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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MARITAL INSTABILTY OF THE OKRIKA PEOPLE IN RIVERS STATE.

DR. IYAYE, Nyengiala Joseph and DR. AIYENIGBA, Kate Charles
Faculty of Humanities, Department of Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies., Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.
P.M.B. 5047, Rumuolumeni, Iwofe, Port-Harcourt Rivers State.

ABSTRACT: The study examines emotional intelligence and marital instability amongst the Okrika people in Rivers State. The interest is on how emotional intelligence can promote stability of marriages in Okrika. The study is guided by three research questions, and adopted "The Gottman Method Couples Therapy" created by psychologist John Gottman and his wife Julie Schwartz Gottam (1996) as the theoretical framework. The study utilized descriptive qualitative research design, where both primary and secondary data were utilized. The population of the study is 319,700 with a sample size of 82 using an interview schedule to elicit data from respondents. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Person Interview (KPI) was applied for data collection with Purposive and snowballing sampling methods used in selecting participants for this study. Data is analyzed thematically, the study concludes that, there is need for couples to engage in pre-marital counselling. The study therefore recommends that effective communication should be practiced in marriages as it is an essential tool, Conflict resolution mechanisms is advocated for maintaining a healthy and stable marriage. Seeking professional counselling to help couples address underlying marital issues geared towards recovering relationship is also recommended.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Marital instability, Communication, Infidelity

Introduction

Contemporary times treat marriage with kit gloves, presenting it with a Dark Demon Face (DDF), making marriage less tolerable and more of walking out by terminating marital vows/ contract as against patching things up, correcting, building and remaining in the marital relationship. With every passing generation, discoveries are made on how to enjoy marital bliss, learning, unlearning and relearning the ingredients for marital positivity and successes. Marriage has been understood in very different terms, at other times in our history primarily as regards economic, social, or political alliance within which satisfaction and romantic love is not particularly important Flowers, (1998).

According to American Psychological Association, (2025), an alarming 40 to 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. Research shows that most of these divorces are not because of physical abuses or addiction, but the primary reasons people divorce are to either escape a relationship that has been painful, toxic, loveless, and destructive or to seek a more satisfying single life, or be with another partner Weiner-Davis, (1992).

However, people may be surprised to discover that their difficulties or unhappiness still exist with their choice of a single life or new partner. Some people think that divorce solves the problem, Sadly the problem often still exist in their lives even with new partners. If divorce is truly the answer, shouldn't the problem go away when the relationship goes away? Shouldn't the problem disappear when the partner gets married to someone else? Marital unrest persist even with new partners, because people are not ready to manage situation as should, work on problematic areas, try to understand each others emotions and act as required to avoid chaotic situations that trigger divulgence of insolence and confrontational words, which

most times result into battering and emotional torture on either partner and the relationship at the long-run.
Marriage is perceived as a school without graduation. There is every need for couples to school together in the same class after joining as husband and wife, this should be done irrespective of past knowledge from EX-relationships, Assumption and pre-empting of partner and resolving to live with them based on presumed notions, could emit dire consequences if not checked. Learning processes in marriage is a crucial period in the life of every beginner for long lasting marital bliss.

Statement of the problem

One area where emotional intelligence is needed the most is in marriage. It is expected that emotional intelligence of couples should affect their happiness. However, it is a fact that, not all marriages are blissful. Some marriages are besieged with a lot of problems in areas such as financial management, number and sexes of children, relationship with in-laws, parenting style and issues on house chores, sex related problem, social, political lifestyles, personality and temperamental issues, cultural and religious lifestyles etc. Sometimes, these problems may become so enormous that the marriage is threatened, because the parties involved lack emotional intelligence and as such make a wreck of their marriage.
This un- bargained scenario is a serious social problem that does not affect only the married, but also has greater negative effect on the offsprings from such marriages, they go through a lot of sociological trauma, some become victims of rape, others run into the streets for prostitution, drug abuse, cultism, stealing, constituting nuisance in the society. The consequences of marital instability as a result of lack of emotional intelligence include divorce, sexual promiscuity, infidelity, alcoholism, drug addiction and other social problems. As opined by Ambakederemo, (2006). Therefore, the objectives of this study is to investigate how lack of emotional intelligence can lead to separations of marriages among the people of Okrika in Rivers State, to examine how the inability to resolve conflict can lead to marital instability of the Okrikans in Rivers State and to investigate how irrational decision can contribute to infidelity and addiction in the marriages of the Okrikans in Rivers State.
Several studies have been conducted by different scholars on the issue of marital instability. For instance Ambakederemo, (2006) examined the "Causes of Marital Instability in Port Harcourt Municipality Nigeria; (Solutions and Counseling Implication") the study revealed that the causes of marital instability in Port Harcourt municipality are clustered in the absence of love, trust, Anti-social vices, economic, socio-cultural and sex-related conditions it was also discovered that self-control, peer group influence and spending quality time at home are the most positive indicators to be emphasized by both government and professional counselors to avoid marital instability in the families.
Again, Ezeh, (2016) investigated "Domestic Violence and Marital Instability in Port Harcourt Metropolis Rivers State", he illustrated how socio-economic activities has contributed to marital instability by the empowerment and possession of wealth by women, he asserts that women claiming independence and taking over the role of authority in their marital relationship and also the emergence of access to modern communication such as phones and social media has given gadgets for women to attack partners on grounds of infidelity, giving rise to marital instability in Rivers State.
Similarly, Kariuki, (2017) in a study conducted in Nairobi on the "Effectiveness of Premarital Counseling Programs on Marital Stability among Selected Couples in Nairobi County, It was discovered that there was a significant difference in marital satisfaction between the couples who received many counts of premarital counselling session. Based on the findings, it was recommended that premarital counselling be done six months before the wedding and between 18-20 sessions be held with the counselees, focusing more on communication, improvements in finance management, personal development for improvements in overall marital stability,
In a study "Effect of Marital Instability on Children in Abeokuta Metropolis" by Omoniyi, Hezekiah & Odunayo, (2014) the study examined the hash effects of marital instability on the product of such marriage. The need for urgent attention by all concerned, including counseling

psychologists, marriage counselors, religious leaders, married couples and the entire public to contribute positively as much as possible to avoid marital instability in the society. This is because the study confirmed the reality of marriage instability.

However, from the above related studies it was discovered to our limited knowledge that there is no existing study on emotional intelligence and marital instability among the Okrika people in Rivers State, it is against this backdrop that the study has evolved, to determine how emotional intelligence can stabilize the marriages of the Okrikans, hence, this study is carried out to bridge this gap in knowledge.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine how lack of emotional intelligence can cause marital instability amongst the Okrikans in Rivers State.

To guide the study, the following objectives are formulated.

i. To investigate way (s) lack of communication can lead to separation of marriages of the Okrikans in Rivers State?

ii. To examine how inability to resolve conflict can lead to marital instability of the Okrikans in Rivers State.

iii. To investigate how irrational decisions can contribute to infidelity and addiction in the marriages of the Okrikans in Rivers State.

Research questions

To guide the study, the following research questions are formulated.

i. In what way (s) can lack of communication lead to separation in the marriages of the Okrikans in Rivers State?

ii. How can the inability to resolve conflict lead to marital instability of the marriages of the Okrikans in Rivers State.

iii. How can irrational decisions contribute to infidelity and addiction in the marriages of the Okrikans in Rivers State?

Conceptual clarification

According to Salovey & Mayer, (1990), they defined Emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own and others feelings and emotions to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Emotional Intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion. The ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought, the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

Boyatzis & Sala (2004) have also defined Emotional Intelligence as an "ability to recognize, understand, and use emotional information about oneself or others that leads to or causes effective or superior performance". They gave an even shorter definition as "the intelligent use of one's emotions". Similar to the Emotional Quotient and Emotional Intelligence (EQ- IQ), though the developers indicated that the ESCI/ECI were developed to measure a construct distinct from personality, and in this case stress that, it is a measure of behavior, still the competencies share a common theoretical orientation, and even wording, with concepts and items on the Five-Factor model of personality (MacCann et al., 2003).

Marital instability as defined by Usoroh, Ekot & Inyang, (2010), it is a marriage with a high propensity to divorce. This is determined by the presence of thoughts or actions capable of precipitating separation. It is a situation in which disagreements and quarrels are common occurrences and one spouse or both spouses are dissatisfied with the marriage. However, some marriages are blessed with peace, unity of purpose, oneness and mutualism. Such marriages witness happiness of spouses and their children and are described as stable marriages. So marital stability is a relationship between husband and wife such that the chances of separation or divorce are very slim, Spouses witnessing marital stability have reduced sources of friction, disagreement and quarrel.

Communication according to Wikipedia, (2025), it is the transmission of information, a message is conveyed from sender to a receiver using some medium, such as sound, written signs, bodily movement etc. according to Jimmy, (2025) he opined that the six types of communication in marriage starts with simple interaction and gradually

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become intimate, these includes partnership, basic information, conflict resolution, connection, personal revelation and intimate communication.

Infidelity in marriage is the violation of agreed-upon emotional or sexual exclusivity with someone outside the committed partnership, often referred to as cheating or adultery. Infidelity is commonly associated with sexual acts, it includes emotional betrayal or other forms of disloyalty. It happens due to many reasons such as emotional or physical disconnect, lack of confidence or communication. Greg, (2017).

Theoretical framework

The study adopted "The Gottman Method Couples Therapy" created by psychologist John Gottman and his wife Julie Schwartz Gottam (1996). It is a therapeutic theory that tries to explain how couples can better their marriage. This approach entails therapeutic skills, scientific dispassion, and scientific authority. John Gottman created this theory by opening a "love lab" where he videotaped couples and their interactions in the most ordinary moments. The Therapeutic Theory is all about giving marriages a chance and not allowing divorce or separation. Gottman's approach to couples therapy emphasizes building a strong foundation of trust, intimacy, and communication. His methods have been widely researched and applied in various therapeutic settings. (Gottman & Julie 1996).

Methodology

The study utilized descriptive exploratory research design, where primary data were elicited through Personal interviews (PI), key person interview (KPI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with 82 participants, according to Lederman & Thomas, (1995), this technique involves the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected purposively. Secondary data was elicited from books, journals, internet etc. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the gathered data.

Data analysis

Table I: Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents (married)

Code Name	Sex	Age	Status	Years in marriage	No. of children	Occupation	Education level
FA	F	64	married	20	5	Public servant	Higher certificate
FB	F	41	married	13	4	Public servant	Higher certificate
FC	F	47	married	28	3	Business	Higher certificate
FD	F	38	married	8	2	Business	WAEC
MA	M	76	married	48	8	Public servant	WAEC
MB	M	40	married	13	4	Business	WAEC
MC	M	45	married	11	3	Public servant	Higher certificate
MD	M	58	married	28	3	Public servant	Higher certificate

Source: Researcher's Analysis of Field data, 2021.

Key: F – Female, M - Male - ABCD (normal alphabet)

Of the participants, 41 were married female and 41 married male, providing an equal gender distribution. The participants were between 31 to 76 years of age, and have about 8 to 48 years marriage experiences.

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Follow up interviews Sections.
Participants were interviewed, and data generated with some common codes that emerge in the concurrent data analysis of the interview transcripts and narratives, it became imperative to use a much more directed way of exploration.
Interview schedules (Theme 1, 2, & 3) allowed the researcher to ask pre-planned and additional probing questions as the interview evolved. All interviews were conducted in English and participants were asked to reflect on their marriage experiences. In this study, data analysis proceeded through coding and normal analysis.

Theme 1: Communication and separation in marriages.
There is a popular saying; a problem shared is a problem half solved. Lack of communication does a lot of damages, by creating marital or emotional distance, unsettled tiffs, fights and resentment, instigates couples conflicts, beef-up misunderstandings, prolongs conflicts, widens distance and as such gives room for unsupported feeling of loneliness amongst couples. If couples don't talk to each other during conflict or even express feelings properly during disagreement as a result of anger from the offence committed, it could lead to separation. Communication in marriage is key, every couple should be able to communicate wrongs and disagreements politely for the well-being of their union, lack of communication kills marriage.
Lack of effective communication can lead to separation in several ways according to interviews.

Extracts from key person interview:
Mrs. Miracle Patience Okorie a civil servant that that has been in marriage for 15years revealed in an interview session that negligence or avoiding to talk about unpleasant issues ie, evading, refusal to talk about offences, disagreement etc. leaves that issue unattended to, when misunderstandings are tactically, unintentionally or intentionally avoided or waved-off, it can lead to separation. Because no room for explanation that brings in remorse, forgiveness or apologies. She also stated that inability to give priority to conducive time for sorting difference timing is essential, couple need to identify appropriate time to bring up certain issues. And this requires awareness of spouse's free and convenient period. One could ask to know if it's okay to discuss on a particular topic for a good outcome. When the timing is wrong, it could aggravate and complication matters that could led to separation. Unresolved issues build misunderstanding that can cause separation. **(Female KPI 50/15).**
Engr. Joseph Atams a Civil Engineer also contributed that Tone of voice is very crucial in marriage, the tone of voice can completely change the meaning of the words you speak. Tone is the combination of volume, pitch, quality, rate and speed. Since the emotional meaning of words can be understood by the above component, it expedient to use a loving and soft tone when communicating with partner. Harsh tone instead of resolving issues, adds fuel to the burning flame, and this can worsen situation that can bring about separation. He also reiterated that Distraction or interference during communication, speaking in between or not allowing spouse to air views, opinions, misunderstandings as should, could lead to separation. It is better to talk in small chunks when you the speaker. So don't worry about being interrupted by the listener, speak in short sentences, because it allows listener to comprehend more than rather than overloading spouse with thoughts at once. Lastly, he said that the use of abusive words have the ability to build or destroy, therefore good communication enhances marriage. Foul languages, abusive words can lead to marital separation. Words seasoned with grace, choice of words is imperative. Avoid using critical, hurtful and demeaning comments on spouse especially during tense situations it can trigger separation **(Male KPI 56/22).**
Mr. Abibo Dokibo a public servant of 58 years and being married for 28years responding to the interview, says dearth in good communication skill, in marriage, impatient intolerant, lack of understanding of each other could ruin the peace in marriages. Break-down in communication erodes trust and in marriage, it makes situation tensed, pressure and widen gap and intimacy. There should be a draw board of settlement and discussion in every matrimonial home. He added that, ignoring to resolve marital conflicts within marriage is key to living without

emotional intelligence. Suggesting that, airing, listening and adhering to each other's views on any matter concerning the marriage, being calm in provocative issues, discussing all topics on finance, sex, job, hygiene, handling chores etc. heals and invariable stops separation in marriage **(Male KPI 56/28).**

Also, **(Mrs.) Comfort Aches Tamuno** spoke on the need for couples to calmly deliberate on any issues in marriage. She reiterated the need for married people to freely communicate with each other in other to avert separation in marriages, be it in communicating feelings, needs, and even disagreements and dissatisfaction of any kind. She added that couples should be able to trust each other and air out their grievances at any given time, this will be able to save any unpleasant situations and stop them from separation **(Male FGD, 72).**

Theme 2: Inability to resolve conflict and marital instability.

Conflicts are inevitable part of life, arising from differing values, beliefs and goals. Conflict resolution in marriage involves improving communication through "I" statements, active listening, and avoiding blame to understand and validate each other's feelings and perspectives. It also requires choosing the right time and place to talk, focusing on one issue at a time, and working towards win-win solution by finding a common ground. However, when conflicts are unresolved, they create a lot of emotional toll or health issues which manifest in several ways, which finally results to marital instability. Therefore, inability to resolve conflict leads to marital instability: (**Extracts from FGD).**

According to Mr. Omiete Uwa a contractor, he said inability to resolve conflict could lead to Emotional unrest, unresolved conflict has emotional hold over the spouse, and it can stop one from enjoying life sake of the constant anger, sad, grieving or yearning for intimacy or closure. This can affect one's self esteem and leaves partner with the feeling of disappointment of how the other partner has misbehaved. This ushers emotional unrest and at such, it becomes difficult to make wise decisions that can stabilize the marriage. He also stated that this inability to resolve conflicts also causes perpetual stress which often manifest as chronic anxiety, depression, and feeling of helplessness. It exacerbate feelings of loneliness and isolation, contributing to a decline in overall well-being. This feelings as often compounded by stigma surrounding mental health issues which can discourage spouse's from seeking help. **(Male FGD, 60/20).**

Mrs. Amah Elizabeth Atamunotorudikiari medical personnel contributed that this inability to resolve conflict goes ahead to cause Psychosomatic/mental harm to not just one but both spouses. And the symptoms can be seen in various categories such as emotional, cognitive and physical aspects which are, negative thought pattern, memory problem, chronic fatigue and low energy level, sleep disturbance including insomnia, changes in appetite and weight, unexplained aches and pains etc. these various ways result of unresolved conflicts leads to marital instability. It is only a sane sound person that can stabilize marriage. **(Female FGD, 49/19).**

Still on extracts from FGD using coding.

MC: says inability to resolve conflict causes resentment, fuels mistrust in marriage.

FC: says it affects the ambience of the home, and also affects the mental well- being of the children.

MB: says inability to resolve conflicts triggers stress and tampers with medical health/well-being of couples.

FB: says inability to resolve conflicts leads to assumptions and unexpected demands and expectations

MD: says it causes emotional withdrawal in the relationship, distance and feeling of isolation

FD: says it leads to significant problems thereby causing marital instability.

FA & MA are also in agreement, they concurred that a partner cannot avoid his/her spouse when there is an issue to be addressed on ground, avoiding will not bring peace but addressing it does. (MC, FC, MB, FB, MD, and FD) all gave a good road map to conflict resolution in marriage, which is one of the strongest areas in marriage. They all are in agreement that settling marital issues cannot be over emphasized in marriage, it is the bedrock. Therefore, it is very vital to resolve conflict amicably in marriages properly else, issues will accumulate, and when it does

burst, the result remains unbearably detrimental. Inability to resolve conflicts could lead to marital instability.

Theme 3: Irrational decisions, infidelity and addiction in marriages.

Irrational decision is a choice made without logical reasoning, sound judgement, or fair consideration of facts and evidence, often resulting in outcomes that contradict one's goals or unknown facts. Such decisions are frequently influenced by emotions, cognitive biases, or incomplete information, leading to counterproductive actions that makes things worse rather than better. Irrational decision contributes to infidelity and addiction in marriage by creating a cycle of unmet needs and poor coping mechanisms, often fuelled by lack of emotional connection, low self-esteem, or desire for excitement that compromises values. Irrational thoughts like ".I" deserve more can lead to infidelity as a misplaced attempt to fill voids compulsion to seek pleasure, often driven by a substance, can undermine a person's loyalty and lead to addiction and further dishonest acts. The inability to judge correctly and absence of responsibility coupled with these irrational choices can further establish addition and infidelity, causing a destructive part that passions trust and stability in marriage. Irrationality in marriage fuels unnecessary conflict, heightens emotional reactivity and damages trust over time. (**Extract from the FGD):**

Mrs. Christaina Ikio contributed that Misconception/ misinterpretation among couples tend to breed misunderstanding or misinterpretation to couples either in communication, actions or deeds. This misconception or misinterpretation can lead either partner astray, by talking a wrong decision of finding joy or pleasure outside of matrimony. This misconception paves way to cheating in marriage, (infidelity) or pushes either partner to take solace or consolation in addiction to drugs, alcohols, and substance abuse like corlos, partying, clubbing, or others. **(Female FGD, 47/23).**

Chief Tennyson Dagogo Brown also stated that Lack of adequate or concrete information, that is, information deficits can lead to infidelity or addiction, actions or relevant information should be evaluated, verified and reasoned with the truth, else it can inform wrongly and lead to irrational stand. He also mentioned that information deficit creates Emotional overrides**,** where instincts, intuition or strong emotions overrides logical reasoning, and this can lead to irrational decision giving birth to full-blown infidelity and addiction that ushers in multiple partners in an relationship as well as irresponsible life-style in marriage. **(Male FGD, 66/33).**

Mrs. Felicia Daju an entrepreneur observed that Perceptive preconceptions or biases can lead to infidelity and foster addiction in a spouse. She added that most times the brain may not be equipped to process all available information perfectly and correctly as should, this could lead to shortcuts or error or perversion in judgement, giving rise to infidelity and addiction in marriage. She defined Infidelity as the act of having a romantic or sexual relationship with someone other than one's husband or wife. She says, it is gross disloyalty to a morals or agreements in marriage, it's a breach of trust, that leads to feeling of anger, betrayal and heartbreaks for the wronged partner, it an irrational decision that destabilize marriage. **(Female FGD, 50/18).**

More extracts from FGD with coding;

FC: says that irrational decision is an unverified information about partner, and it leads to extra marital affairs.

MD: says irrational decision causes loss of self -control over drugs or the opposite sex.'

FA: says irrational decision makes partners act impulsively, unable to reason correctly.

MC: says irrational decision leads to misinterpretation of actions and motives, fighting toxicity in marriage.

FD: says irrational decision breeds uncontrolled emotion and inability to control oneself'

MA: says irrational decisions leads to a life of compromise, impaired judgments and others.

Response on irrational decision by (FA, FD, MA, MD, MC, and FC) answered their questions mentioning things irrational decisions could cause in a relationship/ marriage as well.

This is literarily supported by **Mr. Andrew Dagogo** in his (KPI), he listed and corresponded on ways in which irrational decisions could result to infidelity and addictions

such as alcohols and liquors, smoking, partying and clubbing, reckless living of irresponsible lifestyle etc. **(Male FGD, 62/27).**

Also **Mrs. Ase David Iyaye** also added that irrational decisions in marriage has caused so much marital instability, she said mostly the males of Okrika are besieged with temperamental problems like anger, lack of self-control, and intolerance. Because of these attitudes, costly decisions are made on impulse. Leading to separation, outright divorce, or infidelity and addictions. **(Female KPI 45/15).**

Mrs. Joy Aminiowuka Gifted also a (KPI) reiterated that irrational decisions on the part of the men has increased the rate of illegitimate children, polygamy and illicit relationships. This is as a result of personality traits that has its root genetically planted amongst the Okrikans, Speaking further, she said irrational decisions leading to infidelity and addiction could also be traced to how fore-fathers ended up marrying as many wives as possible either to tame the first wife, or a considered stubborn wife **(Female KPI 50/19).**

Discussion of findings

It was discovered from findings that lack of effective communication leads to separation when partners tend to Disregard, give attitude or display negligence or even avoid to talk about unpleasant issues encountered in the marriage. Others are inability to prioritize a conducive time for sorting out differences. Others are, the tone or harshness of voice while trying to communicate during conflicts or misunderstandings, interjecting to Interrupt or interference during communications, and also the use of abusive or derogatory words, could actually lead to separation.

It was also discovered that the inability to resolve conflicts leads to marital instability of the Okrikans, by causing emotional unrest, emotional imbalance tending towards mental disabilities. This inability to resolve conflicts also lead to continuous or perpetual stress on either one or both couples. it builds up resentments and huge misunderstanding leading to feeling of frustration, anger and disappointment which escalates to full-blown conflict. This impacts negatively on daily marital life, making marital bliss impossible to achieve nor concentrate on personal engagements that brings joy both in marriage or other aspects of life.

Finally, from the findings, irrational decision leads to infidelity and addiction in the marriages of the Okrikans and it's as a result of the misconception/misinterpretation of situations between spouses. Other findings that lead to irrational decision are lack of adequate or concrete information, emotional overrides, Perceptive preferences or bias. This pushes partners into infidelity, polygamy, and addictions like drunkenness, alcoholism and drugs, these does not only affect the couples, but also their children and love ones.

Traditional Marriages of the Okrika People in Rivers State.

Marriage is seen as a social and legally binding agreement between a man and a woman for a coitus in other to produce offspring. Marriage could also be conjugal without the desire to raise children even though the couples are fertile according to Miebaka, (2024). Marriage is considered very sacred by the Okrika customs and tradition, basically, the Okrikans have 2 marriage types namely; the Igwa and the Iyaa (Okuru-Kaka).

The Igwa marriage (small bride's wealth system)

The Igwa marriage is the most contracted in those days, it prevailed because of the low expenses, and the most dominant custom among the Okrikans. It is the foremost, meaning mixed marriage, it is a combination of the Igwa and Yaa marriage together. The Igwa marriage is currently losing its potency because of the disadvantages. In Igwa marriage a woman can be bent on marrying as many men as she can, because it is flexible and based on friendship status with social backing, no bride's wealth payment is required, divorce in Igwa marriage is also easier and more frequent according to Opuogulaya, (1977).

The Yaa or Iyaa marriage (big bride's wealth system)

The Yaa marriage involves certain customary function that precede the consummation of the marriage. Here the bride and groom must come from the same tribe. The man is required to produce as part of the marriage requirements items such as Ikpo clothes, Indian Georges, Feni, Popo, Injiri, Raffia palm clothe sewn together (Okuru) tubers of

yams, palm oil, salt, firewood, dried fish, pepper, life goat, assorted drinks etc.

Yaa marriage happens to be the highest "Okuru- Kaka" (*raffia tieing*), its a marriage where the couples in the ancient days go into family ancestral shrines to seek the blessings of their ancestors for fruitfulness and long-lasting marriage. But today, it is optional to tie or hold the raffia in the hands, shrine entering is also outdated with Christianity and modernity. But walking from the woman's family to the man's family bare –footed, with the man holding the woman's is compulsory, while the attire to put on is usually a singlet for the man upon a George wrapper, and the woman wears a small white sleeveless blouse upon a Feni or Indian Wrapper of her choice. Marriage involves two families coming together. This is sealed with performing stage by stage marriage requirements by the Man's family.

The "Yaa" marriage is the most expensive and more superior to the Igwa marriage, it involves the payment of Brides Wealth, ("Tibi Igbigi"), and other marriage requirements, ownership claim on the woman is more on the "Yaa" marriage, it can be done (completely) at any time, by husband, children from the marriage, or even relatives, in life or in death, children can do it on their behalf to claim legitimacy in their paternal family.

Okuru –kaka signifies the final and unbreakable bond of marriage. Once the raffia is tied, the marriage is considered indissoluble. This ceremony is a significant cultural event emphasizing the importance of the marital union commanding respect for the couples within the community.

General Causes of Marital Instability

The list of the causes of marital instability is endless and could be attributed to the followings: Lack of or inadequate courtship before marriage, dissimilarities between spouses in social and economic characteristics such as social class, ethnicity, religion and age, other causes includes: Sterility, adultery, desertion and excessive cruelty, difficulties/hardship etc, these are frequent indicators to fierce frictions and conflicts that in fights, separation, divorce, and even murder according to Danso, (2008), Boakye & Ardayfio, (2005).

Subsequently, other causes of marital instability as highlighted by Nkwocha, Onyia & Aniche, (2002), Kumuyi, (2004), Ezeh, (2000), includes; Childlessness, unsatisfactory sexual relationship, polygamy, rumor and faction, lack of commitment towards marriage, sexual incompatibility and infidelity, lack of communication between spouses, abandonment, alcohol addiction, substance abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse, and the inability to manage or resolve arising conflict. Others are differences in personal and career goals, different expectations and perspectives about household tasks and financial problems, intellectual incompatibility and inflexibility, mental instability or mental illness, religious beliefs, cultural and lifestyle differences according to Nkwocha, Onyia & Aniche, (2002), Kumuyi, (2004), Ezeh, (2000).

Major causes of marital instability among the Okrikans, are peculiar cases such as: polygamy, infidelity, domestic violence, man's-ego (head), sex related issues, finance, recklessness, wife battery, In-laws related issues, childlessness, sterility, male child preference, alcoholism, ill-health, incompatibility, family marriage pattern etc. Olarinmoye, (1998), is in full agreement with the above, it is among the resultant effect of marriage instability in contemporary Nigerian society.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is needed for any marriage to survive, as such it should be encouraged and introduced to couples in any way possible, marriage training by community leaders, women groups and civil societies in other to teach intending couples both at the rural and urban levels. In- house trainings or talk-shows on how to handle one's emotions, fundamentals of marriage should also be taught at the local level. Emphasis should be during or before traditional marriages are conducted. Pre- marital counseling should be organized by churches before joining couples, taking them through all marriage related topics. Purpose - driven courtship for intending couples in other to study and understand partners' temperament and emotions before contraction of marriage should not be neglected. This will give them ample time to get emotionally prepared for marriage.

Recommendations

- The study recommends that effective and assertive communication should be practiced in marriages as an essential tool. Couples should give preference to open, honest communication which is a strong foundation for a healthy and fulfilling relationship.
- Conflict resolution mechanisms which are communication, active listening, mediation, compromise, apology and forgiveness is recommended for maintaining a healthy and stable marriage. Blames and personal attacks should be avoided by couples when resolving conflicts and strengthening their relationships.
- Seeking professional counselling by couples to help address underlying marital issues geared towards recovering relationship is recommended. Also building a supportive network and seeking help from loved ones, support groups can contribute to recovery from addiction and infidelity.

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