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IMPACT OF DIVORCE (FAMILY DISINTEGRATION) ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR HOME ECONOMICS

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Abstract
This paper explores the impact of divorce (family disintegration) on women and children in Ilorin metropolis, kwara state, Nigeria: implication for home economics. Divorce is an ending of marriage by an official decision in a court of law. Recently, views about women, children and divorce necessitated our beliefs about family and child rearing. Divorce is undoubtedly one of the greatest stress human being can experience This paper discusses types and reasons for divorce, the effect of divorce on the family, on women and the children and highlighted how to manage divorce. The researcher is of the opinion that, divorce in the family always signals dangers and insecurity in the society and generally the rate of divorce today is skyrocketing all over the countries of the world. It is recommended that the society should be enlightened about the increasing trend of divorce rate by the Home Economics family and child unit for proper counselling on how to go about the stress of divorce in the family.

Keywords: Divorce, Women, Children Family, Home Economics

Introduction

The major social issue in Nigerian society is the increase in divorce rate or dissolution of marriage which means the end of marriage. Divorce can be contrasted with an annulment which declares that a marriage is invalid. Crouch (1999) stated that divorce is like an epidemic in our society that is spreading very quickly, and the offspring are most affected in this epidemic, Amato (2000) further stressed that out of every two marriages ends in divorce it is very sad because many children are raised in single-parent families, and this has a negative impact on their development.

Divorce damages society. It consumes social and human capital. It substantially increases cost to the taxpayer, while diminishing the taxpaying portion of society. It diminishes children's future competence in all five of society's major tasks or institutions: family, school, religion, marketplace and government. The reversal of the cultural and social status of divorce would be nothing less than a cultural revolution.Divorce also permanently weakens the family and the relationship between children and parents.(Amato and

Sobolewski (2001).Divorce leads to disruptions in the parent-child relationship, continuing discord between former spouses, loss of emotional support, economic hardship, and an increase in the number of other negative life events.
A new understanding of the real causes and effects of divorce on the families and society began in the mid-1980s. Behrnan and Quinn, (1994) is of the opinion that the effect of divorce on children's hearts, minds, and souls ranges from mild to severe, from seemingly small to observably significant, and from short-term to long-term. Amato (1994) pointed out that divorce has all kinds of negative influence on the child. The divorce may cause the risks of emotional problems for children such as teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol addiction, smoking, crime and poverty. Parents dealing with a divorce want to protect their children from the same stress they feel. But avoiding the issue only adds to the stress. Parents need to help their children understand that the family will learn to adapt to new schedules, new environments and new ways of communicating. Only then can parents begin to relieve some of the accompanying stress for children
Mulroy etal (1995) stated that the custody issue on who is going to be responsible for the care of the children is also very important for those going through divorce and it is indeed a source of stress for children, which can result in decline of well-being. On the other hand, some children will breeze through with few negative effects, and some will actually show improvement following divorce.

The researcher identified that, women in Ilorin generally suffer financially after divorce because they have to be responsible for their children well being in most cases. They are often left with the big responsibility and the burden of looking after their child after the divorce. Women and children will have to adapt to new schedules, new environments, and new ways of communicating. Only then can parents begin to relieve some of the accompanying stress for children. Individual adult reactions to divorce and separation vary. Children's reactions vary also, depending on change. Divorce has physical and mental health effects especially on children and women and it can affect the whole society. Divorce between parents can be disastrous and painful on children. With divorce, changes will occur in many household responsibilities. Children may have to adjust to new schedules, new homework, mealtime, and bedtime routines.

The researcher is of the opinion that divorce will not go away on its own, unless much can be done in order to redefine the status of what marriage means and what it is for people, divorce and other marital problems will extremely arise. To have a peaceful, happy and healthy relationship, either spouse must be patient, strong, and trustfully dwell in unity and love each other.

Types of Divorce

There are six different ways divorce could occur, Lawler, (2002) identified six different types of divorce that are conversant to the society such as:

1. **The emotional divorce**. Emotional divorce- This feeling occurs before legal divorce is finalized. One partner moves out changing roles and responsibilities. Discussions begin on how to inform near and dear ones about the decision. Children are the biggest sufferers in any divorce. They have the feeling of rejection, fear, confusion, sadness, etc
2. **The legal divorce.** Legal divorce (i.e., absolute, uncontested, limited, no fault)- lawful end of marriage by court. Professional mediation is provided to resolve child related custody issues.
3. **The economic divorce**. This involves division of assets. Insurance and retirement plans become very important. Maintaining two households is more expensive than one..
4. **The co-parental divorce-** The negotiation for child custody related matters. Parents learn how to maintain the role of a parent after letting go of their spousal responsibility. The family now becomes a binuclear family.
5. **Community divorce**- Changes that occur between a divorcee and his/her social surrounding. There may be feeling of nervousness in dating again. Family and friends might become more aloof in your divorce matter.
6. **The psychological divorce**- A divorcee learns to live alone and there is mental acceptance that divorce is over.

Reasons for Divorce

According to Johnson (2010) , some of the reasons why people divorce are, lack of commitment to the marriage, Lack of communication between spouses, Infidelity, Abandonment, Alcohol Addiction, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Inability to manage or resolve conflict, Differences in personal and career goals, Financial problems, Different expectations about household tasks, Different expectations about having or rearing children, Interference from parents or in-laws, Intellectual Incompatibility, Sexual Incompatibility, Falling out of love, Religious conversion or religious beliefs and Cultural and lifestyle differences, Mental Instability or Mental Illness, Criminal behaviour and incarceration for crime. Suzan (2011) is of the opinion that, Children are often the forgotten victims in a divorce. However, with the right amount of sensitivity, compassion and patience on the part of parents and others in the community, children should be able to overcome and deal with their feelings and emotions.

She further ascertained that Lack of commitment to the marriage, Lack of communication between spouses, Infidelity, Abandonment, Alcohol Addiction,

Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Inability to manage or resolve conflict, Differences in personal and career goals, Financial problems, Different expectations about household tasks, Different expectations about having or rearing children, Interference from parents or in-laws, Intellectual Incompatibility, Sexual Incompatibility, Falling out of love, Religious conversion or religious beliefs and Cultural and lifestyle differences, Mental Instability or Mental illness, Criminal behaviour and incarceration for crime can be regarded as important points for divorce to occur.

Amato (2000) attested that Children are often the forgotten victims in a divorce. However, with the right amount of sensitivity, compassion and patience on the part of parents and others in the community, children should be able to overcome and deal with their feelings and emotion

Effect of Divorce on the Family Weakened Parent-Child Relationships-

When parents divorce each other, another sort of divorce occurs between the parents and their children. the primary effect of divorce (and of the parental conflict that precedes the divorce) is a decline in the relationship between parent and child. Meneghan andParcel (1995) further stressed that immediately after a divorce, most parents have two sets of problems: their adjustment to their own intrapsychic conflicts and to their role as a divorced parent. Divorce often results in the loss of contact with one parent and with this loss children also lose the knowledge, skills and resources (emotional, financial, etc.) of that parent. Children in divorced families receive less emotional support, financial assistance,and practical help from their parents. Amato and Booth (1997) opined that divorced homes show a decrease in language stimulation, pride, affection, stimulation of academic behavior, encouragement of social maturity, and warmth directed towards the children. The presence of fewer toys and games is common, as is an increase in physical punishment. MacKinnon eta'l (1992) stated that, though some studies show that parental divorce itself may result to children living in single parent families are less likely to have as many economic resources.

Weakened Mother-Child Relationships

Children of divorced mothers have poorer and less stimulating home environments. Furthermore, divorced mothers, despite their best intentions, are less able than married mothers to give emotional support to their children. King(2000) identified divorce as a slight causes of decline in children's trust of their mothers when parental divorce occurs Hetherington eta'l (1992) compared divorce mothers with continuously-married mothers, and described divorced mothers to be less affectionate and communicative with their children, and to

discipline them more harshly and more inconsistently, especially during the first year following the divorce.(Cox 1997) also stated that divorced mothers have particular problems with their children especially their sons, though their relationship will likely improve within two years, even if, as often occurs, discipline problems persist for up to six years after the divorce.

Weakened Father-Child Relationships

Divorce leads to a decline in the frequency and quality of parent-child contact and relationships, Aquilino (2001) maintained that it becomes difficult for nonresidential parents, 90 percent of whom are fathers, to maintain close ties with their children. For example, children spend significantly more nights with their mother than their father. Lin eta'l (2004) attested that nearly 50 percent of the children in one study reported not seeing their nonresident father in the past year, and the small number that had recently stayed overnight at the father's residence did so for a special visit, not as part of a regular routine According to Furstenberg (1995), An analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households found that about one in five divorced fathers had not seen his children in the past year, and fewer than half the fathers saw their children more than a few times a year. Divorce process increases the likelihood of distance between the father and his children. However, as time passes after the breakup, conflict between father and child decreases. Additionally, older children typically experience less conflict with their nonresident fathers than do younger children.

Emotional Closeness and Wellbeing:

Children's relationships with their parents worsen after a divorce. Marital disruption creates distance between parents and children, Rossi and Rossi, (1990) even compared to children living in married but unhappy families. Divorced parents also report significantly diminished satisfaction with their former spouse's relationships with their children, though parental divorce tends to affect the relationship of the child and the opposite-sex parent more than the child and their parent of the same sex. (Booth1994)

Effect of Divorce on Women

A divorce is painful for everyone involved. Quattrocchi, (2004) stated that the emotional journey to divorce vary from one individual to the next, however, there are some effects of divorce that are common among women. Knowing what those effects are can help you strategize a plan for coping with them effectively, as you navigate your way through this difficult experience.

Financial Effect

The most immediate challenge a divorced woman faces are taking care of financial concerns.Amato (2001) stated that "90% of divorced mothers have custody of their children" and 60% of people under poverty guidelines are divorced women and children." If your husband was the primary breadwinner during your marriage, you now carry of the burden of providing your family with an income. You also assume the responsibility of handling your finances.

Independent Effect

A divorce means that you must learn how to do all of those things on your own, without the help or support of a partner. It can be both intimidating and overwhelming to take on these new responsibilities. You will likely feel out of your depth at first and alone. However, as long as you're willing, you can acquire the skills you need to run your household. It will take time, but it can be done.

Depression Effect

Mydivorce.com (2011) stated that "The stressful effects of divorce can leave women feeling rejected, insecure and depressed." You might experience doubt and even self-loathing as you agonize over what went wrong and what might have been done differently. This bout of depression is normal; it is also temporary. The best thing you can do is stay focused on doing the things you need to do in order to stand on your own.

Relief Effect

In spite of the financial and emotional effects of divorce, sometimes marriage is so unbearable that a woman must end it in order to preserve her dignity, happiness and sense of self. Mediate.com (2011) says "women are more likely [than men] to notice marital problems and to feel relief when such problems end." It is painful to live with someone who ignores you, mistreats you or takes you for granted. Coping with the stress that comes with being single may be preferable to being part of an unhappy couple. In this situation, it is normal to feel relief that your marriage is over. You are ready to build something better for yourself.

Effect of Divorce on Children

Parents who are going through divorce often believe that shielding children from the stress of the situation is in the children's best interest. But regardless of their parents' good intentions, children often find themselves caught in an emotional whirlpool during these times. Instead of protection, they need support and reassurance during this temporarily stressful time. This guide

will help you understand the stress that children often feel when their parents' divorce. (Amato, 1994)

1. **The family they have always known will be different.** One of the biggest fears for children is change. With divorce, changes will occur in many household responsibilities. Children may have to adjust to new schedules, new homework, mealtime, and bedtime routines. They may no longer have contact with some friends and extended family members (such as grandparents or cousins).
2. **Loss of attachment.** Children become attached to parents, brothers, sisters, and pets. Changes in how much contact occurs with any of these can cause some distress. Having a different bedroom and being away from familiar possessions also create stress.
3. **Fear of abandonment.** Milroy, (1995) stated that, children fear that if they have lost one parent, they may lose the other. They may blame themselves, feel unlovable, or not feel safe. They worry about who will take care of them and even who will pick them up from child care or from school. Even children whose parents are not divorcing may hear friends talk about divorce and create confusion and fear for themselves anguish.
4. **Hostility between parents.** Arguments and tension between parents may make children feel guilty, angry, and alone. Trying to make the children take sides or turn against the other parent creates confusion for the children and places them in the middle of an adult struggle. It is important to let the children make up their own minds about their parents. Children's reactions to stress may vary from relief and complete acceptance to great sadness, anger, or anxiety. Parents will see signs of children's stress in many of their words and actions. (Behrnan, 1994)

How to Manage Divorce

According to Strohschein, (2007) there are many things to consider before filing for a divorce and effectively changing of women and children's situation in the family for the rest of their lives, nothing is more challenging than thinking through the effect such action will have on the children in particular. Roll (1998) stated that in managing divorce, Financial issues may be dealt with by enlisting the support of friends, family, church, or even the social safety net, the loss of a car or house can be compensated for, the loss of companionship which you will have to endure, and will be eased over time; yet nothing is as heartbreaking as the sudden feelings of loneliness that will creep into your children's hearts and minds. Therefore they should seek for counsellors, advisors, workshops,

seminars etc especially the Home Economics Family and Child unit, where help can be available.

Hetherington (1999) suggested that in your heart you have done everything you could, and your children will be better off if you terminate the relationship with their father, here are some tips to keep in mind: Reduce conflict and blame, recognize and respect Children's positive traits from both parents.Maintain a relationship with your future ex-husband's parents, no matter how much pride it will cost you. They are still grandma and grandpa, and your children should not have to suffer because adult egos are becoming involved. He further stated that, invest in some counselling should be made for the children and make sure they understand that they played absolutely no role in your decision to divorce. It is imperative that they do not feel at fault or believe themselves to be contributing factors in the demise of your relationship with their father.

Miller,(2000) confessed that children from divorced families can grow up happy and healthy, just like children from any other type of family. He stated that Over 25 years of research has shown that the two most powerful factors influencing children's development after a divorce are:

- How much conflict, anger, and bitterness there is between the parents as they raise their children across two households.
- Whether or not the child has regular, predictable, and frequent access to both parents. The best thing you can do to help your children cope with the emotions and upheaval involved in a divorce is to work towards a peaceful relationship with your children's other parent.

Divorce is a painful process for everyone involved. Parents' emotions are very intense during this life change, and can cloud their ability to make decisions that are in their child's best interests. Do not hesitate to seek professional help and parent guidance during a divorce.

Getting an objective opinion can be very valuable to make sure that you are doing everything within your power to have a "good divorce." Putting your child's needs first during this difficult change in the family will insure that he or she will grow up to be a healthy, happy adult. (Wallerstein eta'l 2011)

Conclusion

The researcher is of the opinion that relationships can be difficult at times, but also rewarding. It can be difficult to make the decision to reconcile with your spouse, or to separate or divorce. Replacing counterproductive behaviour with productive behaviour is critical to saving a relationship in crisis or minimizing the impact of divorce on you and your family. Divorce in the family always signals dangers and insecurity in the society and generally the rate of divorce

today is skyrocketing all over the countries of the world. People are no more interested in solving problems within the home they no longer tolerate one another. The men could not stand women liberation and the women could not stand men infidelity, unfaithfulness or disloyalty, especial to a social partner. Lack of maturity in handling problems of the home such as expectation of household task, having and rearing of children, interference from parents or in laws, falling out of love are some of the problems that increases divorce rate in Nigeria.Children's adjustment depends on the interaction of several factors: parental distress, socioeconomic status, developmental stage and individual personality characteristics. Children should do their best when the need to honor and admire both parents is protected. This generous goal - decency on behalf of children - is ultimately what promotes successful adjustment. The researcher identified that, women and children are more 3affected by the negative effect of divorce, therefore they should be able to cope with the stress that comes, stay focus, take up their responsibility as single parent and build something better for them to live a better life.

Recommendations

It is recommended that women going through divorce should able be:

1. Seek out emotional support help from people to navigate the initially painful hurdles of divorce,
2. Visit the Home Economics unit of family and child for proper counselling on how to go about the stress of divorce, and to be able to redefine them, that is a reality that can come as a relief or a frightening prospect.
3. Take up new hobbies, activities, interests and expand yourself and should be able to stay busy in a constructive way.
4. Have the power to minimize the pain their children feel by keeping things as amicable as possible. You're dealing with a lot of grief and personal feelings. But always avoid criticizing the other parent in front of the children and women are warn against pulling children into any conflict with an ex-spouse, or their father it is a scenario that provokes taking sides it's a short gain with a long loss.
5. Make friends with children teachers and administrators at ' schools.

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