EFFECTS OF FAMILY CONFLICTS ON FAMILY SECURITY: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING.

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Abstract

The paper discusses the effect of marital conflict on family security and counselling implications. In the paper, the concept of marriage and marital conflicts disagreement, quarrel and misunderstanding was discussed. Likewise family security challenges such as poverty, spouse divorce, unemployment was highlighted. Causes of marital conflicts which include individual differences, expectation of norms among other was mentioned. Effect of marital conflict on family security was also highlighted such as verbal and physical scars general care of the family. The paper also talked on counselling interventions such as developing skills for acquiring honest traits, forgiveness, proper communication between spouses etc. it also recommended that for security of family to be ensured in the society, families should establish a harmonious relationship and couples should have fear of God in their affairs. Lastly the paper concludes that for security challenges in the country to be arrested, that of the family is fundamental.

Introduction

Family is said to be secured when most needs of the members can be provided. Such needs in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The human needs exist in a hierarchy, ranging from physiological needs through safety need, social needs, esteem needs and finally self-actualization needs. It is the full responsibilities of the family to ginger the members by creating an enabling environment that will allow them meet up the peak expectances in order to be stable members of the society in which they live.

Our societies are bedeviled with so many vices that indicate lack of adjustment on the part of members. Family being a unique setup in a social setting shoulder the responsibility of proper upbringing of the children. These children are unique and progressive thus are not unaware of what is going on in their homes and environment most children are typical of their

parents, either heredity or environment. Conflict around them could be learnt easily thereby imbibing such habit in their continuous life.

Concept of Marriage

Marriage means different things to different people. Agbotun (1990) defines marriage as a culturally approved relationship of one man and a woman, (monogamy), one man and two or more women (polygamy), or of one woman and two or more men (Polygamy), in which there is cultural endorsement of sexual intercourse between the marital partners of the opposite sex and the expectation that children will be born of the relationship.

The above definition suggests that marriages are of many folds, varying from one society to another such variations not withstanding, it has some common features namely, there is agreement between a man and a woman to become husband and wife, a certain legal procedure is followed before it is accepted as a legal means of having sex between a man (husband) are thus expected as legal, payment of some money or gift or even manual labour to one of the partners (to get married) or to their parents as well as the two partners staying in the same house or are free to meet each other (where they live apart) etc.

In Nigeria, marriages are contracted in accordance with laws of traditions. Such tradition as Islamic laws by the Muslim, Christian principles and traditional ways. What is required is that people who enter into marriage do not do so for defined reasons with defined intentions and objectives.

Marital Conflict

Conflict simple means disagreement, quarrel or misunderstanding among people marital conflict is a form of association or interaction and is an

indication that the spouses do not care enough about the relationship. Thus, conflict arises. As long as conflict exists, the two parties in the relationship do no longer live in harmony. The conflict may lead them to hurt each other which show that something about the relationship is still important to the people involved to care of Omotosho (1994) contends that whenever couples show indifference or apathy then, that relationship is dead. Eisenman (1990) describes conflict, frustration and misunderstanding for all marriages are essential to growth. Conflicts he argued necessities the continual negotiation and renegotiation of values beliefs and goals. In the view of Alhassan (1988), he asserted that marriage involves conflicts, as no two people can live together for years without clashing unless one of them has decided to give in always. Inspite of this condition, the conflict still exist underneath, even though the dominant partner may be aware of it.

The conflict between couple could be interpersonal or intrapersonal. Interpersonal in the sense that the conflict is between the husband and the wife, and interpersonal which is the suffering individual undergo when they have conflicting desires that they are unable to resolve.

Barry, Hertef, Raush and Swain (1994) noted conflict is inevitable when partners in close relationship seek to satisfy their varied needs from the foregoing discussion one cannot dismiss conflict in marriages, nonetheless, strategies need the employed to resolve the conflicts for harmonious living and well being of the family.

Family Security

Family security challenges are multifected. It is necessary for marital and family counsellor to have a clear picture of the likely challenges in the

family which could result into conflict and security challenges. Okorocudu (2010) posited as follows:

- Poverty in family
- The birth of child places new demand for adaptation on family
- The striving of teenagers for independence can lead to struggles between parents and children.
- Problems relating to delinquent children, drug addiction children, children in cultism.
- Children getting unwanted pregnancy.
- Spouse unfaithfulness
- Spouse separation of divorce
- Spouse unemployment
- Demotion in place of work
- Death of spouse
- Death of close family members
- Problems from in-laws and unfriendly friends of the family
- Not at peace with God.

This is just to mention but few. In addition to the above, is recorded that the amount of education an individual possesses and the presence of children within the home have been identified as factor affecting conflicts perceived between the work and family roles.

Causes of Marital Conflicts

Before we can manage or resolve conflict, there is need to identify and understand its causes. Among the causes identified from literature are:

Individual Differences

Individual differences are a source of conflict. In the marital relationship, the spouses are different in many ways and each of them has a unique combination of personality and character traits. Individual differences do not necessarily lead to conflict, but they provide the potential for conflict and increase the possibility that conflict will occur. According to Edward (1997), one should take into account that in a marital relationship two separate personalities are interacting and as such two relatively heterogeneous value and need systems conflict with each other and two different behavioural systems are present. Research has shown that the greater the discrepancy between individual background characteristics, the less stability the marital dyad is likely to have (Falk, 1995). In addition, spouses who are similar are less likely to have conflicts than those w[7]ho are different from each other.

Following are areas in which individual differences occur:

- Physiological (e.g. gender, age, level of sexual desire, intelligence, manual dexterity, energy level, etc.)
- Personality (outgoingness, confidence, shyness, quietness, aggression, adventure, etc)
- Experience and conditioning (home b a c k g r o u n d / environment economic conditions, type of reinforcement given) and
- Talents and interests

Emotional Closeness

This could be another source of conflict. Any close relationship has the potential to develop strong feelings that are both positive and negative. Feelings of affect ion and friendship contribute to the well being of a family

and the happiness of its members. Feelings of misunderstanding, frustration, competition and anger can sour relationship (Ijagbulu, 1989). Spouses are more likely to feel both love and frustration more strongly with each other than with a casual acquaintance since they interact more frequently and their relationship touches every facet of their lives (Omotosho, 1994).

Expectations and Norms

These are also a source of conflict. Sometimes they are enacted into law, but more often they are simply communicated from person to person and sanctioned informally. People carry these norms in their minds and apply them to themselves and to others constantly. Examples are "Wives should cook", "husbands should provide for the family" etc.

According to Duke and England (1993), the expectations of others, especially those who are close to us, have a powerful impact on our lives. To them, disagreement about norms or non-conformity to group-held expectations is one of the greatest sources of conflict in interpersonal relationships. For instance, if a young man grows in an environment or a (group that teaches the norms of male aggressiveness and independence and then marries a young woman who learned a different expectation such as male responsibility and quiet leadership, both may feel that the other person is not living up to his/ /her expectations. Thus incompatible sex roles, routines of married life, being overloaded with heavy and impossible expectations are seen as causes of conflict in a family set-up (Hens, 1980).

Marital Infidelity

Breaking of God's laws; behaviour that is against the principles of morality; crime as Oxford Advanced Dictionary of Current English puts it, lies at the root of much of the world's conflict and unhappiness. According

to Duke and English (1993), one of the ways to avoid conflict is to practice the law of love in our relationships with others.

Irrational thinking

According to Ellis (1988), unrealistic and illogical ideas create disruptive feelings. Crazy ideas create conflicts and dysfunctional behaviour especially in an interpersonal relationship such as the marriage relationship. The following are some typical errors in thinking that lead couples to form faulty assumptions. These faulty assumptions are also the root cause of most marital conflicts:

Overgeneralisation: Women are manipulative. Men are exploitative. Married life is absurd. You can't trust people. People don't like me.

All- or - nothing concepts: Either you love me unconditionally or you don't really love me. Either you will help me or there is no more hope. Either it gets accepted in my in-laws family or my life is over.

Absolute Statements: My spouse should keep promises. My spouse must be nice to me. He / She ought to love me dearly for all I have done for him / her. I should be right.

Semantic inaccuracies: I failed versus I made a mistake. This is the end versus this a setback. I hate him versus I dislike him. I feel devastated versus I feel bad. She is hostile toward me versus she is angry with me,

When couples fail to sharpen their discriminations and to avoid these errors in thinking, they will allow the heart of the faulty assumption to remain untouched and unaltered. In this case the seed for full blown marital conflict is sown. (Nwoye, 1991).

Effect of Marital Conflict on Family Security

Marital conflict or disharmony is of the most pressing pervasive social problem of this generation. It is no longer gossips about the danger of marital conflict. It is glaring to everyone in the society. Conflicts and hostility creates scars on the partners. These scars could be verbal or physical.

The verbal scars are like arrows, which not only pierce and tear the hearts but also cause permanent scars after all have been said and done.

The physical scars cause damages leaving a permanent scar on the person(s). For instance, bruise marks on the body, sprain on the limbs, swellings red eyes, bleeding which can lead to death to mention few.

Apart from verbal and physical scars damages are caused to the properties contributing to economic downturn of the family. Marital conflict breeds unhappiness anger, emotional and psychological disturbance to the couple and family as well as family security at large. Some of the ways the marital conflict manifested on the security of the family are: -

(1). Conflict among couple can lead to their death as a result of injuries sustained through physical coercion thus living the product of marriage as orphans.

(2). It can lead to permanent deformity on the couple such as plucking of the eyes, ears, nose and certain extent major deformity or limbs which will incapacitate one to perform certain functions for the well being of the family.

(3). Conflict among couples can degenerate to affect the general care of the children and entire family. When couples bring up chuld in a chaotic way which children are likely to live in a chaotic manner such as being cruel

some, hulliganism, juvenile, delinquency, social unrest, crimes, drug addiction, depression e.t.c.

(4).   Children from homes where conflict is the order of the day among their parent may grow not to fancy marriages.

(5).   Conflict in marriages can encourage the products of such marriage to adopt similar mode of interaction in their marriages.

(6).   It also creates in the mind of the children that respect, obedience and peaceful coexistence is not found marital life.

From the few points, one can without hesitation conclude how insecurity could be generated among and within the family as a bi-product of mental conflict.

For security to be ascertained in the family, couples who are member of such family must as a matter of sincerity adopt measures capable or resolving conflict to the minimum ratio in order to facilitate peace harmony and general well being of the entire family.

Counselling Implication on Effect of Family Conflict and security Challenges

With the current security trends in the country and the proneness to conflict between individuals, parents and children, schools and students, there is need for the intervention of professionals in the field of counselling to always be on alert to give necessary assistance to those involved in the conflict.

This paper is particular about conflict in family setting which could manifest itself in relational, economic, social and psychological facets. Family conflicts have serious effects on family members which include the spouse, the children, dependents and other relatives who are emotionally

attached to the family. Counsellors are needed to assist the family in areas of conflicts resolution so that families do not view conflicts as the end of togetherness but as a way of adjustment to marital harmony.

According to Nwoye (1991) and Uwe (2000) the characteristics of harmonious family living that needs to be handled by counsellors are:

- Developing good personality, intra and inter-personal relational traits in marital relationship.
- Skills for acquiring honesty traits in marital relationship
- Skills for acquiring courageous traits in marital relationship.
- Skills for acquiring forgiveness of spouse offences
- Skills for developing patience in marital relationship.
- Skills for developing kindness in marital relationship.
- Skills for generosity, humility, courtesy, and unselfishness.
- Skills for good temper, loyalty and sincerity
- Skills for developing love and respect.
- Skills for acquiring respect for authority of husband and proper communication in fostering marital harmony.
- Counselling couples to acquire healthy practices and relational skills development.
- Skills for commitment to family and its individual
- Acquire appreciation skills for each other i.e. promote social connection.
- Develop willingness skills to spend time together
- Practice a high degree of religion and spiritual orientation.
- Develop the ability to deal with crisis in a positive manner i.e. adaptability.

- Develop skills for encouraging individual members of the family.
- Acquire skills for designing specific roles for each member of the family.

Conclusion

This paper on effects of marital conflict on the family security concludes that since family is a smallest unit of the society, one cannot dismiss that whatever is operative in it can be inferred to the larger society. The crises in the general society emanate from the conflicts in the family, meaning, the general security challenges in the country have its geneses from the conflicts and security challenges from the individual families. Therefore if marriages can be sustained on the platform of unity, good communication, commitment and consideration of dignity of every member of the family, surely, it would go along way creating harmony in the home, family and society at large as well as ensuring that security reign in the country.

Recommendations

In view of the situation noticed in the society and the relationship between spouses, children and family members of yesterday and today, It is an understatement that there is lack of harmony, crises and conflicts in the family setting which is posing a state of security challenges of the family.

This paper recommends that:

- For security to reign in the society, families most ensure that there is a harmonious relationship existing in the family set-ups.
- There should be fear of God in minds of every member of the family.

- The spouse should ensure that they have good communication among themselves and have positive thinking about the growth of the family.
- The couples should live an exemplary life for the emulation of the children and other members of the family.
- The members of the family should be accorded respect of dignity and allowed to be participants in the affairs of the family.
- Couples should exercise patience, humility, generosity and unselfishness in their commitment to family issues.
- Consultations should be allowed with elders, leaders and those that matters in the affairs of the family.

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