

# Explaining the Divorce Phenomenon among Indigenes of the Ilorin Emirate in Kwara State, Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

*The family institution, which is the basic foundation of every society, is being threatened by high rate of divorce globally. The literature and popular media are replete with statistics about the rise in the rate of divorce and the decreasing stability of the nuclear family. It is believed that this situation often results into an unstable society and even destroys its form and moral standards. Consequently the adolescents who are raised in such broken homes are more likely to drop out of school, to use drug, to have teen births, to have illegitimate children and to be poorer than their counterparts whose natal home is intact. It is therefore germane to ask the following questions: what are the factors responsible for the high incidence of divorce, and what are the effects of divorce on the society? The main thrust of this paper is to x-ray the factors responsible for high incidence of divorce in the context of feminist theory, the individualism dual income paradigm and to know the effect of divorce on the children, the couples involved and the society at large. In line with these objectives, the paper relies on secondary material and primary data obtained through questionnaire in order to assess the phenomenon of divorce in Ilorin Emirate. The study reveals that the main factors associated with divorce in the Emirate are financial problems, barrenness and irresponsibility. The paper concludes with some suggestions on the ways to minimize or reduce the divorce rate in Ilorin in particular and human societies in general.*

**Keywords:** marriage, divorce, family, adolescents, Ilorin Emirate

## **Introduction**

From the creation of man, family has been the basic unit of societal organization. It is a great circle where all moral upbringing of life is transmitted through this process of socialization. Family, therefore, remains the life wire of any society since it is in the family that children spend and receive their early education, which serves as foundation for their subsequent educational career and future prospects. Owing to the important position of the family, the success, progress and failure of any society depend largely on the general state of families within such society. In pointing out the importance of the family institution, Bell (1971), James (1980) and Riley (1991) were of the opinion that family constitutes the primary agent and the centre of the most impressive celebrations and rituals that are associated with marriage, birth and death and with the initiation of the child into the beliefs and ways of the community. In spite of the prime position of the family in human society, this



important institution is being threatened on daily basis by the phenomenon of divorce, a process that creates unstable society and even destroys its form and moral standards.

In the past, much attention was not paid to the problem of divorce, its causes and its harmful effects, nor were any measures devised to prevent its incidence, because the cases of divorce were few and far between. Today, there is a new dimension around the world concerning the breakdown of marriages and families. It is now estimated that one in two marriages will end up in divorce. In fact, about one out of every six adults will endure two divorces during their life time (Amato, 2000). The global divorce rate statistics as presented at [divorcereform.org](http://divorcereform.org) shows that Belgium has the highest percentage of 59.8, followed by Sweden, 53.9, Finland, 53.2, United Kingdom, 50.5, Austria, 49.8, United States of America, 49.4, New Zealand, 47.0, Germany, 46.4 and France, 40.6. This means that there is probability of one divorce in every two contracted marriage in some of the above mentioned countries. The situation may not be totally different in African countries, in spite of the dearth of adequate statistics on the issue of divorce in the Continent. On the other hand, there are some countries that still have lower rate of divorce, such as Switzerland, 26.4%, Spain 18% and Italy 13.2%. The high rate of divorce in some parts of the world may be due to their liberal marriage laws, and people's general altitudes towards the institution of marriage, which allow couples to end easily their marriage contract.

With statistics like this concerning the alarming rise in the rate of divorce in human societies as presented above, the phenomenon of divorce has become a global social problem which needs some sociological explanation. The main objective of this study, therefore, is to empirically examine the factors responsible for the incidence of divorce and to look at the possible effects of divorce in the context of sociological tradition. The study attempts to do this using some theories to explain the data collected from 189 sampled indigenes of Ilorin Emirate with risk of divorce. In order to achieve this objective, the remaining part of this paper is sectioned as follows: conceptual issues, methodology, findings, explaining divorce in the context of sociological tradition, recommendations and conclusions.

### **Conceptual Issues**

The term divorce refers to the legal termination of a marriage and all rights and responsibilities associated with that marriage. Divorce is different from annulment which refers to the invalidation of a marriage. In divorce, marriage is recognized as something legitimate that existed at one point but which has since ended, whereas with annulment, it is as though the marriage never took place because the marriage is declared to have been illegitimate from the start. Annulments are available only when it can be proven that a marriage was entered into under fraudulent, forced or other illegitimate circumstances. The

vast majority of persons requesting exit from marriage do not qualify based on these terms and thus annulment is uncommon. Divorce is also different from separation, which is a legal change to the status of an existing marriage but which does not terminate the marriage. Legally separated couples continue to be married and continue to share most of the rights and responsibilities associated with marriage such as joint property, custody, etc. Separated couples cannot remarry unless they go on to get divorced. Separation used to be more common, but in modern times it has taken a back seat to actual divorce.

Divorce comes in two forms namely, fault divorce, and no-fault divorce. Fault divorces are granted only when it can be shown to the court's satisfaction that one spouse has seriously harmed the other (through adultery, abandonment, abuse etc.). Under a no-fault divorce system, divorce requires no allegation or proof of fault of either party. The barest of assertion suffice. For example, in countries that require 'irretrievable breakdown', the mere assertion that the marriage has broken down will satisfy the judicial officer. The court will not inquire into facts; a "yes" is enough, even if the other party vehemently says "no". The application can be made by either party or both parties jointly. From the foregoing, divorce therefore refers to the dissolution of marriage. It is the final termination of a marital union, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bond of matrimony between the parties.

To narrow down this conceptual clarification to our research area, it is important to note that the Ilorin Emirate is a Muslim community, whose population is predominantly Muslim. Being a Muslim community, the Islamic way of life is visible in their culture and belief system. Therefore the Islamic position on divorce is somewhat known to the members of the community. *Talaq* is the word used in Islamic law for divorce. The word is Arabic, which means to set free. In Islam, *Talaq* is only permitted as a lawful method to bring marriage contract to an end only in unavoidable circumstances. This means that divorce is allowed in Islamic community as a last resort. The position of Islam on the issue of divorce is clear from the following three Hadith of the Holy Prophet of Islam:

1. Of all the things permitted in Law, divorce is the most hateful thing in the sight of Allah (Abu Daud).
2. Marry and do not divorce, undoubtedly the Throne of the Beneficent Lord shakes due to divorce (Tafsir al-Qurtubi, vol 1).
3. A woman seeking divorce unnecessarily will be deprived of the scent of paradise (Tirmidhi, Abu Daud).

The people of Ilorin Emirate understand clearly the position of Islam on this issue. In this study, therefore, with the definition of divorce as discussed above, there are two categories of people who are regarded here as 'people with risk of divorce'. These are individuals that have completed the process of divorce and couples whose divorce suits are in courts and are no longer living

together as husband and wife. In this paper, the two categories are simply referred to as 'people with risk of divorce.'

### **Factors Responsible for Divorce: A Review**

There has been a consistent increase in the rate of divorce around the world. The aim of this section is to review briefly some of the factors that have been found to be responsible for the persistent increase in the rate of divorce. Starting with work of Cherlin (1992), he opined that in the contemporary era, the increased societal emphasis on autonomy and personal growth had decreased the status of marital union as a cultural imperative. Consequently, he went further to say that marriage is no longer seen as a mark of adulthood and normalcy and that marriage also is no longer a social obligation. Rather, marriage is seen as one of many paths to self fulfilment. Another factor that has led to increase in divorce rate is the breakdown of communication among couple which may lead to inability to solve their common problems that may occur in the marriage. In this regard, Amato and Rogers (1997) concluded in their study that divorce is caused most often by pattern of damaging incidents. Some common issues are often indicators of these incidents. According to them, married couples often argue over money, which stems from uneasiness about the future of their family. Also, infidelity and general incompatibility are all issues that create strain in marriage.

Zuckman (2009), in his own work, cited conflicting reports about divorce and religiousness. According to him, in 2001 marriages between people of different faiths were three times more likely to be divorced than those of the same faith, whereas in a 1993 study, members of two main line Protestant religions had one in five chance of being divorced in five years; a catholic and an evangelical, a one in three chance; and a Jew and a Christian, a forty percent chance. What this means is that religious differences have also contributed in no small measure to the increasing incidence of divorce. The work of Anthony, Mitchell and Richard (2005) also revealed that increased economic autonomy of women since 1940s has contributed to high rate of divorce. They observe that most wives were not employed outside their home and depended on their husband income prior to 1940, but thereafter about two-thirds of married women are in the labour force. A wife who is unhappy in her marriage is more likely to leave the marriage if she has the economic means to support herself and likewise an unhappy husband may leave a marriage if his wife is self-sufficient and can contribute to the support of the children. Liberalized divorced law is also seen as another factor that has contributed to high incidence of divorce. Before 1970 in the USA, the law requires a couple who wanted divorce to prove that the spouse was at fault and had committed an act defined by the State as ground for divorce. Such grounds include adultery, cruelty or desertion. In 1969 California became the first State to initiate no-fault divorce which permitted a divorce based on the claim that there were

“irreconcilable differences” in marriage. No-fault divorce law has contributed to the continued escalation of divorce, because today, many countries around the world recognize some form of no-fault divorce.

Age at first marriage is another crucial factor determining the probability of divorce. With regard to age at first marriage, Castro-Martins and Bumpass (1989) and Teachman (2002) in their different research found that the strongest predictor of divorce is the age at first marriage. Those who marry for the first time in their teens have two to three times the incidence of divorce than those who marry after age twenty. Norton and Moorman (1987) also discovered that men who marry before age twenty have twice the divorce rate of men who marry between the ages of 20-24 and twice the divorce rate of those who marry between the ages of 25-29. Early marriages have a much higher divorce rate than other marriage for several reasons. Individuals who married at young ages are usually less matured intellectually, emotionally and in term of experience in their teenage years than when they get married at an older age, when they are likely to make sound marital choices. Also Castro-Martins and Bumpass (1989) observe that teenage marriages are chiefly a lower class phenomenon and high incidences of divorce occur in this class for many reasons. According to them, lower social class generally has more financial pressure, lower job status, lower educational level and more premarital pregnancy, all of which are correlates of high divorce rate.

The societal acceptance of divorce around the world has become a major factor that has contributed to the increasing incidence of divorce. It is no longer considered necessary to endure an unhappy marriage. Other factors that are mentioned in the literature include: sexual problem, lack of trust, poor social habits of spouse, disparity in educational attainment, barrenness, drug addition, physical abuse, psychological abuse and emotional abuse.

### **Methodology**

The study was a survey of the causes and effects of divorce phenomenon among the people with risk of divorce in Ilorin Emirate. Its main objective was to find explanation for the divorce phenomenon in the context of sociological tradition. In order to achieve this objective, data on the causes and effects of divorce phenomenon were obtained from one hundred and eighty-nine (189) respondents, who have been categorized as individuals with risk of divorce. To this end, the study involves two sets of individuals namely; (i) those who had already secured divorce, and (ii) those in the process of securing a divorce. The one hundred and eighty-nine sampled respondents with risk of divorce were identified and captured from the Area Courts’ registers in Ilorin Emirate. The final selection of the respondents was done through purposive sampling based on the willingness of the people to participate, bearing in mind the characteristics of age and gender.

The study was carried out in Ilorin Emirate, which consists of five Local Government Areas namely, Ilorin West, Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Moro and Asa Local Governments. Its inhabitants engage in occupation such as pottery

making, weaving, trading, banking work, teaching and civil service work. The people of the Emirate are mainly polygamous; although Islam and Christianity are the two main religions with the people, the Emirate is predominantly Muslims.

The needed data for this study were collected through the use of questionnaire, administered on 189 respondents with risk of divorce. The method of questionnaire administration gave the respondents the assurance of anonymity, time to ponder on the questions, privacy and at the same time guarantee the genuineness of the data from the respondents within a short time. The questionnaire, which was the source of primary data, was divided into two parts. The first part inquires about the respondents' age, age at marriage, type of living abode at marriage, educational status, divorce status etc. The second part elicited the opinions of the respondents on the causes and effects of divorce in the Emirate. The second source of data in this paper was the secondary source, which consists of journal articles, court registers, text books, and internet materials employed in the review of literature. The method of data analysis employed in this study was the non-complex descriptive statistical method involving frequency distributions with percentages for each of the responses to items on the questionnaire.

### **Data Presentation and discussion of findings**

As mentioned in the methodology section, the information used in this study was collected through the use of the questionnaire method which was administered on the respondents. Table 1 displays the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

An examination of Table 1 reveals that the study respondents varied in terms of their socio-economic characteristics namely: sex, age, age at marriage, educational status; divorce status and living apartment at marriage. Specifically, the result on the gender of the respondents revealed that there were more female respondents in the sample than the male respondents. The majority of the respondents were 30 years of age or below; while only 20 percent are aged more than 40 years. The analysis of the respondents in terms of the age at which they got married indicates that majority of them (60%) married before the age of 25.

On the distribution of the respondents relative to educational status as shown in Table 1, the majority of the study respondents had some tertiary education (about 53%). The categorization of the respondents on the basis of divorce status indicates that the respondents were either already divorced or about to finalized divorce. Thus, 66 out of 189 respondents had finalized their divorce, while 123 were about to finalize divorce. The result of the frequency distribution of the respondents by the type of living apartments at marriage indicates that majority (59.7%) were living in the rented apartment, while 27% of the respondents were living in the family compound, and 12.7% lived in

government quarters. With regard to the respondents' opinion on divorce rate, the majority (65%) claimed that the divorce rate is high in their society.

**Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by socio-economic characteristics**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	82	43.3
Female	107	56.7
<b>Age</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
Below 25	46	24.3
26 – 30 Years	52	27.5
31 – 35 Years	33	17.4
36 – 40 Years	20	10.6
41 and Above	38	20.1
<b>Age at marriage</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
Before 25	114	60.4
Between 26 – 35	47	24.8
36 and Above	28	14.8
<b>Educational status</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
Degree Holder/ HND	49	25.9
NCE/OND	51	26.9
Secondary	71	37.5
Primary	10	5.3
No Education	8	4.4
<b>Divorce status</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
Divorced Suit completed	66	34.8
Divorced Suit in progress	123	65.2
<b>Mode of shelter at marriage</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
Family Compound	52	27.6
Flat/Rented Apartment	113	59.7
Government Quarters	24	12.7
<b>Opinion on divorce rate</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
High	124	35.6
Average	51	26.9
Low	14	7.5

**Source:** Researchers' fieldwork, 2011

On the causes of divorce in the study area, some factors were investigated and the results were as presented in Table 2. The majority of the respondents agreed that financial problem (79.9%), abuse (such as physical, psychological and emotional abuse – 59.7%); barrenness (65.0%); age at marriage (56.5%); education (57.5%) and irresponsibility (83.9%) were the major factors responsible for cases of divorce among the indigenes of the Emirate. Religion and cultural differences were not seen as the major causes of divorce among the indigenes.

**Table 2: Respondents’ opinions on the cause of divorce in their society**

<b>Causes</b>	<b>Strongly Agreed</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>	<b>Strongly Disagreed</b>
Financial Problem	121 (64.1)	30 (15.8)	23(12.2)	15(7.9)
Abuse (physical, psychological, etc.)	91 (48.1)	22 (11.6)	39 (20.9)	37 (19.5)
Religious differences	32 ( 16.9)	16 (8.4)	57 (30.1)	84 (44.5)
Barrenness	70 (37.0)	52 (28.0)	22 (11.6)	44 (23.4)
Age at marriage	81 (42.8)	26 (13.7)	51 (26.9)	31 (16.6)
Irresponsibility	132 (69.6)	27 (14.3)	19 (10.1)	11 (5.8)
Cultural differences	32 (16.9)	18 (9.5)	79 (41.7)	60 (31.7)
Education	62 (32.8)	41 (21.7)	33 (17.5)	53 (28.0)
Communication	54 (28.5)	29 (15.4)	81 (42.8)	25 (13.3)
Third party interference	22 (11.6)	18 (9.5)	53 (28.1)	96 (50.8)

**Source:** Researchers’ fieldwork, 2011

Table 3 shows the opinions of the respondents on the effect of divorce. With regard to the effect of divorce on the children, the respondents named anti-social behaviour (84.1%); truancy (50.7%) and child labour (71.5%) as the commonest effects of divorce in the study area as against indiscipline and isolation. An examination of the effect of divorce on adult, on the other hand, revealed that financial problems (79.1%); psychological problem (65.0%) and attitudinal problem were named as the effects of divorce on adults in the study area as against loneliness and desertion.

**Table 3: Respondents' opinions on the effects of divorce**

Effects of Divorce	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
Effect on children	132(70.4)	26(13.7)	24(12.6)	6(3.3)
Truancy/poor academic performance	51(26.9)	45(23.8)	56(29.6)	37(19.7)
Child labour	142(75.1)	21(11.1)	19(8.9)	7(4.9)
Indiscipline	73(38.6)	18(9.5)	59(31.2)	39(20.7)
Isolation	12(6.3)	39(20.6)	61(32.3)	77(40.8)
Loneliness	31(16.5)	28(14.8)	58(30.6)	72(38.1)

**Source:** Researchers' fieldwork 2011

From the data presented above, it can be seen that a number of factors were attributed to the occurrence of divorce in the Emirate. Top on this list are financial problem, marital abuse (such as physical, psychological and emotional abuse), barrenness and irresponsible behaviours either from the husband or wife which can no longer be tolerated. These findings are in line with the work of Olusanya (1970) and Yaqoob (1984), who also identified economic factors, communication problems, lack of children in addition to interferences of in-laws and education of spouses as some of the causes of divorce. Writing specifically on the factor of barrenness as a cause of divorce, Otite and Ogonwo (1981) stressed the fact that the pride of Nigerian woman lies in her ability to have issues, which is a good reason why they marry in the first place. Therefore, failure to achieve this primary objective may lead to divorce.

Another factor attributed to the incidence of divorce in the study area is age at marriage especially among women. Being a Muslim community, it is not uncommon to find people particularly women getting married at a very young age. This practice affects many other things such as the education of women and their ability to cope with the challenges of marriage. In such a situation, the burden of keeping a family in terms of meeting their economic needs rests on the husband, who himself may not be in a good employment. Where such happens, the most likely thing is to seek for divorce. This finding is in line with an earlier study carried out by Castro-Martins and Bumpass (1989) who asserted that age at first marriage is a crucial factor in determining the probability of divorce. Norton and Moorman's (1981) study was specifically on the relationship between the age at which men marry and probability of divorce. According to them, men who married before the age of twenty have twice divorce rate of those who marry between the age of between 25 and 29. However, Morgan and Rinduss (1985) disagreed with this position in their own study, possibly because men are usually much older than their wives. The position of the Norton and Moorman is however more acceptable because there

is always a sociological link between the age and level of education attained. Early marriage either on the part of man or woman will certainly affect the level of education which will consequently determine the kind of employment the spouse will secure and subsequently their economic status.

While some studies like Zukman's (2009) emphasized religion and cultural factors as important determinants of divorce, these two factors in this current study do not have much impact on the incidence of divorce. The reason for this is that our study area is predominantly a Muslim community. In Islam, Muslims are allowed to marry among the Christians though with a number of conditions. Because of this, the study respondents did not see difference in religion as a good ground for divorce. This position is however in contrast with the findings by Zuckman (2009) who concluded that marriages between people of different faiths were three times more likely to end up in divorce and that people of the same faith had a 1 in 5 chance of being divorcees in five years.

More broadly, divorce phenomenon is becoming a common occurrence in human societies due to a number of factors. Today, divorce is legally easier to accomplish. For instance, in traditional societies divorce were almost impossible because of the extent and the vibrant system of extended families. In such situation, the wife was not only married to her husband but also to all members of the husband's family. Therefore, to break up a marriage in the past required the consensus of all family members. Similarly in UK for example, the law before 1857 made divorces almost impossible. It was only the wealthy men that could get through a divorce as it required a private Act of Parliament. But with the passing of time, legislation made divorce increasingly easy. Couples in UK now divorce after two years' separation (five years if the partner objected). This new development has given further impetus for increasing divorce rate.

In the contemporary societies, collectivism is giving way to individualism. It is therefore not surprising to see the rise of modern society in which both men and women have choice and control over their lives, as well as equality. The events are changing to the point that human beings have become more individualistic and more concerned with their personal happiness and success than with the wellbeing of the families and their children. This kind of situation if unchecked, makes for more tension and provides a fertile bed for potential conflict between couples which, makes their marriage to be more prone to breaking up (Beck-Gernshiem, 2002).

Sociological research has also shown that women are now less dependent on men and they now have changed expectations. This has been found to be due to their increasing participation in labour force, which has reduced the wives' financial dependence on their husbands. In addition to this, the women of today have largely come to expect more from life than being the homemaker alone. In fact, they are more likely to demand equality from husbands who do not often recognize the fact that the role of women in the society is changing.

This change in women's expectations may make it much easier for women to walk away from a marriage that is considered to be an unhappy one.

To walk away from unhappy marriages is made much more easier today if one considers the stressful nature of many marriages. Where both partners work outside the home, which in most cases is time and energy consuming, raising children can be very difficult. Thus, tension between husbands and wives may increase because women may demand for more participation from men in the sharing of child rearing roles. This explains why divorce is most common during the early years of marriage when many couples have young children. Finally, research has shown that in today's world, divorce is more socially acceptable. That is, the negative stigma carried by divorce some years back is no longer there. The divorcees are easily integrated into the society and no longer seen as outcasts.

The discussion of factors that are responsible for the incidence of divorce in human society as analysed above can be summarized under five sociological theories namely; the functionalist, social conflict, feminist, individualism and dual income theories. In the perspective of the functionalist theory, a marriage is expected to be functional rather than dysfunctional. A marriage that is therefore dysfunctional in the thinking of the functionalist is exceptional because the family institution is considered the bedrock of the society. This view of the functionalist is in contrast with the position of the feminist and Marxist, who on their own see conflict as inevitable in society and which is often projected into the smaller collectivity like the family. According to the functionalist thinking, there can always be family disorganization that sometimes leads to divorce, which results from the role failure. Ordinarily, marriage is expected to be symmetrical (that is husband and wife shared more roles), or in the traditional view of marriage (where husband is seen as provider and the housewife as home maker). But a situation may arise where partners may fail to carry out their roles as specified by their culture or conventional practices thereby resulting into role failure in the first instance and consequently to functional failure-divorce.

In contrast to the functionalist theory, the social conflict theoretical position locates the root causes of divorce not in the home, but in the economic and society. Thus, this theory interprets the issues surrounding divorce as influenced and encouraged by social and economic conditions. Therefore, the conflict theory does not see divorce phenomenon as a symptom of the couple's relationship, instead it is seen as a simple manifestation of external elements that work upon the couple. Thus, the imbalance created by external variables will create a conflict relationship between the couple leading subsequently to divorce.

Like the earlier theories discussed above, feminist theory has also found its way into the explanation of divorce. Feminism is a theory that stems from critical theory. It takes the perspective that socio-economic pressures ultimately create imbalance between genders, which is at a variant to the natural function of the husband and wife relationship. Indeed, it is a set of

identities constructed for them by economic need, and which remain in conflict. According to the feminist theory, divorce can therefore be construed as partial or wholly outcome of this perceived reality. With the emergence of feminist movement, marriage is more and more expected to be a two-way street with equal obligations on both sides in term of investment, affection and faithfulness. A situation where women folks are oppressed by their men counterparts is no longer acceptable.

Thus, in the early period of feminist movement, one foremost radical feminist, Elizabeth Candy Stanton who was a staunch supporter of divorce once proclaimed that ‘with the education and elevation of women, we shall have a mighty sundering of the unholy ties that hold men and women together who loathe and despise each other’ (Riley, 1991: 73). In other words, there will be increase in divorce rate due to increase gender equality that will provide variety options for women. Feminist theory therefore advocates that women do not need to depend on men for emotional and financial support, or even to give them status in the society.

Another theory that can be used to explain the incidence of divorce is theory of individualism. Individualism is mainly the new generation viewpoint that involves placing emphasis on the individual, rather than focusing on the group. Individualism looks at the “I” instead of the “we”. Along with individualism has come a need for personal happiness. This shift from collective values to individual values has put a major pressure and stress on existing ideas of what marriage is about. It is the stress that leads to many splits.

The dual income theory has also been found to be relevant in the explanation of divorce in human societies. This theory holds that more families are converting into a dual-income household where both partners in marriage are working and pursuing separate careers. The theory further holds that some of these careers can pull two partners apart so that each individual can pursue his or her career. Most dual-income families spend less time together than single income families, resulting into such families having less time to grow to love each other and more time to grow apart. The theory is linked to divorce because an individual that is focused on making a career work, may find it more difficult to provide the focus it takes to make a marriage work. Thus, people may give up on marriage because it has become less important to them than economic status. The need for dual-income families has therefore shifted mentalities to economics, rather than marriage or love, which may impact negatively on existing marriages. Because it is almost necessary for both partners to have careers, a strain is put on marriages, and this strain may lead to divorce.

Another effect of the dual income theory is role conflict. Role conflict exists when there is scarce time to be divided between work and family. According to Cooper and Lewis (1994), “when people feel torn between the

needs of their children and the demands of work, the subsequent conflict can be very distressing.” This distress can, and often does lead to separation, or, in some cases divorce. Cooper and Lewis went on to say that “Problems may arise if partners lack the time and energy to provide the practical or emotional support associated with having a homemaker wife.” This is essentially saying that with the incorporation of new family ideas comes a change from traditional roles, that in turn may produce a lack of actions or support that has grown to be norm in the society. This can cause many problems as dual income situations may remove comfort areas of a relationship and, by doing this, a more stressful situation is created, which may eventually lead to divorce.

From the various theories discussed above, it can be seen that the increasing incidence of divorce in human societies today has its root in many causes. The feminist theory hinges its argument concerning the root of divorce on the fact that the women of today are becoming more and more liberalized and therefore can take decisions on whether to stay in marriage or quit it. The functionalists see divorce as an outcome of role failure, while the social conflict theory explains divorce in the context of the happenings in the economy and society. According to the theory, the imbalance created by these external variables will create a conflict relationship between the couple which sometimes leads to divorce. The individualism theory situates the cause of divorce in the shift from collective values to individual values being experienced by many societies today. This shift has put a major pressure and stress on existing ideas about marriage requirements. Finally, the dual income theory explains divorce by holding that the modern economy is creating many dual-income households where couples, for reason of survival, pursue separate careers which pull them apart thereby creating gaps that may crack down a marriage.

In Ilorin Emirate, the incidence of divorce as we have discussed in the findings can also be discussed in the context of global events. In the Emirate, girl child education is on the increase. Therefore, unlike what was obtainable in traditional Emirate system, when women folks were restricted to perform only domestic roles, the increase in female education has brought many females into contact with modern occupations such as teaching and other civil service work. As a result, many homes have become dual-income households. Like other societies, the Emirate community is also experiencing a shift from collective value to individualistic value. The implications of all of the above are many and far reaching on the evolving cultures of the Emirate community. First and foremost, the women in the Emirate community now enjoy some level of economic independence, which now allows them some level of freedom in decision-making including divorce decisions. Also, the shift to the cultures of individualism and dual-income families has empowered women to take independent decisions on matters such as whether or not to go ahead to end a marriage contract. The development in the Emirate has also ended the grip of the extended family system on the individual thereby making it possible for the indigenes to relocate to outside the family compound. Thus, the extended

family's interference on matter of divorce is becoming more and more limited as couple can now go to court to ask for divorce without the knowledge of their extended family's members. Divorce phenomenon is therefore becoming an individual issue rather than family matter as it used to be in the past.

### **The Way Forward**

Marriage is certainly an institution which promotes family ties, orderliness, peace, unity and national development. Thus, the substance of marital stability requires the collective effort of the government, non-governmental organisations, extended families and individuals to protect the institutions of marriage and family which are being turned apart by the increasing incidence of divorce. The need to save the institution of marriage by stepping down the rate of divorce is obvious from the fact that most of the delinquent, child labourers and school dropout that had being raised in broken homes today are expected to be the future leaders in the society. To this end, something must be done.

As we have noticed earlier, the changing altitude of towards divorce in human societies have been institutionalised by various changes in the law, culture and traditions of the people. Consequently, the cost of obtaining divorce and the ground for divorce have been widened. To alleviate these conditions, there should be a review of divorce law in such a way that it will encourage the staying together of husband and wives rather than making it easy for the couple to quit marriage. Among the efforts that should be made by all tiers of governments, the various governments should establish by resolution, a national goal of reducing divorce among families with children by a reasonable percentage. Governments at various level should also established marriage demonstration programmes by diverting sufficient funds from the existing social programmes into programme that provide trainings in marriage skill.

The federal government, in particular, should mandate that surplus welfare funds be used to strengthen marriages and show the increase in family disintegration. In order to have accurate data on marriage and divorce for effective planning, the government should establish a sound system of gathering data on marriage and divorce. The government should also create a public health campaign to inform Nigerians of the risks associated with divorce and of the long term benefits of marriage. The non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should key into all the government's efforts at reducing the rate of divorce particularly in the area of campaigns. The old values of collectivism should be rekindled through the various traditional institutions, so that the issues of marriage and divorce should be a collective responsibility as it used to be in the past.

## Conclusion

In this study, we have examined the cause and effects of divorce phenomenon in Ilorin Emirate using the theoretical and empirical arguments in sociology as the basis of our discussion. Divorce in this study has been shown to be multidimensional and involves multi-factors explanation. In this study, financial problems, physical, emotional and psychological abuse, bareness, educational status, age at marriage and breakdown in communication between spouses are the major causes of marital disruption. The effects of divorce as mentioned by the respondents are mainly on children, including truancy/poor academic performance, increase in child labour and indiscipline. With the multi-dimension effects of divorce on human societies, which are mostly negative, efforts should be made to step down the growing rate of divorce through deliberate government policies that will not only discourage divorce but also encourage lasting marriage.

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