Social Welfare Services and Broken Homes, The Role of Social Work Practice in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State

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A B S T R A C T

The study examined social welfare services and broken homes – its causes and effects on the family and society, as well as the role of social work practice in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State. Four (4) research objectives that included: To ascertain the frequency rate of broken homes, to identify and examine the various causes and effects of broken homes and to determine the role of social work practice in Eleme LGA and research questions that guided the study. This is borne out of the fact that the challenge of broken home has remained a recurrent issue in the Nigerian society; it becomes imperative to examine the causes, effects and resolution using Eleme Local Government Area as a study area. The descriptive survey research design and the cluster sampling technique were adopted as method and framework for this study with the aim of educating the readers on the menace of this phenomenon and also to determine the role of social welfare services as regards to broken homes in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State as a case study. One hundred and forty (140) people comprised mostly of females selected from five wards (Ogale, Alesa, Akpajo, Alode, and Aleto) out of the ten wards in Eleme Local Government Area and obtained using a two-stage cluster sampling technique formed the sample size for this study. A self-completion questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using tables, pie and bar charts.

Result of the study shows, among others that, the awareness among respondents of the role of social work practice is low. Furthermore, it revealed that the role of social work practice in Eleme Local Government Area is not commendable or active enough. Based on the results of the findings, the study will also make recommendation on how best the society can assist in checking the continued occurrence of the incident of broken homes.

Introduction

Social welfare can simply be defined as organized public or private social services for the assistance of disadvantaged groups (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Social welfare refers to a wide range of activities and services by volunteers, non-profit organizations and governmental agencies providing help to needy persons unable to care for themselves; activities and resources designed to enhance or promote the well-being of individuals, families and the larger society; and efforts to eliminate or reduce the incidence of social problems (Hasan, J.E., 2017). Social welfare services are required for the improvement of the society's effort to attain the objectives of higher levels of social justices, social security, freedom and better quality of life as the right of each individual. Social welfare services could therefore be defined as the services designed to improve a lot of individual family, groups and local communities to enable them cope effectively with the social problems affecting the constantly and rapidly changing society. The term "social welfare" does not have a precise definition but from definitions, social welfare can be a system or overall effort.

Social welfare history describes the changes in helping activities and services initiated to combat a variety of social ills of complex origins. While poverty and public assistance play large roles in this narrative, they are not the entire story. Social welfare history reflects the lives of people living, being educated, working and voting in the nation. The efforts of individuals, religious groups, non-profit organizations and governments recounted in this history have strengthened the fabric of society and improved the quality of life for many who live within our borders. A broken home is widely considered as a family in which one parent is absent due to divorce or desertion. The rate of broken homes in marriages is becoming alarming as the number of people from broken homes is increasing by the day. The home is meant to be a place filled with joy, happiness with lot of guaranteed security and comfort but it is rather pitiful that the home is neglecting its primary functions thereby causing lots of psychological challenge in the mind of the people. The problems associated with broken homes affect every member of the family, especially the children who get caught up in the crossfires of broken homes as the home is the first and immediate entity of every child. The child as the result acquires initial education and socialization from parents and other significant persons in the family. Family is said to be the first institution where one starts to equip oneself to grow, and having a healthy and happy family is everyone's dream but many do not succeed in achieving this because due to different problems, the healthy families end up being broken as well. When unwanted things are coming up, many families have been broken, and the members are separated. This is a tragic happening that arise out of irreconcilable reasons/differences as well as unfortunate reasons. When we say broken family, it is not a distinct and strange thing, rather it is a common and an experiencing problem in and around us. Family life is in a crisis when some problems arise and which causes separation of the members in the families, which is simply called broken family. However a mere separation due to education, job, etc. is not broken family, there must be some crises which may have arisen out of death, misconception, maltreatment, misunderstanding, unacceptance, etc. Then the ensuing crises lead to the divorce parents, disposal of sons or daughters and desertion of home by any members of that family. It is very controversial whether to claim every splitting up leads to a broken family, while they still run the

family well. There are many families without fathers, mothers and other members but still conditionally and systematically running. They may not like to be called broken. They argue that they are not broken, rather just devoid of some members. Of course, they may not be broken in regard to the overall working and smooth running of the family but it remains broken structurally. Therefore, a "broken home" in this context, is one that is not structurally intact, as a result of divorce, separation, death of one parent and illegitimacy. Structurally, families/homes are either broken or intact.

Agulana (1999) pointed out that the family lays the psychological, moral and spiritual foundation in the overall development of the child. The basic structure of the African Life, as with the human population as a whole, is the family. Even before the arrival of the white man in Africa, the social structures possessed a system of organizing behavior and economy, a cultural system for the preservation of its uniqueness and independence, a system of polity for the realization of the societal political goals, and a system of control and integration. These are characteristics which any viable social system should possess (Parsons T., 1971). Every societal function was, therefore, assumed and performed through that network. Even the function of what is known today as social welfare and social services was exercised by the family network. According to Frazer (2001), psychologically negative home conditions arise mainly from illegitimacy of children, the label of adopted child, broken home, and parent deprivation. Such abnormal conditions of the home are likely to have detrimental effect on the development of the child. Life in a single parent family or broken home can be stressful for both the child and the parent. Such families are faced with challenges of inadequate financial resources.

Schultz (2006) noted that if adolescents from unstable homes are to be compared with those from stable homes, it would be seen that the former have more social, academic and emotional problems. Roehlkepartain (2003) is of the opinion that the family and its structure play a great role in children's lives. To a great extent, there is simple evidence to show the broken homes bring about stress, tension, emotional pain and instability, lack of motivation and frustration, in all members of the family, not least the children. One of the causes of broken home may be linked to unnecessary family interference on the set of children (female or male) a family has, where mostly male children are particularly preferred because emphasis on succession. Where female children dominate in marriage, less attention is given to those children as regards to sending them to school or paying of school fees, and provision of material or school requirement can be a problem. Another factor that can lead to broken home is polygamy where the man marries more than one wife which leads to having many children. The first wife may be neglected due to unhealthy rivalry from other women and lack of love from their spouse, and the atmosphere and ensuing consequences of such homes tend to undermine the children. It is common knowledge that children of unmarried parents/separated families often fail and are at risk emotionally. However, this may not be completely applicable in all cases of broken homes. Some children irrespective of home background or structure may work hard and become successful in life, although at a great cost.

Moreover, Ayodele (2006) stated that the environment a child finds himself/herself goes a long way of determining his learning ability and ultimately his academic performance in school. In broken homes, children hardly related well with their parents, this can affect them emotionally and psychologically. Broken homes or pre-mature separation if allowed to persist for a long time can lead girls to grow up anxious and neurotic, while boys can be bullies and delinquent. This is why social welfare services are needed so as to ease family relations problems and such family problem like broken home. Generally, the home has been identified as an overwhelming factor affecting students' performance academically. It would appear, then, that broken homes may present a very serious danger to the emotional

personality, and mental adjustment of the young adolescent. This impinges on students' academic achievement. Other variable to consider is the personality development of the child.

Broken homes are a problem because ideally, the African family has been the basic structure that performed the functions of a social system even before contact with European and other white cultures. These included not only the organization of behaviour and economy, the preservation of culture, the realization of political goals, the control and integration of the members but also the provision services classified today as social welfare. Along with this, there is a customary law of collaboration and self-help among the members of the family which is dysfunctional in a broken home. The organization and execution of tasks are supervised by the patriarch, who also assumes custody of the material and spiritual goods of the family. He has family counsellors who may assist him in matters of settling problems between members of the family or decisions affecting the welfare of the family. The African life is a type of unlimited co-responsibility. Parents devote a great part of their lives to the care and nurturance of the young ones. They are never in doubt as to their inescapable obligations to feed, clothe, shelter, educate, and protect the lives, rights, and freedom of their offspring. More often than not, they are ready to discharge these obligations at the expense of their own personal comfort or lives. The offspring too are never in doubt as to their natural obligation to care for their parents in their old age or infirmity. The well-being of each member of the family is the concern of all and vice versa, and the wealth of the family is shared among its members with manifest fairness and equity. The needs of the young, the aged, the sick, and the disabled and the relative contributions of the able-bodied constitute important factors in the distribution of the family wealth (Awolowo, 1968). Relatives are also available to help anyone in need. If there is distress, people move in to live with their kinsmen in another area (Rodney, 1974). Thus, the individual at every stage of his life has a series of duties and obligations to others as well as a set of rights. This is to say that kinship implies a combination of security and obligations. The family is the group the African can depend totally on and to which Africans owe allegiance, a group which transcends the individual and gives him/her position in society and in history. It gives the individual importance and status as well as physical necessities or even wealth. What matters is the family ideal and its sanctity. The family has for its function the creation and maintenance of order as well as social justice. It is considered as a religious unit, a sacred reality because every one of its members is a descendant of the same ancestor.

Statement of the Problem

Every society across the globe has its peculiar problems and challenges. Nigeria indeed is not an exception. As a developing country, she faces her own share of social, political, economic and cultural problems, which have in no small way adversely affected the well-being of the populace. One of such problems is the country's problem. The problem of broken homes and its effects both on the particular family and the society have doubtlessly continued to place considerable burden on the individual, the family, the community and the society at large, as they have seriously constituted clogs in the wheels of national development and survival.

In its 2008 report about the state of children and crime, UNICEF noted that increasing numbers of young Nigerians are getting involved in criminality, (UNICEF 2004). The Growing concerns over the increasing juvenile crime rate have sparked extensive research into various factors that may lead young adults to engage in illegal behaviour. Brown (1998) observed that over the past ten years, the numbers of juvenile courts cases have doubled in West Africa. The rise in destructive acts amongst youths seems to be evident in school dropout rates, teenage pregnancies, drug abuse and quite apparently substantial increase in teenage crimes committed. In Nigeria today, the fear of crime permeates every

aspect of human live. This includes violent crimes such as aggravated robberies, rape, drug abuse, hijacking and bank heists, which are mainly committed by juvenile predominantly from broken homes. In fact, a careful analysis of the scenario by expert and scholars reveals that the trend is still on the increase (Niyi 2015).

The severity of the issues of broken homes in the Nigerian society especially in recent times has continued to bug the minds of concerned Nigerians to the extent that successive theologians, social reformers, academicians, moralists and even the various levels and agencies of government have not relented in their concerted effort to variously find a lasting solution to the menace, but in spite of this, the problem has persisted. It is against this backdrop that this study intends to investigate the role of social welfare services on broken homes, using Eleme Local Government area of Rivers state as a case study.

Objective of the Study

1. To ascertain the frequency rate of broken homes in Eleme Local Government Area.

2. To identify the various causes of broken homes in Eleme Local Government Area.

3. To examine the various effects of broken homes in Eleme Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to guide this study;

i.   To what extent are broken homes prevalent in Eleme Local Government Area?

ii. What are the common causes of broken homes in Eleme Local Government Area?

iii. What are the common effects of broken homes in Eleme Local Government Area?

Review of Literature

Effects of Broken Homes on the Family and the Society

Polanen (1990) maintains that a broken home has a number of effects on the particular family involved. Some of these are immediate while the others only begin to manifest after a period of time.

Effects of Broken Homes on the Family

Colcord (1919) states that chief among the effects of broken homes on the family are the effects on the children of such homes. She maintains that there is a mountain of scientific evidence showing that when families disintegrate, children often end up with intellectual, physical and emotional scars that persist for life. All these ills trace back predominantly to the broken family. This position lends credence to the age-old adage that when two elephants fight, the grass beneath suffer. Saheed (1988) supports this view, stating that children from broken homes end up with a condition that is called *Attachment Disorder*. As the phrase suggests, it is the lack of attachment that brings about a package of ill behaviours. A neglected and abused child of a broken home ends up with it, since no one cares for him or her. He lives in emotional pain all the time, thus hurting people comes naturally. The child may even with a reasonable allowance still indulge in stealing, drugs and other delinquent acts. He maintains that young-offender laws cannot undo the feeling of insecurity and low self-esteem that these children grow up with.

McLanahan (1989) opines that the most significant consequences of a broken home is that it increases the propensity of children from such homes to experience marital instability in future. Men and women from divorced families are more likely to experience separation and divorce (Kobrine & Waite, 1984). When a marriage breaks up, the parents are less able to invest as much time in their children as necessarily required. As a result, their children's human capital will not be as developed as supposed and they will experience inferior adult outcomes. At times, the children are drawn into the conflict between their parents, and as a result, may not learn the skills needed for the appropriate resolution of differences and building of viable relationships.

Margaret (1918) suggests that the stability of a home is important for its income. A broken home poses harmful effects on the income of the family. For a mother with children, divorce increases her financial responsibilities and typically, correspondingly force upwards her hours of work outside the home. This additional work hour also disrupt her network of support for parenting her children. The breakup of the home ushers in a dramatic decline in the standard of living of its members. The worst hit is those belonging to the lower socio-economic groups since they experience greater hardships in event of a broken home. Morgan et al (1987) supports this view, and maintains that after a home is broken, their assets and most times, the matrimonial home inclusive may be sold and the proceeds used to start off again. In conclusion, he states that evidence indicates that the income of broken households with children drops significantly, thereby lessening the likelihood of asset formation. The breakup of the home reduces its rating or ranking in the society. its social status most times is reduced to zero level. Members of such families are looked down on in the society, scorned and disdained. Most times, they are deprived of certain societal benefits and privileges available to other stable homes. This typically applies in the Nigerian context where it is unthinkable that a divorced woman without re-marrying can stand for an elective position. Also, the consequence of broken family to the parent is caused by death and other reasons apart from divorce. When they lose their children, they develop grieve and anxiety. Their mental suffering adversely affects their health. There are some parents who lost their health and eventually died. There, the breaking of the family is great lost for each and every members of the family.

Effects of Broken Homes on Society

Polanen (1990) argues that the ever-increasing rate of broken homes endangers the society since it increases the number of juvenile delinquents and other social deviants. The groups represented here take to all sorts of crime and other social vices that undermine the effective and efficient functioning and continued existence of the society. Saheed (1988) suggests that the nation's economic difficulties are rooted not in technical economic forces (like exchange rate or capital formation); but in fundamental moral causes. He argues that there exists a deeply intuitive reasoning that the success of a market-based economy greatly depends on a highly developed sense of social morality – trustworthiness, honesty, concern for future generations, an ethic of service to others, a human society that takes care of those in need, frugality instead of greed, high standards of quality and concern for community amongst others. These economically desirable social values, in turn are seen as rooted in family values. Thus, the link in public reasoning between a healthy family and a robust economy, though indirect, is clear and firm. He states that when the rate of broken homes is on the increase, these desirable social values are taken away from the society and this contingency in turn affects the economic condition of the society adversely.

Having outlined the general effects of broken homes on the family and society, the study therefore outlines the following three consequences on children:

Broken Home and Child Abuse:

Child abuse refers to the harm that is done to the children. Any action which impedes the child's development should be considered as abuse. According to Royal Canadian Police (2006) child abuse is any form of physical, psychological, social, emotional, or sexual maltreatment of a child where by the survival, safety, self-esteem, growth and development of the child are endangered. It goes further to say that there are four main types of child abuse; they are neglect, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Child abuse includes any behaviour which neglects the child survival and development needs, causes physical or emotional injure, harassment and subject the child to measures, situation and experiences which interfere with the healthy development towards Adulthood. According to UNICEF child abuse and neglect are far more common in single-parents families than in families where both parents are present.

The growing empirical evidence on child abuse reveals new alarming and distinct patterns of familiar relationship that contribute greatly to this tragedy. In addition to poverty and community environment, the rising incidence of child abuse can be linked to one more factor: whether an abuse child's parents are married. Children react in different ways to the onset of divorce. Some will be extremely sad and show sign of depression and even sleeplessness as anxiety level peaks because they feel they are going to be abandoned or rejected by one or even both parents. Some divorce situations make the child feel lonely. This may be due to a long absence of one parent. No matter what the situation the child will be affected in some ways by divorce. Some children may become psychologically scared from the experience. Child support payment and experience place a monetary strain on one or both parent which directly affects the children negative. They can lead to physical abuse which involves injuring the child by physically abusing them.

Social Welfare Services

Social welfare policy is simply laws enacted by the government with the aim of improving the livelihood of the people particularly, the disadvantaged members of the society. Nevertheless, social welfare do varies depending on individual society. The history of social welfare is an interdisciplinary study of the evolution of charitable works, organized activities related to social reform movements and non-profit or public social services designed to protect or benefit individuals, families and citizens of the larger society. Charitable efforts have often grown out of religious beliefs – beliefs that inspired reformers to deep compassion, firm ethical convictions, and a strong sense of justice. The reformers' faith backgrounds were the foundations of movements such as abolition, temperance and the establishment of settlement houses. And from the nation's earliest days, religious groups and individuals have provided significant labor and financial support for social reform and humanitarian aid.

Social welfare is actually one of the government's policies, aimed at providing assistance to members of the society particularly the needy and the less privileged families in the society. This includes essential services, such as provision of financial assistance to the aged members of the society, who could not work and the unemployed youths in an organized society who could not gain or secure themselves employment. Social services like, provision of health care for the sick in the society and provision of education to those members of the society, who could not afford themselves education are also inclusive.

For the purpose of this study, the activities of social welfare services as related to broken homes will be critically looked into.

Theoretical Framework

Structural-Functional Theory

According to Wikipedia, functionalism, also called structural-functionalism theory, is "a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability". Fundamentalism addresses society as a whole terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, custom, traditions, and institutions. Structural functionalism also took on Malinowski's argument that the basic building block of society is the nuclear family, and the clan is an outgrowth not vice versa (Perey, Arnoid 2005). Functionalism sees society as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet the biological and social needs of the individuals in the society. functionalism grew out of the writings of English philosopher and biologist, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), who saw similarities between society and the human body; he argued that just as the various parts of society work together to keep society functioning (Urry, John 2000). The parts of society that Spencer referred to were the social institutions, or patterns of beliefs and behaviors focused on meeting social needs, such as government, education, family, healthcare, religion, and the economy.

Research Design

Descriptive Survey design was adopted for this study. The design entails the collection and use of data systematically from a given population to describe certain characteristics features of the population. The design is considered appropriate for this study being that the work is intended to collect data from small group with view to describing the entire population. The findings from this sample were generalized to the entire population. The study is a survey research investigating the residents of the Ogale, Alesa, Akpajo, Alode, and Aleto wards of the Eleme Local Government Area, through selecting sample respondents to investigate the role of social welfare services on broken homes. This envisaged cross sectional survey strategy helped to generalized for the population, and allow inferences to be made about the whole population at one point in time.

Population of Study

The target population for this study consists of all adults, male and female and victims of broken homes resident in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State spread across Eleme Local Government Area. According to Wikipedia, it has a landmass of 138 sq. km with a population of 190,884 people (2006 Census). The sample for this study comprised 140 respondents selected from five wards (Ogale, Alesa, Akpajo, Aleto, Alode) out of the ten wards (Alesa, Agbonchia, Aleto, Ekporo, Ogale, Onne, Akpajo, Ebubu, Alode, Eteo) that make up Eleme Local Government of Rivers State. The breakdown of the selected sample include: 50 men (ten men each respectively from the five selected wards), 65 women (thirteen women each respectively from the five selected wards), and 25 youths (five youths each respectively from the five selected wards). The main sources of Data for this study are the primary and secondary sources. A questionnaire was designed and used for the study and supplemented with oral interviews. Also data were sourced from the secondary source that is through books and journals.

To ensure the successful conduct of the study, the selected samples were given the development questionnaire to fill in the answers. They were given time to study and fill the questionnaires. To those who are not educated enough to read and write, they were assisted by an interpreter. In all about two weeks used in the administration and collation of the data from the questionnaire.

Method of Analysis

After collecting the data via questionnaire, the responses were collated and analysed. First the responses were counted and presented with tables, pie and bar charts. The frequency of each response was converted to simple percentage and used to analyse the distribution of the responses. Pie and bar charts are generally useful when showing percentage or proportional data.

Presentation of Data

This chapter presents the research data and discusses the findings on the role of social welfare on broken homes in Eleme Local Government Area. This section displays in tabular forms all the variables analyzed in the course of the study. Questionnaires were presented to various respondents and their responses are hereunder presented, beginning with a demographic data of the respondents. The relevant data and the discussion are presented.

Table	Number of cases	Percentage
Copies of Questionnaire Administered	170	100
Copies of Questionnaire Retrieved/Returned	150	88
Copies of Questionnaire not Returned	20	12
Unusable Copies of Questionnaire	10	6
Completed and Usable Copies of Questionnaire	140	82

Table showing how questionnaire was administered

From table, it is observed that 170 copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents and 150 copies of questionnaire representing 88 percent were returned. However, 20 copies of questionnaire representing 12 percent were not returned and 10 copies of questionnaire representing 6 percent were not properly filled, thus unsuitable for data analysis. Finally, 140 copies of questionnaire representing 82 percent of were correctly filled and thus suitable for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Respondent profile	Frequency	Percentage%
	Males	67	48
Gender	Females	73	52
	Total	140	100
	21-30	25	18
Age range	31-40	54	38
	41 Above	61	44
	Total	140	100

		140	100
	Christian	132	94
Religion	Muslim	5	4
	Others	3	2
	Total	140	100
Level of	Primary	10	7
Education	Secondary	67	48
	Tertiary	63	45
	Total	140	100

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Table summarizes the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents participants

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One:

To what extent are broken homes prevalent in Eleme LGA, Rivers State?

Table 2.

Prevalent Level of Broken Homes in Eleme	SA	A	SD	D
1. The rate of failed marriages and divorce in Eleme is high	47	73	0	20
2. Most homes in Eleme are bereaved of some members due to death	60	63	4	13
3. Most homes in Eleme consist of separated parents	55	21	55	9
4. Most homes in Eleme are facing the desertion of any parents or family members	67	20	30	42
5. Most homes in Eleme consist of divorced parents	31	20	73	16
MEAN	52	39.4	32.4	20.2

Source: Fieldwork 2019

The research data in Table showed that 47 respondents (34%) strongly agreed that the rate of failed marriages in Eleme is high, while 73 respondents (52%) agreed, and 20 respondents (14%) disagreed. Also, 60 respondents (43%) strongly agreed that most homes on Eleme are bereaved of some members due to death, while 63 respondents (45%) agreed, 4 respondents (3%) strongly disagreed, and 13 respondents (9%) disagreed. Similarly, 9 respondents (7%) strongly agreed that most homes in Eleme consist of separated parents, while 21 respondents (15%) agreed, 55 respondents (39%) strongly disagreed, and 55 respondents (39%) disagreed. Additionally, 67 respondents (42%) strongly agreed that most homes in Eleme are facing desertion of any parents or family members, while 20 respondents (12%) agreed, 30 respondents (19%) strongly agreed, and 43 respondents (27%) disagreed. Lastly, 31 respondents (22%) strongly agreed that most homes in Eleme consist of divorced parents, while 20 respondents (14%) agreed, 73 respondents (52%) strongly disagreed, and 16 respondents (12%) disagreed. In conclusion, the mean of respondents that strongly agreed was 52, the mean of

respondents that agreed was 39.4, the mean of respondents that strongly disagreed was 32.4, the mean of respondents that disagreed was 20.2.

Research Question Two

What are the Common Causes of Broken Homes in Eleme LGA, Rivers State?

Table 3.

Common Causes of Broken Homes In Eleme	SA	A	SD	D
1. Poverty and money challenges contribute to the spate of broken homes in Eleme	100	40	0	0
2. Divorce or separation of parents, or desertion of family is a leading cause of broken homes in Eleme	67	73	0	0
3. Difference in background and wrong basis for marriage contributes to broken homes in Eleme	73	20	31	16
4. Death or either or both parent(s) is a major cause of broken homes in Eleme	31	20	73	16
5. Interference of extended family members is a cause of broken homes in Eleme	72	68	0	0
6. Sexual incompatibility is one of the causes of broken homes in Eleme	51	69	5	15
7. Ill health and infertility can contribute to the spate of broken homes in Eleme	66	69	0	5

Source: Fieldwork 2019

In table, 100 respondents (71%) strongly agreed that poverty and money challenges contribute to the spate of broken homes in Eleme while 40 respondents (29%) agreed. Similarly, 67 respondents (48%) strongly agreed that divorce or separation of parents, or desertion of family is a leading cause off broken homes in Eleme while 73 respondents (52%) agreed. Also, 31 respondents (22%) strongly agreed that death of either or both parent(s) is a major cause of broken homes in Eleme, while 20 respondents (14%) agreed, 73 respondents (52%) strongly disagreed and 16 respondents (12%) disagreed. Likewise, 73 respondents (52%) strongly agreed that difference in background and wrong basis for marriage contributes to broken homes in Eleme, while 20 respondents (14%) agreed, 31 respondents (22%) strongly disagreed and 16 respondents (12%) disagreed.

Research Question Three

What are the Common Effects of Broken Homes in Eleme LGA, Rivers State?

Table 4.

Common Effects of Broken Homes In Eleme LGA	SA	A	SD	D
1. Victims of broken homes are likely to suffer marital instability in the future	80	50	0	20
2. Broken homes can be a threat on the overall income of the family	49	49	7	35
3. The breakup of the home may lead to a dramatic decline in the standard of living of its members	68	54	9	9

4. The breakup of the home reduces its rating or ranking in the society	54	60	5	21
5. Members of such families are looked down on in the society, scorned and disdained	67	73	0	0
6. Most times, they are deprived of certain societal benefits and privileges available to other stable homes	15	40	44	41
7. Victims of broken homes experience great mental suffering, which may adversely affect their health	68	38	10	24
8. Most delinquents and members of secret cults or criminal groups in Eleme are from broken homes	50	40	20	30
9. Victims of broken homes perform poorly academically	15	40	44	41
10. The victims of broken homes tend to be emotionally unstable	35	60	25	20
11. Most abused children are victims of broken homes	50	40	20	30
12. Street peddlers, rascals and thugs in Eleme are victims of broken homes	70	57	0	13
13. Most young people in Eleme that indulge in alcohol and illicit drugs use are from broken homes	59	68	3	10
14. Most members of broken homes are victims of social stigmatization	31	24	23	62

Source: Fieldwork 2019

In table, displays response on the various effects of broken homes as given by respondents in Eleme. It can be seen that 80 respondents (57%) strongly agreed that victims of broken homes are likely to suffer marital instability in the future, while 50 respondents (36%) agreed, and 10 respondents (14%) disagreed. Similarly, 67 respondents (48%) strongly agreed that members of such families are looked down on in the society, scorned and disdained, while 73 respondents (52%) agreed. Also, 50 respondents (36%) strongly agreed that most abused children are victims of broken homes and most delinquents and members secret cults or criminal groups in Eleme are from broken homes, 40 respondents (29%) agreed, 20 respondents (14%) strongly disagreed, and 30 respondents (21%) disagreed. Likewise, 68 respondents (49%) strongly agreed that the victims of broken homes tend to be emotionally unstable, 38 respondents (27%) agreed, 10 respondents (7%) strongly disagreed, and 24 respondents (17%).

Discussion of Findings

The main objective of this study was to investigate the roles of social welfare on broken homes in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State. The data to provide answers for the main and specific objectives of this study were gathered through questionnaires. The study involved five wards (Ogale, Alesa, Akpajo, Alode, and Aleto wards) out of the ten wards (Alesa, Agbonchia, Aleto, Ekporo, Ogale, Onne, Akpajo, Ebubu, Alode, Eteo) of the Eleme Local Government Area. The respondents involved in the study showed good cooperation and responded amiably to study guiding questions. The research study questionnaires provided to them were returned timely to the researcher. The written research

data relate to the views and suggestions of the respondents with regards to guiding questions provided to them.

Generally, the findings of this research study have shed some light as to the roles assumed by the social welfare in Eleme in regards to alleviating the occurrence of broken homes and its effects on the victims. The study points out that the majority of the respondents fell that the social welfare in Eleme has been below par and needs to improve if it is to stem the increasing trend that is broken home. From the study findings, social welfare services in the form of making provision for assistance to victims of broken homes in Eleme have not been good enough and broken homes victims in Eleme are not sufficiently helped to acquire skills that would help them lead a normal life.Also, other major challenges identified in the study involved the lack of awareness about the dangers of broken homes and knowledge of the cases which may require social wok interventions. The study revealed that majority of the respondents were not aware of the role of social welfare as regards to helping mitigate the cancerous growth of broken homes. Consequently, this has led to the underutilization of social welfare services.

Conclusion

The family is undoubtedly the basic unit of the society. It is the fulcrum on which the society revolves. The extents of well-being of the individual families constitute the society form the yardstick with which the success or failure of the society is measured. It is therefore not rhetoric to state that once the family system collapses, the society concerned is doomed to fail. The Nigerian situation lends credence to the above position. The average Nigerian family wallows in abject poverty, no wonder Nigeria has been infamously tagged the poverty capital of the world. The issue of the high and ever increasing rate of broken home is not an exception to the above position. When the average family that constitutes the society is intact, and continually and continuously functions as an integrated unit, the society in turn is integrated, orderly and peaceful. The individual members of the society thus have the opportunity of bringing the various values gotten from their homes to bear towards the development of every sector of the society.

However, where the rate of break-up of homes is on the increase, the reverse is the case. The family members are intellectually, morally, emotionally, psychologically, economically, physically and socially deprived. In the society, they can neither function nor deliver their quota towards the development of the society since they lack the values necessary for same, and which only a stable home can offer. No wonder corruption and embezzlement of public funds is on the increase, while unemployment and inflation have defied all known control measures.

Recommendations

The possible solutions to the problems of broken home in the society may be classified into preventive and corrective measures of control. The preventive measures refers to those undertaken to inhibit the possible collapse of the family structure while the corrective measures, conversely refers to those undertaken as a panacea to help ameliorate the condition of an already broken home. The following recommendations are made that:

1. Since poverty appears to be one of the primary causes of broken homes, the government at all levels should step up efforts to improve the economy, as a matter of urgency. This can be done by stemming the tide of unemployment, improving the remuneration of workers, improving infrastructure, creating job opportunities, and empowering the masses in various conceivable ways.

This would go a long way to raise the socio-economic condition of most families thus reducing the poverty rate in the country.

2. As it already been pointed out, illiteracy is also a major factor causing marital instability and the break-up of homes. Policies and projects aimed at eradication of illiteracy should be initiated and embarked on by the government. The government at all levels should not only provide free basic education but also take practical steps to ensure that the education they give is truly and completely free, qualitative, and necessarily compulsory. Legislating and effecting punitive measures on education stakeholders that default will enhance success in this direction.

3. Also public enlightenment through the media and other agencies on marriage principles remain a sure way of preventing the breakup of the home. Marriages are falling apart and other marriages never begin as adults may choose to cohabit as sexual partners and sometimes have children, instead of get married. Where applicable, religious organizations must teach sound marriage principles so that marriages will last. Such education becomes necessary to put marriages back on firm foundation.

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