

THE CAUSES OF DIVORCE AMONG MUSLIM FAMILIES OF SAFANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KATSINA STATE: A PANACEA TO SOCIAL INSTABILITY OF WOMEN IN THE AREA

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Abstract

The progress of any society depends largely on the stability of women. Nowadays, the welfare and social stability of women is hampered by so many factors, prominent among which is divorce. The purpose of this paper is to find out the main causes of divorce among Muslim Families of Safana Local Government Area as Panacea to social instability of women. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) married male and female consisting 238 females and 121 males were randomly selected from ten (10) political wards of Safana Local Government area and were given the questionnaires to fill. The result showed that the respondents perceived economic factors, illiteracy, employment opportunity and transfer of family from urban to rural areas as the major causes of divorce. The research recommends that there is a need for special classes and courses on Marriage Education for new couple before the contract. All bodies concerned should examine the institution of family extensively so that marital disharmony and dispute will be handled before maturing to divorce. This will help to minimize the social instability of women resulting from divorce in the society.

Keywords: *Divorce, Safana and women social instability.*

Introduction:

The basic functions of marriage involves conception and birth, regular intercourse, socialization and maintenance functions of providing economic support and physical protections for the children as they mature (Bilton, Bonnett Jones, Sheard, Stanwoth and Webstar, 1981). In fact, each spouse is a source of emotional support and companionship for the other. Unfortunately, due to the influence of industrialization, urbanization, modernization and security challenge, the social system has been affected in Nigeria. The

family functions have equally been affected and it resulted into rampant occurrence of divorce. Divorce is the final termination of marriage, cancelling the legal duties, responsibilities and dissolving the bond of marriage between husband and wife (Khurshid, Khatoon and Khurshid, 2012, p.500). In Islam, marriage is the only right form of relationship between man and woman, for it establishes a family and enable them to undertake and fulfill their social responsibilities conscientiously, with devotion and sincerity. Moreover, Islam encourages social

life starts with the establishment of a family through marriage, because it considers not only a physical necessity but also a religious duty. Islam, therefore, encourages marriage of young people and condemns the life of celibacy. Qur'an says:

Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among yourselves male or females: if they are in poverty, God will give them means out of His grace; for God encompasses all, and He knows all things (Qur'an 24:32,).

The verse above encourages Muslims to marry the single among them or slaves for the benefit of marriage union. The Holy Prophet (SAW) greatly strengthened this institution by encouraging marriage among young people. *Hadith* related from Anas, that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Marriage is my way and (Sunnah): who so love my conduct should follow my way and who so strays from my way is not for me" (Narrated by Muslim, chp.1, Vol.4, No.3469. p.129; Baihaqi, Vol. 3, No.2345, p.7).

The *Hadith* directs the believers to love marriage since it is the *sunnah* of the prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet also said: Islam allowed divorce but except if all the methods of reconciliation failed. The Qur'an says:

If you fear of break between the two, appoint two arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers, if they wish for peace, Allah may bring about their reconciliation (Qur'an 4:35).

The verse encourages people to seek for compromise before they go into divorce. In Islam, divorce is greatly disliked. It should not be done lightly or for irreligious reasons. According to a *Hadith*, the Prophet is reported to have said:

Of all the things that have been permitted, divorce is the most hatred by Allah (Narrated by Abu Dawud, chp3.vol.2. p.220).

This *hadith* shows that Islam permitted divorce just because it is the last solution for the severe conflict or losing obedience of Allah. Siddiqi (1972) stressed that divorce is a measure that cannot be avoided for the welfare of the society because it is only remedy for another harm which may be more dangerous. Divorce, is one of the problems that women experience nowadays. Many studies have tried to focus on common causes of divorce. The rise of divorce rate has affected the structure of northern Nigeria especially in Katsina State. The research was conducted on the major causes of divorce among Muslim Families of Safana Local Government Area in Katsina State as a means of minimizing the social instability of women in the area.

Brief History of Safana

The Safana Local Government came into being in 1989 carved out of Dutsinma Local Government Area; Safana Local Government Area has two districts made up of Safana and Zakka, with a projected population of 183,779 people based on 2006 population census exercise. In addition, the local government is one among the most densely populated local government areas in the State

with an average growth rate of 2.8%. Moreover, slight difference occurred between male – female figure where female figure remained higher. The area has an open undulating landscape with occasional rocky-out-crop in the northern part. The area is well drained with a gentle slope.

It has an area of 282km². The area is bordered to Dutsinma Local Government to the east, Danmusa Local Government to the south, Batsari Local Government to the west and Zamfara State to the South. The dominant ethnic group in Safana is the Hausa\Fulani's who are mostly farmers and grazers. Farming is the leading economic activity of the people in the study area. In addition some people engaged in other activities like trading, craft industries, and few are civil servants as well as unemployed people (Ministry of land and survey, Katsina, 2008, quoted in Sada and Muhammad ,2013). Safana LGA has 10 political wards which include Babban Dahu (A) & (B), Baure (A) & (B), Runka (A) & (B), Safana, Tsaskiya, and Zakka (A) & (B) as at 2019 (web, nd).

Literature Review:

The literature review on marriage shows a number of factors causing divorce in marriage. For instance, Otite and Ogunwo (1981) argue that childlessness in a marriage can lead to divorce in Nigeria. Olayinka (1987) stresses the importance of communication in marital stability; Olusanya (1970) and Yaqoob (1984) identify lack of children, economic factors, communications problem, and interference of in-laws and education of spouses as the causes of divorce.

Thus Olusanya (1970) found literacy to be a factor that positively affects marital stability and concluded that the more the education of the spouses the more stable their marriage will be. In an earlier study, Click and Norton (1971) observed that men who complete only College have lower probability of divorce than men who complete only high school or who leave College without graduating. This therefore shows that education makes for an increasing sense of responsibility within marriage. Grenstein (1990), Spitze and South (1985) realized that there is a positive relationship between women's working hours and marriage instability.

Prior studies indicated that education and incomes facilitate marital success (Voydanoff, 1991). Education promotes more effective communication between couples, thus helping them to resolve differences.

According to Umoh and Adeyemi (nd), barrenness, repeated sickness, religious differences and sexual problem are the main causes of divorce. In another study, influence of western culture and influence of traditional beliefs are the causes of divorce (Sani, 2008). In the finding of Abba (2014), barrenness, illiteracy, repeated sicknesses and economic factors are the major causes of divorce.

The Causes of Divorce in Society

The causes of divorce are numerous; sociologists have enumerated some factors responsible for the increase in divorce rate. These are:

“Changing family functions, the increased number of job opened to woman, a decline in moral sanctions, accelerated urbanization and other phenomena (such as greater mobility) which are apparently associated with an expanding industrial economy” (encyclopedia international, p.51).

In the analysis of the above citation, one may deduce that the failure of the husband in discharging his obligations such as support of the family may force the wife to behave negatively to her husband. This could easily lead to divorce. Below are some numbers of factors that lead to divorce in Nigerian society:

1. Employment opportunity for the wife creates room for divorce through the abuse of her obligations.
2. Movement of the family from urban to rural areas leads to divorce. Not all wives sacrifice to leave urban centers to rural areas.
3. Maltreatment of wives is another cause of divorce. Likewise maltreatment of husband by the wife easily triggers divorce.
4. Insanity, if any of the spouses is insane, separation may be the alternative.
5. Change of faith by a Muslim automatically renders marriage invalid.
6. Sterility, if the husband is impotent, can make a wife seek for divorce.
7. A barren wife may be divorced by her husband if his interest is to beget children.
8. Polygamy is the multiple of wives usually resulting to divorce especially if the husband is not just.
9. Force marriage also leading to divorce. Marriage life is more stable when the couple loves each other otherwise divorce may be the alternative.
10. Instigation by the wife’s relatives can provoke the husband to become annoyed and divorce her or her relatives may instigate her to seek for divorce from the husband (Sani, 2008, p.52-53).

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design so as to find out the main causes of divorce in Safana LGA, Katsina State. For the purpose of this research, the population comprises the married men and women (males and females) in the area of Safana Local Government. Safana Local Government area contains ten (10) political wards namely: Babban Dahu (A) & (B), Baure (A) & (B), Runka (A) & (B), Safana, Tsaskiya, and Zakka (A) & (B) as at 2019 with total population of 89,978 married men and women ranging from 15 to 60 years as at 2006 population and Housing census (NPC Web, 2010). The subjects participated in the study were married men and women, Hausa and Fulani by language and Islam by religion. Therefore, the population of the study was eighty nine thousand nine hundred and seventy-eight (89978) subjects. Based on the nature of the study, it is very hard to study the entire population. However, appropriate method was adopted so as to have a representative population.

The researcher(s) randomly selected a sample size of three hundred and eighty-four (384) married men and women (males and females) as respondents in the entire political wards of Safana Local Government Area that represented the entire population of the study area using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of determining sample size in a given population. Three hundred and seventy-three (373) questionnaires were used since eleven questionnaires were not returned.

Divorce and Women Social Instability among Muslims in Safana Local Government Area

Divorce is hated by Allah, but there are some problems for which divorce is the only solution. That's why it is permissible act. Raising children in unstable home is not a good decision (Tariq, 2010 quoting in (Khurshid, Khatoon and Khurshid, 2012, p.505). Waite and Gallagher (2002) argued that divorce has negative consequences for economic, educational, wealth and sexual outcomes.

In the area of study, some women who did not exceed the limit of procreation could be seen outside or in market square and other places struggling for food. Most of them were divorcees and widows. They are physically fit, morally sound and good to be house wives but they preferred to become business women than staying in their matrimonial homes. Some, among the divorcee women due to suffering from loneliness, stresses and other emotional and social problems, prefer to be involved in illegal sex. Voydanoff (1991) notes that, not only

the children of the divorcees, even the spouses themselves have been found to experience loneliness, stress and strain.

Khurshid, Khatoon, and Khurshid (2012) opined that the increase of crime rate in the society has very evident linkages with increased divorce rate. Katu (1988) further stressed that most of social misfits found in Nigerian urban areas are products of broken homes and sometimes the situation becomes worse due to lack of compromise from both (wife and husband) sides and egoistical attitude.

The Qur'an says:

"If you fear of break between the two, appoint two arbiters one from his family and the other from hers, if they wish for peace, Allah may bring about their reconciliation (Qur'an, 4:35)".

However, in the area of study, some divorced women ran into danger of illegal sex or prostitution due to stress. This is a very serious danger against the smooth running of the society.

Results and Discussion

The table below shows the responses of the respondents on the causes of divorce in Safana Local Government Area.



Questions	Agree	Percentage	Disagree	Percentage
Economic factors contribute to divorce in Safana LGA	295	79%	78	21%
In most cases, barrenness leads to divorce in Safana LGA	160	43%	213	57%
Employment Opportunity of Women leads to divorce in Safana L G A	283	76%	90	24%
Transfer of Family from Urban to Rural Cause Divorce in Safana L G A	194	52%	179	48%
Illiteracy leads to divorce in Safana LGA	291	78%	82	22%

Source: (Questionnaire, 2020).

Discussion of Findings

Findings in the above table on the factors responsible for divorce among Muslims in Safana LGA, Katsina State, revealed that economic factors identified as the first cause of divorce with 295(79%) responded above average. The survey showed that there is element of poverty among couple. Many people became economically handicapped due to problem of insecurity that is affecting the area. Rampant divorce is blamed on women who lack tolerance and sacrifice for new situation when their living condition changes from affluence to

poverty. Some women expected continuity in luxury from the time when they were bride, forgetting that when the economic earning dwindles or with the size of the family growing, the quantity of feeding and clothing must change. Men are blamed also for adding more wives when they get increment in salary or gain profit in business not knowing what will happen when the size of the family becomes large. The study revealed the economic factor as contributing factor to divorce. This is agreeing with Olusanya (1970) and Yaqoob (1984) who identified lack of children, economic factors, communications problem and interference of in-laws as the causes of divorce. This is also in line with Qur'an (4:34)

“Men shall take full care of women with the bounties which Allah has ordained to be guarded.....”

Illiteracy in this finding agreed as the second of the major causes of divorce with 291(78%) respondents. This showed that illiteracy is considered as barrier to marriage stability. Some couple do not know that marriage is commanded by Allah and His messenger. It is good for pious Muslim to learn the rules and regulations of *shariah* especially in relation to marriage. Some couple are illiterate because they are fully engaged in animal rearing in the bush. Illiteracy is a reason some couple could not solve their marital problems by themselves. This also agrees with Olusanya (1970) who found education to be a factor that positively affects marital stability and concluded that the more the education of the spouses, the more stable their marriage will be. This therefore showed that education

makes for an increase sense of responsibility within marriage.

The research findings also revealed that employment opportunity for the wife as the third cause of divorce with 283 (76%) of respondents. Some women whom they are good in their marital responsibilities fail especially when they get the opportunity of job in government offices. Not all husbands could take care of their home responsibilities with the absence of their wives. This resulted in problem of marital instability and leads to divorce. This is in line with Sani (2008) who noted that employment opportunity for the wife creates room for divorce through the abuse of her obligations. Grenstein (1990), Spitze and South (1985) realized that there is a positive relationship between women's working hours and marriage instability.

Transfer of family from urban to rural areas identified as the fourth cause of divorce with 194(52%) responded above average. Some couple in the study area transfer from urban to rural areas as a result of insecurity problem, poverty or retirement from white collar job. Some women could not cope with living in rural areas because they are familiar with urban life. This results in divorce. This is also in line with sani (2008) where he revealed that: movement of the family from urban to rural areas leads to divorce. Not all wives can sacrifice leaving urban centers to rural areas.

Barrenness is considered one fo the causes of divorce as indicated in the respondents' opinion with 160(43%)..

Africans, especially in Northern Nigeria, value children like wise in Safana and the ability to procreate whether for the man or the woman is a measure of sexual virility. Some couple face problem if one of them is barren. Nowadays, this problem is not a serious one due to intervention of medical scientists. This is unlike the finding of Abba (2014) that considered barrenness as number one cause of divorce. In his finding, he revealed that barrenness, illiteracy, repeated sicknesses and economic factors as the major causes of divorce. This is unlike the teachings of *hadith* of the prophet (pbuh) narrated by Muslim:

"Marry affectionate and fertile females, for I will be proud of your numerousness before (the other) nations on the day of Resurrection"
(Narrated by Ahmad, vol.20, No.12613, p.63).

The *hadith* guided that marriage is the fulfillment of the commandment of Allah (S. W. T) and His Messenger. Procreation is also needed by the prophet for Muslims to out number other nations in the day of judgement.

Recommendations:

1. Women should not consider outside job ahead of their family responsibility.
2. . Muslims are encouraged to search for knowledge so as to tackle their day to day challenges and worship Allah accordingly.
5. Men are also called to handle the welfare of their family according to the tenet of *sharia* and think well about the growth of their family size in terms of their economic dealings.

6. Couple should exercise patience on issue of transfer, they are advised to resist since no condition is permanent.
7. There is a need for respect, tolerance and understanding of each other.
8. Careful selection of the spouses according to the instruction of Islam is encouraged.
9. Muslim should enhance comprehensive Islamic teachings and guidance on marriage through educational sectors, public awareness, and sermon in the mosques and lectures in religious gatherings.
10. There is a need for special classes and courses on Marriage Education for new couples before contract.
11. Barrenness can be tackled through medical science.
12. State government should use all efforts to wipe out the security threat in the areas of Safana and other areas in the State so as to allow people to carry out their businesses as well.
13. Government, Counselors, Religious teachers and all bodies concerned should examine the institution of family extensively so that marital disharmony and dispute will be handled before maturing to divorce.

Conclusion

In conclusion, women are the backbone of any society but they are facing serious problems that hinder the social stability of their lives in the society. Divorce is one of the problems that society experiences especially due to its social, economic and psychological effects on women

and children in Safana. Finding revealed that economic factors, illiteracy, employment opportunity, transfer of family from rural to urban are the major causes of divorce. Couples should enhance their emotional, intelligence and tolerance level. For any unexpected happenings, they should remain calm and try to find out the solutions instead of creating problem which may lead to divorce. State government should use all efforts to wipe out the security threat in the study area so as to allow people to carry out their businesses as normal. Government, parents and all concerned should play their roles in maintaining good family relationship in order to minimize the rampant occurrence of divorce so as to enhance the social stability of women. Meanwhile, the incidence of divorce is wide and is not limited to Safana Local Government Area. Any future researcher should cover wider area in the State or Nation at large. The instrument used should equally diversify to include many other causes of divorce. The population used for the study was limited to the data of married men and women collected from the National Population Commission of Nigeria. Future researchers should also collect data of divorcees from court of law and traditional rulers.

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APPENDIX.

Sample of the Questionnaire
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Divorce Questionnaire for Males and Females

Dear respondent,
 I am conducting a research on the topic titled: “The Causes of Divorce among Muslim Families of Safana Local Government Area, Katsina State”. To this end, the questionnaire has been developed in order to seek your views and whatever information you give will be treated confidentially. Your co-operation is highly needed to make the exercise successful.

Thank you.

Kindly supply the information and/ or tick where applicable on the provided options.

PERSONAL DATA:

Your age-----

Sex-----

Occupation-----

Your present highest qualification-----

1. In most cases Barrenness leads to divorce in Safana Local Government area.
 a. Agree b. Strongly Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
2. Employment Opportunity of Women leads to divorce in Safana Local Government area.
 a. Agree b. Strongly Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree.
3. Transfer of Family from Urban to Rural Areas causes divorce in Safana Local Government area. a. Agree b. Strongly Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree.
4. 3. Economic factors contribute to divorce in Safana Local Government area.
 a. Agree b. Strongly Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
5. Illiteracy leads to divorce in Safana Local Government Area.
 a. Agree b. Strongly Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree