to solve, they last longer, and are more significant to them than other types of disputes (Britt, and Huston, 2012). There is evidence to suggest that money disputes between spouses are correlated with a reduction in marital gratification (Dew & Huston, 2012). Transition from engagement period to marriage also known as courtship requires premarital counseling. It is very important for the success of marriage and has been found to be effective (Li et al., 2015)

2.7.3 Premarital Counseling and marital stability

A person's family of origin is the foundational piece of who they are according to Duba et al (2012). Very often families have rules, expectations, patterns, taboos and protocols that even family members are not aware of. Therefore, by creating a genogram during premarital counseling with a therapist, a method of mapping a client's family holistically; not simply a genealogy, can shed a great deal of light on how one's family operates, and provides insight into the couple by preparing them on how to relate with their spouses. Premarital counseling includes conversations about family's unique upbringing. Even though couples usually try to avoid the negative cycles they have experienced in their own families, the effect is usually felt. Anxiety, depression, anger, fear and recurrent relationship problems are often tied up in unresolved issues from the past. However, premarital counseling help couples with skills to deal with their old wounds and successfully re-adjust their lens on life.

2.8 Review of Empirical Literature

The Concept of Marriage

The institution of marriage is a central pillar on which the society is build. Marriage involves the living together of, or a partnership between, two or more persons who are relatively strangers to each other (Karina, 2011). As a powerful legal and social institution, marriage protects and supports intimate family relationships by

providing a unique set of rights, privileges and responsibilities. It represents multi-level commitments, one that involves person-to-person, family-to-family, and the couple (Kepler, 2015).

Biblically and in almost all societies, marriage is viewed as a permanent bond, so much so that in some societies, it is virtually irrevocable (Bagarozzi & Sperry, 2012). The stability provided by a life-long promise of remaining together makes marriage the institution most suited to rearing and socializing the next generation of members, a necessary task if the society's norms, values, and goals are to be maintained and if the society itself is to be perpetuated (Vail, 2012).

In some societies, the connection between marriage and reproduction is so strong that if conception does not occur, a divorce is permissible and often automatic. In others, a marriage does not take place until after pregnancy occurs (Baker, 2015). Kepler (2012) describes a family as, an ordinary social system having unique properties of its own, including, roles, rules, forms of communication, a power structure and problem-solving skills that allow various tasks to be performed effectively and ways of negotiations. When marriages break down and fail to provide the healthy nurture that is needed, the impact is not only on the lives of the individuals, but also on communities; implying that everybody pays for unhealthy marriages.

A family system is more than the total of all its individual members. This means that one cannot know the family simply by knowing each person as an

individual because each individual will behave differently outside the family (Strait et al., 2015). People's behaviour is deeply influenced by their family background, and people are best understood by understanding their family. When an individual has a problem, not only does the family get affected but also the whole community gets involved in finding a solution. This argument concurs with a popular opinion that: "it takes a couple to bear a child but it takes a whole village to raise the child".

Premarital counseling and marital stability; Africa perspective

In the traditional African societies, young adults were taught how to be goodwives and husbands in preparation for getting married by their aunties and uncles. The young people were instructed on the expectations and roles in marriage. However, due to migration from rural to urban in search better lifestyles, industrialization, globalization and change of life, young people have no access to that kind of counseling. As, a result, there is need for professional counselors to enhance and where necessary to replace traditional practices (Ng'ang'a & Wasanga, 2010).

Africans are community-oriented people who tend to think and act on the basis of how their decisions will impact the community. As such, marriage and family takes a central part in the consciousness and the daily occupation of the African people. Each family in the community endeavours to instruct its young ones on the weighty matters of good marriage and family and how such matters influence directly or indirectly the well-being of both the immediate family and the larger community

(Ng'ang'a and Wasanga, 2010). Traditionally, premarital education was given through three major avenues namely: apprenticeship, simply watching others do something and then doing the same thing. Girls for example, learned how to cook, care for the babies, care for the home, and work in the farm by watching their mothers. Much of the girls' training for the responsibilities of marriage came through daily associations with their mothers while boys learned how to watch over their father's beehives on high trees, harvest honey, care for the domestic animals, hunt, and fish as they accompanied their fathers doing all these activities (Mbunga, 2010).

The second avenue of preparation for marriage was actual teaching whereby grandmothers and aunties taught young girls in this regard. During meal times, girls ate food at their grandmothers' houses as they listened to teachings on life in general but more often than not, the lessons covered issues such marriage, fertility, sexuality, women's menses, families with whom they are related and should never marry, romance, choosing the right man for a husband, procedures for marriage such as how to care for their husbands and children, and how to maintain a marriage (Mbunga, 2010).

The third avenue for marriage preparation was during the initiation ceremonies. The initiation ceremony was the time when a girl became a woman and a boy became a man (Kunhiyop, 2008). The ceremonies gave young men and women the right to marry because they provided the final training required to enable persons

to marry. The ceremony combined several procedures for both boys and girls, including the physical operation of circumcision, various tests of physical endurance, teachings on how an adult man should care for his wife and family, and the performance of various rites and ceremonies. The girls, on their part, learned how to handle their husbands and home and what to do when they encountered misunderstandings and conflicts with their husbands and the new relatives. Parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents functioned as counselors, keepers of family boundaries and peace keepers. Africans emphasize on good relationship-they believe it is needed not only between the two-young people who are intending to marry but between their families as well.

Hence, marriage in the African family system is not only between the two-young people who intend to marry, but between the families from which the individuals come from (Mbunga, 2010). The words of counsel to the young couple did not mean that the parents should dominate the new family, but that they should respect it and assist them where necessary so that their marriage would succeed (Karina, 2011). The counseling to the new couple by their parents showed first that a new family has been established, yet the new family remains part of the larger family, the community.

This counsel clearly defined the responsibilities of husband and wife to one another as a subsystem within the extended family and also defined the boundaries of

the families of origin and the larger community (extended family) and lists the responsibilities of the parents to continue caring for the new family. The boundary of mutual respect and friendship between the two families of origin was mandated. All three parties-husband, wife, and parents were told to pursue the happiness and success of the new family. African traditional family counselors believed that prevention is better than cure and they began counseling instruction before marriage took place. Such instructions remained as lifelong guidance for the new family (Nga'ng'a & Wasanga, 2010)

In Kenya, the rate of divorce may not be as high as in some other western countries but has its own dreary picture. The institution of marriage is facing many challenges (Marang'a, 2013) and one the major challenges is marital dispute . As such, premarital counseling is a good avenue that can equip couples on how to deal with issues such as faith, tribe and racial differences (Mbunga, 2010). Basically, premarital counseling practices fall under three major models: the African traditional model, secular counseling model, which draws almost entirely from psychology and other humanistic disciplines, and the religious models, which include Christian, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. However, this research focuses on only Christian premarital models, specifically the model used in PCEA churches.

The church has diverse premarital counseling programs with programs differing on a number of important dimensions. According to Mbunga (2010), the

differences ranges from the number of sessions taken, the qualifications of those who conduct the sessions, content given and the type of programs employed. In Christians premarital programs, Christian's principles and ideals taught are based on the Word of God. The main problem with the Christian model used in PCEA churches is lack of a standardized curriculum that would ensure all the practitioners (Parish Ministers) are teaching similar ideas agreed upon and tested against the word of God and scientifically tested. This leaves every parish minister to use whatever material available in the name of Christian premarital counseling.

For example, all the clergy in Milimani presbytery uses different premarital manuals for pre-marital counseling. They then conduct the premarital counseling according to couple's needs. Some clergy builds their counseling on one question: Why do you want to get married to him or her, as their foundation hence the need to evaluate the effective of such uncoordinated practice and materials used in the Milimani South Presbytery churches.

The Concept of Marital Stability

Stability basically suggests the capacity to return to equilibrium or to the original position after having been displaced (Kepler 2015). This statement suggests an important notion of resilience which maintains and strengthens marriage, for the maximum self-support and personal independence. Farnam et al. (2011) cite parental

mental health, stable relationships among couple and positive parenting as marks of marital stability. Characteristics of the home environment, such as warmth, emotional availability, family cohesion and harmonious day-to-day activities, have also been implicated as signs of marital stability.

Theory of marital success versus failure reflects a causal process model that specifies satisfied versus not satisfied married partners. According to Gottman's (1994) as quoted by Navarra (2011), marital partners' negative nonverbal message causes a shift in perceptions of each other that may lead to unfavourable beliefs about the other partner. In particular, negative nonverbal message such as sarcasm and accusations predicts relational dispute . Conversely, a high ratio of positive-to-negative messages indicates stability. Stable couples have a 5:1 positive-to-negative messages ratio while unstable marriages enact a 1:1 positive-to-negative nonverbal message ratio. As such unstable marriages exhibit an equal number of positive to negative non-negative messages. According to Gottmann (1994), negative behaviours lead to negative emotional reactions. Differences between stable and unstable marriages also are evident in the response a partner extends regarding his or her partners' negative behaviour. For example, stable partners rely on positive or benign attributions to respond to a negative behaviour. Once hostile attributions are attained, partners begin to distance themselves from one another, re-cast the history of the marriage, and, finally, separate. The primary strategies for maintaining stability would

be to use cooperative strategies that avoid negative reciprocity, and attempt to explain the partner's negative behaviour using benign attributions. When one cannot alter defensive beliefs about his or her partner, then marital counseling with a spiritual leader would be of good help as noted by Navarra (2011).

Marital stability is interpreted as the ability for a couple to remain together instead of separating or divorcing during a difficult time (Marang'a, 2010). On the contrast, marital satisfaction refers to how marital partners evaluate the quality of their marriage. It is a subjective description of whether a marital relationship is good, happy, or satisfying. Various names are used to identify satisfaction in marriage: the most frequently used one's marital happiness. There is therefore a need to investigate the effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on both marital satisfaction and stability (Navarra, 2011).

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were postulated and tested in this study.

H01. There is no significant relationship between socio economic factors and marital stability amongst couples in the study area

H02. There is no significant difference between couples married in the church and the others (traditional or court) in their attitude towards marital stability

H03. There is no significant difference as to how literate couples view marital stability and extended family interference family

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Preamble

This section involves the systematic collection and analysis of data in research. It also involves the research design, population of study, sample size, sampling methods or techniques, sources of data, instruments of data collection and the techniques of data analysis. The components of the methodology of this research are outlined here under.

3.1 Research Design

This is the specification of the method and procedures for acquiring the information needed for the research. It will make use of quantitative method of data collection which involve conducting interviews and the circulation of carefully designed questionnaires to respondents in the study area.

Survey method involving the use of questionnaires was adopted for this study. The survey method is chosen in preference to other methods like content analysis because of its capacity to measure human attitudes and opinions. This will enable the researcher to generate valid information from samples of human elements that constituted the respondents of the questionnaire issued (Orodho, 2009). According to Agbonifoh and Yomere (2017), a survey is a method by which information are obtain

from a sample or subset within a larger population with the intention of studying the sample and thereafter generalizing the results to the entire population from which the sample was drawn.

3.2 Population of Study

The National Population Census of Nigeria in 2016 puts the population of Nigeria at one hundred and forty million, four hundred and thirty one thousand, seven hundred and ninety, at which Edo state figures stood at three million, two hundred thirty three thousand, three hundred and sixty six (3,233,366). The population of Egor Local government Area Edo State will be used in the investigation of this study.

3.3 Sample Size/Sampling Technique

The sample size of this study will be 200 respondents which comprises of male and female adults of voting age (18 years and above). This is a representative sample of the population of electorate in the three senatorial districts of Edo State. The sample size of 100 respondents will be randomly selected from the population for interview and administration of questionnaire through the use of stratified random sampling. . The sample size will be obtained using Taro Yamene (1967) formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

3.4 Research Instrument: Questionnaire/ In-Dept Interview

The standardized questionnaire will be used to elicit information from the respondents. It guarantees subjects anonymity and encourages high response rate. The questionnaire comprised of standardized questions structured to appropriately elicit useful information from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, sections A and B. Question in section A dwells on the bio-data of respondents – sex, age, educational qualifications, gender and occupation. Section B comprised of questions that relate to the marital stability and other related issues which enabled us to get the required information or data for the analysis. Also, officials of the State Independent Electoral Commission and officials of the State political parties' secretariats will be interviewed.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Reliability and validity of data will be fortified by allowing experts in statistical analysis to make useful inputs on the research instruments. The questionnaire constructed will also be given to supervisor to scrutinize so as to ensure that the research instruments will be consistent with variables raised in the hypotheses and that they actually measure the issues under study by the researcher. This therefore improved without doubt the validity of the research instruments.

3.6 Source of Data Collection

For the purpose of the study, primary and secondary data formed the nuclei of data collection for analysis. The primary source of data was based on the administration of questionnaire and the conduct of interviews, while the secondary source included perusal of textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, internet amongst others.

3.7 Techniques of data analysis

The data collected will be analyzed using both inferential and descriptive statistics. To this end, the Chi-Square (χ^2), simple percentage and t-test will be used to analyze the questions raised. Analysis of data by simple percentage enabled the researcher to know the different opinions in assessing and testing the hypothesis for interpretations. The chi-square was used to substantiate the data or facts of the study. The data was presented in tables according to bio-data information like sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, and occupation.

The formula for the computation of the chi-square (χ^2) is given below:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

Where:

(x^2) = Chi-square

F_o = Observed frequency

F_e = Expected frequency

While the formula for computing the simple percentage is:

$$\% = \frac{PC}{N} \times \frac{100}{100}$$

Where

PC = Percentage compliance

N = Total number of respondents

100 = Common base of simple percentage

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction

The researcher made use of Likert scale question to gather her information from respondents. The major aim of this research study is to examine the socio economic determinants of marital stability in Egor Local Government are Edo State

The questionnaire was designed to capture the demographic data of the respondents and their opinions with respect to the research question/statement, the questionnaire was divided into two (2) parts. Part I sought to obtain information on demographic details of respondent while Part II consisted of items measuring the respondents' perceptions.

In all a total of hundred (100) questionnaires were administered in the study area and ninety nine (99) were retrieved, one (1) was wrongly filled and nine.

The response are presented in tables and percentages which were used to illustrate the responses received.

$$\frac{\text{Number of Responses}}{\text{Total number of respondents}} \times 100$$

Data Presentation Part I

In this chapter, the researcher presents and analysis the data collected from field survey. Deduction/findings are also made.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 1: SEX DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sex	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Male	63	63..6%
	Female	36	36.4%
	Total	99	100
Age group	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	20-30yrs	73	73.7%
	31-40yrs	16	16.2%
	41-50yrs	8	8.1%
	51 and Above	2	2.0%
	Total	99	100
Educational Qualification	Responses	Frequency	Total
	WAEC/GCE	12	12.1%
	OND/NCE	29	29.3%
	BSC/HND	58	58.6%
	Total	99	100
Marital Status	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Single	87	87.9%
	Married	9	9.1%
	Divorced	3	3.0%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

The table indicates that 63.6% of the total respondents are male and 36.4% are females. This shows that there are more male respondents.

The age group distribution of the sample population shows that majority of the respondents falls within the age group of (20-49), while 16.2% represent age group of 31-40yrs, 8.1% for age group 41-50yrs and 2.0% for 51 and above.

The analysis of findings as shown in table 3 reveals that 12.1% of the respondents had WAEC/GCE, 29.3% of the respondents had OND/NCE while 58.6% of the respondent had BSC/HND degrees.

The table shows that 87.9% of the respondents were single, 9.1% were married and 3.0% of the respondents were divorced.

TABLE 7: Marital dispute have increase in Benin City because of the quest for material things

Marital dispute have increase in Benin City because of the quest for material things	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	21.2	21.2%
	Agree	45.5	45.5%
	Disagree	21.2	21.2%
	Strongly Disagree	8	8.1%
	Undecided	4	4.0%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

From the findings above, 21.2% of the respondents are of the opinion that Marital dispute have increase in Benin City because of the quest for material things,

while 45.5% also agree to that, 21.2% of the respondents disagree with the opinion and 8.1% strongly disagree while 4.0% responds were undecided.

TABLE 8: Marital dispute deprive children from parental care

Marital dispute deprive children from parental care	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	14.1	14.1%
	Agree	47.5	47.5%
	Disagree	22.2	22.2%
	Strongly Disagree	7.1	7.1%
	Undecided	9.1	9.1%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

The table above shows that 14.1% of the respondents are of the opinion that Marital dispute deprive children from parental care, while 47.5% also agree to that, 22.2% of the respondents disagree with the opinion and 7.1% strongly disagree while 7.1% responds were undecided.

TABLE 9: If couples are from different tribes does it result to marital dispute

If couples are from different tribes does it result to marital dispute	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	55	55.6%
	Agree	32	32.3%
	Disagree	6	6.1%
	Strongly Disagree	3	3.0%
	Undecided	3	3.0%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

The table above shows that 55.6% of the respondents are of the opinion that If couples are from different tribes does it result to marital dispute , while 32.3% also agree to that, 6.1% of the respondents disagree with the opinion and 3.0% strongly disagree while 3.0% responds were undecided.

TABLE 10: Lack of male children in the family would lead to marital dispute

Lack of male children in the family would lead to marital dispute	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	53	53.5%
	Agree	36	36.4%
	Disagree	3	3.0%
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0%
	Undecided	3	3.0%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

From the table above 53.5% of the respondents strongly agree that Lack of male children in the family would lead to marital dispute , while 36.4% agreed. 3.0% disagree, 4.0% strongly disagree while 3.0% respondent are undecided.

Table 11: marital dispute will exist because of the inability to choose the right partner

marital dispute will exist because of the inability to choose the right partner	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	41	41.4%
	Agree	43	43.4%
	Disagree	8	8.1%
	Strongly Disagree	5	5.1%
	Undecided	2	2.0%

	Total	99	100
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Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

The table above shows that 41.4% of the respondents strongly agree that marital dispute will exist because of the inability to choose the right partner, while 4.4% agree also to that, 8.1% disagree, 5.1% strongly disagree while 2.0% of the respondents responses were undecided.

Table 12: marital dispute will exist because of the inability to choose the right partner

marital dispute will exist because of the inability to choose the right partner	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	21	21.2%
	Agree	47	47.5%
	Disagree	15	15.2%
	Strongly Disagree	5	5.1%
	Undecided	11	11.1%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

The table above shows that 21.2% of the respondents strongly agree that marital dispute will exist because of the inability to choose the right partner, while 47.5% agree, also to that, 15.2% disagree, 5.1% strongly disagree while 2.0% of the respondents responses were undecided.

TABLE 13. Will the choosing of spouses by parents for their children prevent marital dispute

Will the choosing of spouses by parents for their children prevent marital dispute	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	53	53.5%
	Agree	38	38.4%
	Disagree	4	4.0%
	Strongly Disagree	3	3.0%
	Undecided	1	1.0%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

From the table above, 53.5% strongly agree that Will the choosing of spouses by parents for their children prevent marital dispute , while 38.4% also agree to it respectively.

TABLE 14. The desire for gender equality among women has contributed to marital dispute :

The desire for gender equality among women has contributed to marital dispute :	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	41	41.4%
	Agree	42	42.4%
	Disagree	8	8.1%
	Strongly Disagree	6	6.1%
	Undecided	2	2.0%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

From the table above, the result shows that 41.1% of the respondent strongly agree that The desire for gender equality among women has contributed to marital dispute , 42.4% agree that economic recession brings about unemployment, 6.1% strongly disagree while 2.0% undecided.

TABLE 15: In marriage, African culture strengthened the rights of male than females.

In marriage, western culture strengthened the rights of female than males.	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	52	52.5%
	Agree	38	38.4%
	Disagree	4	4.0%
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0%
	Undecided	3	3.0%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

The table shows that 52.5% strongly agree that In marriage, African culture strengthened the rights of male than females., 38.4% agree, while 4.0% disagree, 2.0% strongly disagree while 3.0% undecided.

TABLE 16: ministry of social and gender unit usually use all possible means to solve family problems to prevent marital instability

We usually use all possible means to solve family problems to prevent marital dispute	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	41	41.4%
	Agree	49	49.5%
	Disagree	5	5.1%
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0%
	Undecided	2	2.0%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

From the table above, 41.4% strongly agree that ministry of social and gender unit usually use all possible means to solve family problems to prevent marital dispute , while 49.5% also agree to it respectively.

TABLE 17: In solving our family problems, the father usually makes the final decision this could lead to marital dispute .

In solving our family problems, the father usually makes the final decision this could lead to marital dispute	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	51	51.5%
	Agree	42	42.4%
	Disagree	2	2.0%
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0%
	Undecided	2	2.0%
	Total	99	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The table shows that 51.5% strongly agree that In solving our family problems, the father usually makes the final decision this could lead to marital dispute ., 42.4% agree, while 2.0% disagree, 2.0% strongly disagree while 2.0% undecided.

Hypothesis Testing

At the inception of this study, we formulated some hypothesis which were designed to act as guide to the conduct of this study. In this section, we shall attempt to test these hypothesis in order to give credence to our Assumptions about the problems under investigation.

Hypothesis One

H1: There is a significant relationship between socio economic factors and marital stability amongst couples in the study area

H0: There is no significant relationship between socio economic factors and marital stability amongst couples in the study area

$$\text{Chi-Square (X}^2\text{)} \quad X^2 \sum = \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{F_e}$$

Where

- X^2 = Chi-square symbol
 F_o = Actual or frequency observed
 F_e = Frequency expected
 \sum = Summation

Decision Rule

At 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis will be rejected if the computed X^2 is greater than the table value of X^2 is greater than the table value of X^2 at 4 degree of freedom.

TEST DATA: The data used to test this hypothesis was obtained from the responses of respondents to questions contained in the questionnaires.

Table 4.4.1: One-Way Classical

	Respondents		Fo – Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo-Fe)^2}{Fe}$
	Fo	Fe			
Strongly Agree	52	20	32	1024	51.2
Agree	38	20	18	324	16.2
Undecided	4	20	-16	256	12.8
Disagree	2	20	-18	324	16.2
Strongly Disagree	3	19	-16	256	12.8
Total	99	99	0	926	109.2

Calculated Chi-Square (X^2) = **109.2**

From the chi-square table the critical value of 4 degree of freedom (5-1) (2-1) is 9.49 the computed value of 109.2 is greater than the critical value of 9.49.

Conclusion

Since the computer X^2 value is greater (109.2) than the table value of X^2 (9.49) at 5% level of significance and 4 degree of freedom we reject the null hypothesis which states that H01. There is no significant relationship between socio economic factors and marital stability amongst couples in the study area. Therefore the alternate hypothesis which states that There is significant relationship between socio economic factors and marital stability amongst couples in the study area, stands and accepted.

Hypothesis Two

H1: There is a significant difference between couples married in the church and the others (traditional or court) in their attitude towards marital dispute

H0. There is no significant difference between couples married in the church and the others (traditional or court) in their attitude towards marital dispute

Decision Rule

At 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis will be rejected if the computed X^2 at 4 degree of freedom.

Test Data

The data used to test this hypothesis was obtained from true responses of respondents to questions contained in the questionnaire as reproduced below:

Table 4.4.2: One-Way Classical

	Respondents		Fo – Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo - Fe)^2}{Fe}$
	Fo	Fe			
Strongly Agree	51	20	31	961	48.05
Agree	42	20	22	484	24.2
Undecided	2	20	-18	324	16.2
Disagree	2	20	-18	324	16.2

Strongly Disagree	2	19	-17	289	14.5
Total	99	99	0	718	119.2

Calculated Chi-Square (X^2) = 119.2

Using a level of significance of 5% at 4 degree of freedom, table X^2 is equals to 9.49, hence we establish our physical acceptance value.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

From the foregoing analysis and research study, it is clearly agreed that there are various impacts of marital dispute on children such as sexual promiscuity, drug abuse and crime, delinquent behavior, mental discord amongst others. In the section of this project work, the project topic was introduced “the impact of marital dispute on children and the case study for this work was gotten from Egor Local Government Area, in Benin City Edo State. The limitation of study gave a comprehensive understanding of marital stability as it relates to both affecting the family and society.

The findings shows that three main factors influence marital stability; viz: social , behavioural and domestic. Respondents equally considered sexual, religious and financial factors as influencing marital stability because their mean scores are also high. The result of these findings corroborate that of Dada and Idowu (2006) in which similar factors were upheld as affecting marital stability. In testing the first null hypothesis, result shows no significant difference between male and female literate spouses in their perception of factors that influence marital stability. The findings of Agbamu and Odewumi (2001) is also in consonance with these findings.

In the second null hypothesis between Christian and non-Christian literate spouses, it shows that the respondents perceived the factors in the same light. This means that they were not significantly different. Jegede (2021) compared Christians and Muslims in respondents' perception of factors influencing marital stability in a similar study with the variable of communication" and reported similar result.

In terms of the respondents' educational level, the third null hypothesis also shows that they were not significantly different in their perception. A study carried out by Olayinka (1990) also corroborates this finding.

So also is the study of Dada and Idowu (2006) who used similar variables. On the basis of length of marriage in the fourth hypothesis, it was evidently clear that the longer the spouses stayed in marriage, the more favourably they adjust in marriage. Ogidan (2021), in his study also found out that though marriage in Nigeria is besieged by a lot of constraints like divorce and separation, the longer the spouses stayed together, the more stable their marriage becomes.

The major stressors in subject were parental divorce and family conflict. The parents of the subject divorced when the subject was four years old, then subject's mother remarried three times. These stressors made an imbalance in subject. It is consistent with Thomas and Högnäs (2015) that parental divorce experienced before age 7 have an influence in children's health. The parental divorce is positively associated with negative outcomes from early childhood, through adolescence, and

into adult. Amato (2014) also said that children with divorced parents experience more mental and physical health problems than the children with married parents. Ermisch and Francesconi (2010) also found that 80% of stepfamilies are not very stable. Children tend to be worse after a parent's remarriage and the more conflicts there is, the more damaging to children's wellbeing (Mackay, 2005).

5.2 Conclusions

It has been seen from this study that in a descending order, social, behavioural, domestic, sexual, religious and financial factors foster stability in marriage. Therefore, the government and marriage counsellors should help to maintain marital stability among couples through seminars, workshops etc. The government should provide an enabling environment for couples to improve their living standards as a means of ensuring stability of marriage. For the counsellors, lectures, workshops, etc should be organised for married couples to enhance marital stability and to teach them some skills in maintaining good marital relationships. Also, premarital counselling should be regularly organised for youths on techniques of enhancing marital stability before going into this God – ordained institution of marriage.

When parents encounter problem in their marriage, they should go for counseling and sort out their problems instead of splitting up and putting their children at risk. Extended families should also stay away from the affairs of a couple.

It is my sincere hope and belief that the recommended actions that would be listed below will be able to address the incident of broken home that has caused social problems in our society as a result of the negative impact in the life of children.

The home that was designed by God to be the shelters and umbrella for children gets turn apart by parents due to misunderstanding and mismanagement. Therefore, there is the need to ensure that there is a conducive atmosphere in which family can operate effectively and harmoniously towards the realization of its goal. It could also be stressed from this angle that when parents are financially stable, faithful to emotional support, value and norms of the society, the issue of marital stability will reduce in our society.

5.3 Implications of findings to social work practice

It is crystal clear that Benin City is faced with enormous child defilement cases which no doubt needs urgent intervention. Factually speaking one can conclude that government alone does not have what it takes to combat child defilement cases. However, if social work is given full recognition especially in this part it is bound to drastically ameliorate most of our child defilement cases judging from the essence of th profession and for the fact that our traditional values are now kpt in the archive or often heard as a fairy tale. Social work is a practice profession inherently saddled with

the responsibility of enhancing the wellbeing of individuals, groups and community members through its use of social work method.

In addressing social worker's role in child defilement cases, social workers work with policy makers and government in enacting laws and policies which will put perpetrators of the act in some form of discipline. In explaining about this definition of social work will be used to throw more light.

Social work according to (IFSW/IASSSW 2014) is a practice based profession and academic discipline that promote social change and development, social cohesion and the empowerment and liberating of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity are central to social work. Underpinned by the theories of social work, social science, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engaged people and structure to address life challenges and enhance well being. Using this definition, social workers can function in various ways in dealing with child defilement and how it affects the children. Policies can be put in place to reduce or eradicate child defilement cases in Benin City. Social workers can strive to create and promote change and development. This can be done through government intervention. Through them making laws that will favour the victims of defilement

5.4 Recommendations

From the analysis of data, it is clear that several causal factors are responsible for the causes of marital stability and the negative effect on children. Some recommendations are

1. Parents should try to be faithful to each other in building up their home. Also they must ensure that there is the spirit of give and take and mental dialogue in dealing in family matters.
2. The development of the nation depends on the stability and well-being of the family. Government should therefore ensure that the homes are properly planned and developed to be able to function effectively for the development of the nation.
3. The welfare and development of the nation depends largely in the quality of the family unit, looking at the traditional and cultural values that enhance and strengthen the healthy wholesome development of the society. Therefore, government must ensure that there is a conducive atmosphere in which the family can operate effectively and in harmony towards the realization of its goals.
4. Couples should learn to live with the limit of their financial capacity rather than live above their means of income which breeds conflict strain in marriage.
5. Parents should give their children moral and emotional support to ensure adequate health and give them guard lines for parenthood in the future.

6. Parents should give their children a free hand in order to choose whom they want to marry, irrespective of their parental background. This will go a long way in resolving conflict among the couple wherever it arises even without the intervention of parents

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