

Effects of Divorce on Igbo African Children

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Abstract:

Marriage among the Igbo of Nigeria is a rite of passage which everyone, man or woman must undergo once or more in a life time. When a girls passed the age of “whose daughter the Igbo say, she gets to the age of whose wife.” It is same to a boy who has gone through adolescence rites of passage after which beautiful maidens will be making attempts to be his chosen one. To the Igbo, marriage is for life. Unfortunately, for one reason or the other, some couples are seen getting divorced. The question now is where was the love before marriage? What is the fate of such separated family? It beats people’s imagination that two would come together to make children all to abandon such product of theirs to the mercy of hardship. The study was carried out in Igbo land of Nigeria in Africa. The Igbo people believed to have migrated from among the Jews are lovers of children. Abandoning their children to suffer is a taboo which their ancestors frown at. Unfortunately, as a result of Western influence, they seem have shifted from their traditional life to practice what they learnt from the white man hence the enormous problems facing them. In view of this, the paper tried to highlight the causes of divorce among the couples and the consequences of such misdeeds. The study therefore suggests that couples should try and settle whatever differences that may arise in their marriage so as to avoid abandoning the product of their marriage to waste and become a problem to world peace.

Key words: Effect, Divorce, Igbo, African, Children

Introduction:

In the process of Igbo African rites of passage, there gets a stage in one’s life time where one is expected to perform a rite of separation from adolescence and initiation into adulthood. The rite is celebrated by male and female with different nomenclatures. The names vary according to locality in Igbo land. Among Omabala Igbo, the rite for female is called *ineezi* while other parts of Igbo land especially; the Imo and Abia areas know it as *irumgbede*. This is for grown up girls and it is a rite which a mother performs for her daughter to appreciate her for keeping her virginity till the time her age mates are ripe for marriage. It is a ceremony whereby the girls are prepared for marriage. It is therefore a ceremony after which suitors start to come for the girls of their choices. Sometimes when a girl gets married before the turn of her age mates to perform the rite, the husband has to do it for her in conjunction with the mother. In this case, the girl is honored for not bring shame to the family. Among the Igbo people of Africa, it is a thing of joy for a female child to preserve her virginity for whomever that may become her husband even if she is betrothed to a man.

On the other hand, before a male child could be said to be taken as a man among the Igbo, he performs the rite of separation from adolescence and the rite of initiation into adulthood. These rites are two in one rite known as *iba mmanwu*, *ima akwa* or *iwa akwa* depending on the dialect area of Igbo. It is after this rite that a male child is set to join or form age grade through which one gets involved in the affairs of one's community. During or after this ceremony, one is expected to begin to look for a marriageable girl. Christian Holy Book, The Bible says, "... a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh" (Matt, 19:5-6).¹ (Gen; 3:24)², when a boy gets a girl and they agree to marry with the consent of their parents, they undergo several rites of union according to Igbo culture known as *ichọ oku*, *ije oku* or *igba nkwu*.

Contraction of marriage between a man and a woman is not the business of the two persons alone but the business of families of parties, their friends and kindred. This is why the Igbo people take their time to make inquiries concerning personalities of either of the couple to be and history of each family. In so doing, once the marriage consummated, the lady so married is not owned only by the man she is married to but by the entire family and relations of the man. She is therefore called *nwunye m* (my wife) by everyone from the man's extended family. She belongs alone to the man only on bed. At the same time, all persons from the extended family of the bride, call the man, *ogbo m* (my in-law). This is to say that Igbo family expands with contraction of one marriage or the other which makes it unique. Any child out of this marriage is also owned by all and trained by all hence the Igbo say that *nwa bu nwa ora* (child is owned by all). It is surprising that despite the uniting capacity of one marriage, it is also capable of disintegrating a people for life. Disintegration comes in when the love that exists between a husband and a wife goes sour causing divorce. Many things contribute to souring love and divorce.

Causes of Divorce:

Contrary to Western concept and reasons for marriage, Africans especially the Igbo of Nigeria get into marriage with sole aim of procreating in order to have a hire. They know that it is only when a man and a woman are in contact sexually that they may procreate. They therefore frown at hearing that a man is married to a fellow man or a woman being married to a fellow woman as found and recognized in some Western nations. In same vain also, they are against a man making himself a eunuch as obtainable among Catholic Priests. They see the practice of the Catholic Priests as a temptation to God's injunction to mankind thus: "Go ye unto the world and procreate" (Christian Holy Book)³. From the above citation, one may understand that either of the couple does not rejoice if he or she finds out that his or her partner is infertile as infertility of one of the couple amounts to deficient in procreating. "The divorce was caused by many years of things that I did wrong. I was not a good husband. My own insecurities meant not being able to show love to my wife" (Paul R. Amato and Denise Previti).⁴ Expectation of relatives from a couple for pregnancy within three months of marriage is high. After three months and no pregnancy in view, the couple, their parents, relatives and friends become apprehensive. Either side of the in-laws immediately starts to trade blames on either of the couple for the delay or misfortune. Some may start going to inquire for the cause of the delay through divination or a seer. When solution is not forthcoming, divorce sets in.

Among the Igbo people of Nigeria, there are certain criteria that people consider in giving out their children in marriage. Some of these criteria are the bridegroom's family's wealth, their farm lands,

¹ The New American Bible. Matthew, 19:5-6. Makati City-Philippines: St. Paul's Catholic Book Publishing Co. ISBN: 971-504-616-92012:43

² Genesis, 3:24. P. 6

³ Christian Holy Book

⁴ Paul R. Amato & Denise Previti People's Reasons for Divorcing: Gender, Social Class, the Life Course, and Adjustment *The Pennsylvania State University*

societal status or hierarchy, etc. These criteria during initial inquiries could not properly be obtained and the marriage contracted. Goode (1956) found that high status divorcees tended to report personality problems and conflict over values as reasons for divorce, whereas low status divorcees tended to report lack of economic support from their former husbands.⁵ One needs to understand that in some marriages especially in Africa, are not based on love rather on conviction from an agent that the spouse to be is nice, from good family and other good qualities. Of course, one may understand that one man's meat may be another's poison. And so, later, when the lady finds out that what she was told about the man is not exactly what he is, there looms trouble which leads to divorce. On this note, perhaps for these reasons, wives are more likely than husbands to initiate divorce (Albrecht, Bahr, & Goodman, 1983;⁶ Goode, 1956;⁷ Kitson, 1992⁸).

In some marriages, there are too much gap between the age of the man and that of the woman. In the old time, it was normally the man giving the woman many years ahead. There are cases where a man could marry a daughter of his female age mate. What this means is that the man may older than the girls with about twenty five to thirty five years. An instance was the case of Nigerian former President who was 70 years when he married his last wife who was 17 years old was giving her a gap of 53 years. Sometimes in the past, a Northern Nigerian Governor who was about 65years, got married to a 13 year old Egyptian girl. This type of marriage is meant to keep the aging man alive but that does not happen because, such a younger girl definitely would not be satisfied sexually by the weak old man. In such a situation, the girl likes to meet her male age mates outside or even within the husband's house whom she enjoys sex with. Of course, she may not continue having sex in hiding and so, likely to initiate divorce. One understands the reason for this as long time's marriage is said to suffer disruption when ones' spouse gets outside marriage sex partner.

Associated with the above is a situation where a man could not meet the demands of the wife. The demands could be fiscal, behavioral or sexual. Levinger (1966) found that low-Socio-economic status divorced individuals complained about financial problems, physical abuse, and drinking, whereas high-Socio-economic status divorced individuals complained about lack of love and excessive demands from their spouses.⁹ Some of these are unusual demands which some married women which should not be, making to their husbands and not meeting those leads the woman into unholy acts. An unholy act in marriage is infidelity. Goode's (1956) research revealed that complaints of infidelity, drinking, and the general quality of home life increased with duration of marriage, whereas complaints about personality and value conflict decreased.¹⁰

With respect to perceived causes of divorce, women appear to be more likely than men to refer to relational or emotional issues, such as basic unhappiness and incompatibility (Cleek & Pearson, 1985),¹¹

⁵ Goode, W. J. (1956). *Women in divorce*. New York: Free Press.

⁶ Albrecht, S. L., Bahr, H. M., & Goodman, K. L. (1983). *Divorce and remarriage: Problems, adaptations, and adjustments*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

⁷ Goode, W. J. (1956). *Women in divorce*. New York: Free Press.

⁸ Kitson, G. C. (1992). *Portrait of divorce: Adjustment to marital breakdown*. New York: Guilford.

⁹ Levinger, G. (1966). Sources of marital dissatisfaction among applicants for divorce. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 36, 803-807.

¹⁰ Goode, W. J. (1956). *Women in divorce*. New York: Free Press.

¹¹ Cleek, M. G., & Pearson, T. A. (1985). Perceived causes of divorce: An analysis of interrelationships. *Journal of Marriage & the Family*, 47, 179-183.

former spouses' personalities (Kitson, 1992),¹² and a general lack of love (Levinger, 1966).¹³ Former wives also are more likely than former husbands to refer to a cluster of negative partner behaviors, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, substance use, going out with "the boys," and neglect of home and children (Bloom, Niles, & Thatcher, 1985;¹⁴ Cleek & Pearson, 1985;¹⁵ Kitson, 1992;¹⁶ Levinger, 1966¹⁷). Emotional and moral stability is very important in marriage. In every society, there are men who excessively drink, indulge in hard drugs, engage in extra marital sex, abuse and bully their spouses. At same time, such people do not take proper care of the family. They would rather stay out late. Not many women could endure these kinds of attitude as it breeds frustration. Some psychiatric patients, who have been examined, tested positive to being victims of the unholy behaviors of their spouses.

Among the Igbo, a wife is expected to manage the home. In managing the home, she has to take care of the family by making sure that the children do not lack any thing; making sure that the husband and the children do not go hungry and be sure of the neatness of the household. If a wife lacks these characteristics, even the entire extended family of the husband will join hands in getting her packing where she never steps on the sand of the family again. A respondent informed this study that he sent his wife packing because she did not know how to prepare a good soup. He narrated how his mother-in-law came to their house during his wife's period of enclosure and prepared *onugbu* (bitter leaf) soup (a popular type of soup among the Igbo of Nigeria) with complete chicken parts and yet, the soup could not be eaten by any one. It was embarrassing indeed because though, the soup is known as bitter leaf, it tastes good and it was expected to taste better with chicken parts still, the expectation was not met. As a result of that and the wife's other dirty characteristics, he got another wife for himself and divorced the first. This was why the Igbo normally say that a good maiden could only get her husband through stomach. It is so in that by preparing good edibles for one's spouse, a husband never eats outside his house.

In contrast, men, more often than women, blame the divorce on external factors, such as work or problems with in-laws (Kitson, 1992;¹⁸ Levinger, 1966¹⁹). Some mother-in-laws do constitute parasites on the son-in-laws' purse. It is a problem when young man tries to have a settle home by getting married to a maiden but could not comprehend the amount of demands being experienced on daily bases from his wife's relations. A male divorcee in a response to a question, said that he separated with his wife due to strange character he started noticing in his wife immediately his mother-in-law left their house for home after her visit to them during his wife's period of enclosure (*omugwo*). He said that his wife's attitude changed immediately her mother left; that he did not know that while she stayed with her mother as he

¹² Kitson, G. C. (1992). *Portrait of divorce: Adjustment to marital breakdown*. New York: Guilford.

¹³ Levinger, G. (1966). Sources of marital dissatisfaction among applicants for divorce. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 36, 803-807.

¹⁴ Bloom, B. L., Niles, R. L., & Thatcher, A. M. (1985). Sources of marital dissatisfaction among newly separated persons. *Journal of Family Issues*, 6, 359-373.

¹⁵ Cleek, M. G., & Pearson, T. A. (1985). Perceived causes of divorce: An analysis of interrelationships. *Journal of Marriage & the Family*, 47, 179-183.

¹⁶ Kitson, G. C. (1992). *Portrait of divorce: Adjustment to marital breakdown*. New York: Guilford.

¹⁷ Levinger, G. (1966). Sources of marital dissatisfaction among applicants for divorce. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 36, 803-807.

¹⁸ Kitson, G. C. (1992). *Portrait of divorce: Adjustment to marital breakdown*. New York: Guilford

¹⁹ Levinger, G. (1966). Sources of marital dissatisfaction among applicants for divorce. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 36, 803-807.

was away for work, the mother tutored her on some evil behaviours and she never considered the love they have for each other and tried to practice what she was taught. He queried, "... how could I have ignored her since we have been living peacefully and happily before her mother's visit." He said, "I sent her packing and initiated for divorce since she could not realize my move to show her love and she failed to understand." "I am sure I did not marry to die" he said.

The life course perspective (Elder, 1994)²⁰, with its emphasis on the timing and duration of events, incorporates factors such as age at marriage, duration of marriage, and the presence of children. With respect to age at marriage, individuals who marry at younger ages tend to report more marital problems and experience a greater risk of divorce than individuals who marry at older ages (Bumpass et al., 1991)²¹. Problems that lead to divorce among married couple of Igbo decent have been traced to early marriage being practiced in Igbo land. There are situations where a baby girl is born and a family friend to the parents of the baby girl would go and betroth the baby girl to their own son who also is a minor. They two families would then be exchanging gifts and visits, relating on behalf of the minors as in-laws till they grew up. At about 11 or 12 years of age, they will get married without their consent. A respondent whose mother married a baby of 7years old when his own age was 12 narrated how he thought that the girls married for him, was his sister. He came to know her as his wife when she came up to 12 and the mother wanted them to start having sex. He couldn't believe his mother, he said. He said that immediately, the love he had for her as his sister diminished. Because of the wrong perception they had for their relationship, they could not stay long as a couple and divorced. This is why White (1991) says, With respect to duration of marriage, divorces occur more often in the early rather than the later years of marriage. Consequently early divorces are disproportionately due to the discovery of basic incompatibility, conflict in values, and personality clashes. ²²Nevertheless, Paul R. Amato and Denise Previti say that couples in marriages of long duration face challenges (such as raising children, boredom with the relationship, and gradually diverging interests and attitudes) that differ from those of individuals in marriages of short duration.

Some girls are married to deities without knowing it. In contracting such marriage, such a girl and her people are deceived into thinking that the girl's husband is the Priest to the deity. Sometimes, the unsuspecting lady may not even know that the man seeking her hands in marriage is a priest to a deity. And so, it is not easy to know this because the priest is in charge of giving babies. However, whenever the girl or her people find out, divorce is the only action left for them.

Prior studies indicate that education and income facilitate marital success (Voydanoff, 1991).²³ Education promotes more effective communication between couples, thus helping them to resolve differences. In contrast, the stress generated by economic hardship increases disagreements over finances, makes spouses

²⁰ Elder, G. H., Jr. (1994). Time, agency, and social change: Perspectives on the life course. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 57, 5-15.

²¹ Bumpass, L. L., Martin, T. C., & Sweet, J. A. (1991). The impact of family background and early marital factors on marital disruption. *Journal of Family Issues*, 12, 22-42.

²² White, L. (1991). Determinants of divorce: A review of research in the eighties. In A. Booth (Ed.), *Contemporary families: Looking forward, looking back* (pp. 141-149). Minneapolis, MN: National Council on Family Relations.

²³ Voydanoff, P. (1991). Economic distress and family relations: A review of the eighties. In A. Booth (Ed.), *Contemporary families: Looking forward, looking back* (pp. 429-445). Minneapolis, MN: National Council on Family Relations.

irritable, and decreases expressions of emotional support (Conger et al., 1990).²⁴ These days in Igbo land, education and or economic wealth of either partner in marriage serves as facilitator to any marriage contract. However, it was observed that many divorce cases arose as a result of loss of job by one partner whose economic down turn could not allow him or her contribute to the up keep of the family. According to a respondent who is a divorcee, “I initiated a case of divorce against my husband for his renegeing from his promise to pay for my higher education till I graduate while he was trying to make me believe him.” Becker (1991) argued that people generally have imperfect information about their partners during courtship but learn substantially more about their spouses after marriage.²⁵

Many men have deceived their women whom they married based on such promises. One may understand that many women do not belong to the kitchen as said by Nigerian President Buhari (2016), “My wife belongs to my kitchen and to my bed room and other rooms.” Gone are days when women are called *oriaku*. Those who belonged to this group of women suffered when their husbands passed away. As a result of this, some women have divorced their men for keeping them at home.

In fact, reasons for divorce cannot be exhausted in one paper. However, one needs to know that one pertinent thing in marriage is love, true love. Marriage crumbles where the base is not on love. We now come to the problem of early marriage or forced marriage as practiced among the cultural groups of Northern Nigeria. In the Northern part of Nigeria especially among the Muslims where marriage is by force, divorce comes easy. A lady forced into marriage runs away once she is let out of the captor compound with a serious guard. A similar case to forced marriage is marriage by inducement due to charm. A respondent from Omabala area of Igbo land could not hold his emotion when he was responding to a question posed to him. He told a story of how his friend’s mother lured him into marrying her last daughter. He said, I was deceived into believing that the girl loved me. I did not know that the woman used charm on her daughter and because I did not want to disrupt the long relationship I have already established with the family, I foolishly entered into the short lived marriage. The study understood that the woman in question charmed the young girl into loving her son’s friend and though, the charm did not actually affect the girl as found from her behaviors towards the man, she continued confusing the man into believing that the girl’s character would change after wedding. This couldn’t be hence, the dissolution of their marriage after a year.

Effects of Divorce on the Products of such marriage

Marriage in traditional Africa especially among the Igbo is for life, even if the couple is unhappy especially when the marriage is blessed with children though, personal happiness of an individual is more important than putting up with a bad marriage. Nevertheless, when the centre could not hold for the couple, they part ways which does none of them any good. It has been a saying among the Igbo people of Nigeria that by steadily urinating in a particular point at a time, one’s urinal is liable to foam (a nyukoo nwamiri onu o gbogo ufufu). In other words, united we win the war or we make progress. For instance, in a football match where there is coordination among the team, victory is surely theirs but in disarray, they will lose a match. This is the reason why the Igbo believe that no one person is capable of giving a complete training to a child in a family.

In an ideal Igbo traditional family, everyone has a function to perform in building up a family especially in bringing up children who are the joy of making a family. The Christian Holy Book, the Bible says, bring up the child in a better way and he will grow up with it. It is a known fact that a child is an umbrella

²⁴ Conger, D., Elder, H., Lorenz, F. O., Conger, K. J., Simons, R. L., Whitbeck, L. B., et al. (1990). Linking economic hardship to marital quality and instability. *Journal of Marriage & the Family*, 52, 643-656.

²⁵ Becker, G. S. (1991). *A treatise on the family* (enlarged ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

of the parents. He is an asset. He stands as a premium to one's life assurance. That is why childless Igbo couples do not rest till they get solution to their childlessness. They can go to any length in search of solution to their problems. The woman is ready to drink urine, feaces, or any other rubbish offered to her by a herbalist so far as she is assured of getting over her bareness. Not being able to make children is too embarrassing to couples of Igbo decent. And so, when a couple is blessed with any, they do not play in giving them proper training.

However, one needs to know that in a situation of crises, the condition of the fruits of the marriage is never better than that of the grass where two elephants fight. It was understood that in a traditional Igbo family, going out to fetch food for the family, was the responsibility of the man alone whereas managing all that the man has brought into the family was on the woman's hands. For those who were farmers, if the woman would help in the farm work, it would be only in weeding the farm and during harvesting; and this is only when she is not pregnant. Every other hard job is for the man.

The study observed that training of the male child is quite different from that of the female child. This is because it is not all needs or problems of the female child that the father knows and solves directly. It is also not all the problems of the male child that the mother knows and solves directly. The man has a responsibility he handles alone for the male children as the mother has for the female children.

Now, as the Global society changes, the Igbo society is not an island. It changes too with the family structure changing whereby both man and woman work and each contributes to the up keep of the family. However, when trouble sets in and divorce initiated, the children's life dwindles. The effect is normally great on children of broken family. In concert with this, Patrick F. Fagan and Aaron Churchill January 11, 2012 say, each year, over a million American children suffer the divorce of their parents. Divorce causes irreparable harm to all involved, but most especially to the children.²⁶

It was understood that when a husband and wife of traditional Igbo family separate, the woman takes the children and train them in her own father's house. Taking them to her father's house does not mean that they will cease to be the man's children. What happens is that the man who may start living his life with another woman, does not care about the children though, they continue to bear the man's name.

As mentioned earlier in this study that providentially husband and wife each has a responsibility in bringing up the children, when the whole responsibilities rest on the woman alone, she could only perform those duties that a woman could do for the children and leave the aspect that should have been done by the man. These responsibilities that should have been done but left undone due to absence of a man make the children improperly trained. A respondent, who is a child of divorced parents, confessed that because he did not experience fatherly torture, he could not behave like a man due to his mother's soft handling. He said that his mother does not cane them when they do wrong like they see children with fathers being flogged for misbehaving according to cultural way of training children. In view of the respondent's narratives, the student understood why the Igbo say that *nkita nwaanyi zuru na-atakpo akwa okuko* (a dog trained by a woman that eats hen's egg). What this means is that though divorce "... might be shown to benefit some individuals in some individual cases, over all it causes a temporary decrease in an individual's quality of life and puts some "on a downward trajectory from which they might never fully recover."²⁷

²⁶ Patrick F. Fagan and Aaron Churchill (January 11, 2012). The Effects of Divorce on Children. Marri Research Marriage & Religion Research Institute

²⁷. Paul R. Amato, "The Consequences of Divorce for Adults and Children," Journal of Marriage and Family 62 (2000): 1269.

In the course of this study, a respondent told a story of his experience with a harlot in city in Nigeria. He narrated how he was driving late in the night and came across a lady standing by the road side. She flagged him down and he stopped to ask her in. When she got into the car and he drove off, he asked her why she was standing where he collected her alone. Her response was that she has no place to stay as she was visitor. The man said that he took her to his house and showed her way to his bathroom where she had shower. According him, the girl might have expected that he had intention of having canal knowledge of her but she was wrong because instead of that, he tried to help her. He asked her, "What do you do for a living?" she answered, "Nothing." Then, why are you in the city where you do not know anyone? He asked. She responded, "... just to look for help but since no help came, I stood where you met me to see if I could have a man to sleep with" The man then, tried to inquire of her parents and relations but she didn't mince words to tell the man that she was a victim of a broken family; that the dad divorced her mother who could not take care of her. She cursed the penis that had impregnated her mother. Due to this type of hatred arising from a victim of divorce case, Paul R. Amato and Juliana M. Sobolewski, say, "Divorce also permanently weakens the family and the relationship between children and parents."²⁸

In another situation, an interviewee regretted his actions that led to divorce action against him by his ex-wife. He said that he would have committed suicide after having sexual intercourse with a lady he met at hotel whom he later through interrogation found that she was his own blood given to him by his former wife. According to the respondent, his former wife was pregnant for him before they got divorce the product of which he had sex with.

It was observed that divorce sometimes; divide a family into warring parties. In a community in Anambra State of Nigeria, a story was told how a quarrel between couples brought division among the children. The couple had four children who got involved in their parents' quarrel. The children sided their parents equally; two for each parent; one boy and one girl each. When they finally divorced, each set of two that supported each parent, went and lived with them accordingly. It continued till date. Surprisingly, when any of the parents passed away, each set organized the burial ceremony alone without the other set. Right now, according to respondent, it remains two of the children because the two parents have died and two of the children, one from each side have also passed away still, the remaining two are had to be reconciled. As if Paul Amato, professor of sociology at Pennsylvania State University knew this family, he said: 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."²⁹ They are not even in good talking terms.

It was also observed that divorce cause the children to be sexually promiscuous. It frequently leads to destructive conflict management methods, diminished social competence and for children, the early loss of virginity, as well as diminished sense of masculinity or femininity for young adults.³⁰ This is because such children lack full parental care. Sometimes, it is either what they learn from which parent they stay with. The Igbo say that *nne ewu na-ata agbara, nwa ya na-ele ya anya n'onu*. That is to say that when a sheep eats a scratching leaves, the lamb watches her mouth. In other words, when a mother or father does evil thing he or she should not forget that the children are watching and learning from them. Divorce leads separated parents to start see outside partners which they do in the presence of their children who

²⁸ Paul R. Amato and Juliana M. Sobolewski, "The Effects of Divorce and Marital Discord on Adult Children's Psychological Well-Being," *American Sociological Review* 66 (2001): 917.

²⁹ . Paul R. Amato, "The Consequences of Divorce for Adults and Children," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62 (2000): 1282.

³⁰ . Patrick F. Fagan and Aaron Churchill (January 11, 2012). The Effects of Divorce on Children. Marri Research Marriage & Religion Research Institute

learn from them. In doing so, the children also find it hard to lead a happy married life when they grow up. For that reason, the Igbo do avoid marriage with children of divorcees for fear of getting involved in broken homes.

The Igbo believe that if a child of a divorcee finds himself or herself in a high position, he could not do well. The reason is that they are most times, emotionally unstable judging from their background. They believe that divorce destroys a society in the sense that each of the divorcees belongs to a family, community and the society at large. Their unstable life of course, affects everyone around them which affects the entire society.

Conclusion

Marriage is not what one should wake up in the morning and gets oneself into. It involves maturity hence the Igbo idea that before a male child should be allowed to take a wife, he should first of all be given a dog, a goat or any domestic animal to tame. This practice is to examine the boy's ability to be patient with a woman and be able to feed her. The reason is that the Igbo associate the woman's disturbing tenderly attitude with those of domestic animal and so, whoever that would properly take care of those animals, could also take care of a wife. That one should be telling stories of having divorced a wife or a wife divorcing him is really annoying among the Igbo in view of the implications on the children. Children are the umbrella to any parent and so, divorce for whatever reason does much harm to the children and the parents as well. In any divorce case, in as much as the children are at the receiving end in the first instance, the parents of course, do not find it funny at the old age. This is because as the Igbo would say that *asị a kpọrọ nne na-emetuta nwa ya*. In other words, hatred for mother is always transferred to the children. When the children discover that their father hates them, it creates deep wound in their relationship with their father hence their abandonment of their father at old age.

It is on this note that this study wants to say that divorce is an evil wind that blows no one good. Therefore it is advised that anyone trying to marry should look before he leaps. Marriage is not and should not be a daily business and therefore it calls for endurance at least for the protection of the children

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