



## Psychosocial Well Being Of Children Whose Parents Having Extramarital Relationship

### KEYWORDS

Psychosocial, Wellbeing, Extramarital Relationship.

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### ABSTRACT

Family is the important institution that has survived through ages. In the present scenario Extramarital relationship is a devastating condition affecting families. "Extramarital Relationship" is a relationship between a married person and someone other than his or her spouse. Their children are the ultimate victims in this relationship. They feel betrayed and rejected in family and in society, experiencing confusion over why their family institution is damaged. It worsens when this relationship ultimately leads to separation of their parents. Children are lead to psychosocial instability such as lack of self – esteem and trust, self blame, shame, confusion, anger and other physical and economical problems. They undergo negative emotions such as fear, anger, guilty, depression, zealous, self-pity, anxiety, shame and regret etc. To cope up with these negative emotions, they use coping mechanism such as regression, disassociation, repression and sublimation. Hence regarding the scenario, the researcher wanted to study the psychosocial well being of the children whose parents have extramarital relationship. This descriptive study aims to analyze their socio-economical, psychological conditions and the adapted coping mechanism, highlighting pastoral care. It is based on the primary data of 50 respondents collected by Snowball Technique in which they were administered with self prepared questionnaire. The major findings and suggestions of the research will be discussed in the main paper.

### INTRODUCTION:

Marital relationship is a lifelong commitment between a husband and a wife. Human being complex in nature, have different reasons for behaving any way they desire. According to Mukerji (2010), 40% found to be involved in extramarital affairs, 28% were men and 12% women. Reasons being 40% were craving for a change, 35% for sexual incompatibility with spouse and 15% because of stress. Some were pressured because they married someone they didn't love and therefore seek love elsewhere. For some it was a pass time when alone or away from their spouse. The infidelity between spouses in marriage results in Extramarital relationship. 'Extramarital Relation', according to the Webster's dictionary is sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than his or her spouse. Statistically this study reveals that eighty percent is father and twenty percent is mother who had extramarital relationship. Children are ultimately affected psychologically, socially, educationally and financially. The complex emotional factors like betrayal, rejection and confusion keep taunting these children, as why their parents have damaged the family bond by having the relationship. The emotional, financial, educational and social needs of the children are openly ignored, there by resulting in various socio-economic- religious-psychological strains. They are prone to become delinquent also. Many, girls in particular, are sexually insecure. Therefore children are the ultimate innocent victims of these parents. God given gift, the Children who are the inheritance of the world should be hale and hearty, need to be loved, cared and kept secure. Infidelity of the parent, shatter all areas of life of their children.

In recent years the subject of infidelity has received much attention. Former President Clinton found himself in the media for his own ventures in this area. Infidelity has become not only more public, but more frequent in its occurrence. According to Dr Rajan Bhonsle (2010), professor and head of the department of sexual medicine, KEM hospital, compared with the previous generation, extramarital cases has almost doubled in the last decade with factors being an unhappy relationship. Cases of women having extramarital affairs have doubled in the last decade. A 1991 survey of five Nigerian towns are used to examine currently married men's and women's perceptions of AIDS which, together with other socioeconomic factors, are then related to extramarital sexual behavior. An overwhelming

majority of the respondents have accurate information about AIDS. In particular, most associate HIV/AIDS transmission with multiple sexual partners. About 54 per cent of men and 39 per cent of women have had extramarital relations.

### METHOD OF STUDY:

This Descriptive Study is an attempt to find out the psychosocial well being of children whose parents have extramarital relationship. The data were collected from the children in Seevalasamuthram, Tirunelveli district, Tamilnadu. The researcher selected 50 respondents where the age limit should be above 17yrs and should be a Christian. The tool of data collection is Structured Interview schedule, prepared by the researcher based on the objective such as to study the social wellbeing of the children in their environment, to know about their various coping mechanism they have adopted to manage with their life situation, and to study the pastoral care for their socio-economic and psychological management of the research. The sampling technique used was snowball technique.

### RESULT:

The data provided by the participant are discussed below.

### COMMUNITY'S PERSPECTIVE ON EXTRAMARITAL RELATIONNSHIP.

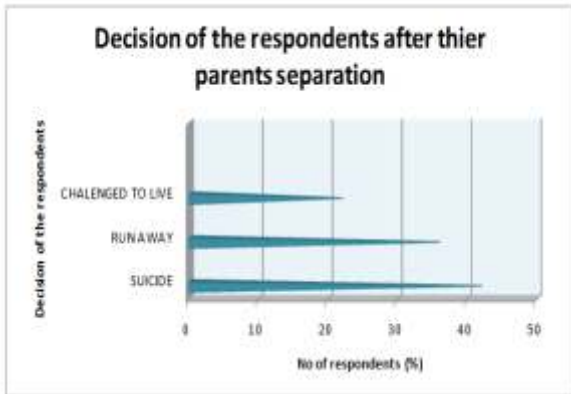
The research portrayed that parents have had extramarital relation when their children are between 5-12 years causing no barrier or opposition from the children's side since they are unaware of the marriage relation or accept or fully trust their parents.

This study reveals that, when the extramarital relationship is within their family or own caste, it is taken for granted in the society and ignorantly by children. Outcome such as argument, fighting and violence was also lower.

Children being insecure and innocent keep pondering over reasons for this critical situation and tend to blame the relatives and community rather their parent who is the apparent cause.

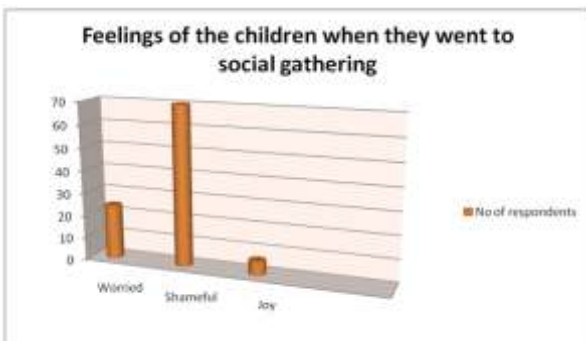
### PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING OF THE CHILDREN:

The research described that in the adolescent stage, they had under gone terrible psychological stress and strain.



The study revealed that the decision rate of suicide is higher when compared to the other decision such as run away and challenging to live.

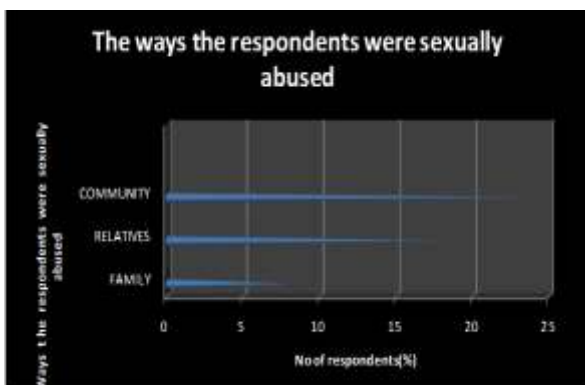
The study revealed that financial problem was the foremost crisis faced, forcing to quit all facilities, enjoyment and even education. Many were forced to work or become bread winner leading to various emotions such as depression, anger, jealous and hatred.



The study revealed that seventy percent had a shameful feeling during family function and social gathering therefore tend to be isolated.

**SOCIAL WELLBEING OF THE CHILDREN:**

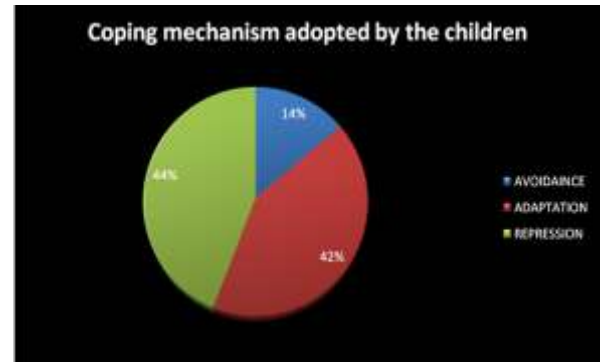
The study of the educational status of these children reveal as follows: 1-3std is thirty four percent, 4-6 std is sixteen percent, 6-9 std is twenty six percent and 10-12 std is twenty four percent. This affected their social status and self esteem.



The research showed that these children were not secure rather thrown into harm's way other than the parent. Twenty four of the respondents have been sexually abused by the community, eighteen percent by the relatives and eight percent by the family.

The research showed that they become delinquent and addicted. The parental responsibility is mostly completely neglected resulting in children imbibing the surrounding environment because they are usually isolated from society. The research also reveals that children though choked-up by all basic freedom and facilities, are well talented and equipped when given opportunity and space to reveal their competence.

**COPING MECHANISM ADOPTED BY THE CHILDREN:**



The study revealed that the coping mechanism of forty four percent had adaptation, forty two had avoidance and the remaining fourteen percent had depression.

The research had revealed that spirituality played a major coping mechanism. For eighty two percent, spirituality has helped them. Among these, thirty four percent are going to religious centre, thirty two percent read Bible and sixteen percent by involving in religious activity.

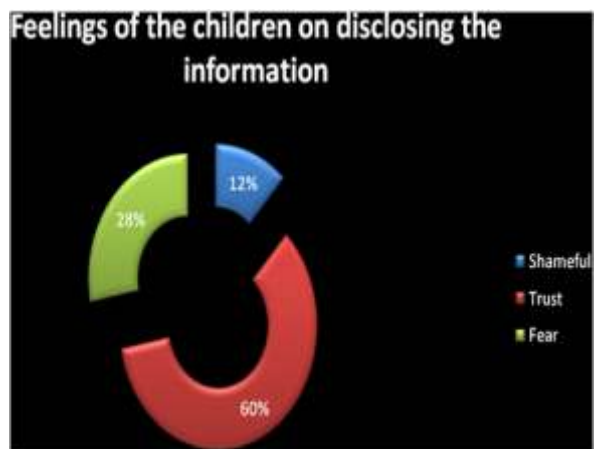
The study regarding the children's observation of their parent's extramarital attitude is, thirty six percent acknowledge that it is the right of an individual, fourteen percent accept that it is because of the rejection of their spouse, and six percent that it depends upon the parent's financial ability.

he research regarding the ethical principles of covenantal marriage against extramarital relation, reveal that thirty six percent have responded that extramarital relationship is against God, and the rest responded that it was for their parent's own physical pleasure.

The study on the apprehension along with similar victims indicated that seventy two percent have helped other children and twenty eight percent have not helped other children same as their situation.

**PASTORAL CARE TO THE RESPONDENTS:**

The study regarding the disclosure of their parent's extramarital affair indicated that forty six percent have disclosed to their friends, forty two percent to presbyter and the rest twelve percent to their relatives. Disclosure of information to their friends in greater degree proves the adolescent's psychology.



- The research on the emotional felling during the disclosure of the parent's extramarital relation revealed that sixty percent had feeling of trust and twenty eight percent had fear and shameful feeling.
- The research revealed that the degree of pastoral care varied according to various pastors. When the pastoral concern towards the respondents was keen, the disclosure or ventilation of feeling increased. The apprehension among the respondents also increased whereby the felt secure.

#### DISCUSSION:

**Family counseling center:** The watch and learn tendency of these children tend to conceive the parental modeling in marriage and other relationships. Therefore premarital counseling on basic foundation of covenant marriage should be insisted in order to avert infidelity. Young couple counseling in relationship management and parental responsibilities should be done periodically. Family counseling along with children would enhance parent-child indulgent. .

**School social worker:** School social worker should be appointed to arbitrate between the respondents and their surroundings. Group work would enhance helping each other in similar environment.

**Presbyter care:** Presbyter and their wife should be given training about counseling, pre marital counseling, family counseling, individual counseling and parenting counseling so as to help these children and their families.

**Counseling center:** The prevailing counseling department in our Tirunelveli diocese should set confidential open door for probing and guiding these vulnerable children and their families and provide supportive group for these children.

**Training projects:** Training centers and projects should be provided to protect these innocent children from exploitation and manipulation, since most of them are forced to labour for the livelihood of their family.

**Research studies:** As infidelity is alarmingly increasing in the so called educated, hi-tech modern society as well as the rural community, research studies on the psychosocial behavior of parents who have the extramarital relationship would enrich faithful and loyal family bonds. Further research on psychosocial behavior of the children who are the products of the extramarital relationship or relationships can be made. Research study on the psychosocial behavior of the spouses can also be made.

#### CONCLUSION:

Extramarital relation within family and caste is usually not barred in the society. Since the initiation of relation is mostly, when the children are below 12yrs, the children are ignorant and vulnerable facilitating the parents to ignore parental responsibility. Arguments, violence, conflicts and disputes become a

constant display in family, between parents, relatives or sometimes even with others because of the extramarital relationship. Children being innocent are exposed, manipulated and exploited. Infidelity in family relationship, result in the negligence of parenting responsibility. The eldest child is usually forced to take up the parental responsibility of the siblings, sometimes to endorse the psychological strains of the parent too. Anger, grudge and hatred on persons concerned for the present disastrous situation continues always. Forced to sacrifice their rights, education, development, participation, security, dignity and even both parents, they tend and toil hard to thrive in society. Earning from childhood, make them self-competent which tends to delinquency and addictions. Losing their self esteem because of their parents, they are isolated and are left wide open in the society becoming delinquent and addicts. Girls usually are sexually abused by family, relatives and society.

Their attitude towards life and relationship is affected drastically since the parental modelling is worse. Studies regarding the perception on family relation by the children whose parents have extramarital relation, conclude elaborately, that they usually follow 'watch and learn' their parents relationship. Wolfinger (2000) reports, people experiencing multiple parental relationship transitions were likely to reproduce these behaviours as adults by dissolving one or more marriages and support the replication of negative relationship patterns in families. The conjugal relations become transitory and less committed. The impact of parental infidelity on children becomes, watch and learn relationships of negativity and conflict forming attitudes and orientations toward love and relationships based on what they saw as they grew up. Duran-Aydenug (cited in Booth & Amato, 2001) reports, that high levels of stress related to parental separation in marital conflicts and low levels of trust in intimate relationships because of parental modelling of relationships. Children will do the same in their own adult relationships if the relationship is filled with conflict and lack of communication or trust, those attitudes and beliefs may be brought into future relationships with the knowledge that "my parents were this way so that is the way relationships work".

For a hale and hearty childhood, we need to build them constructively. Positive attitudes such as trust, honesty, faithfulness, responsible, loyalty, trustworthy, and sincerity must be imparted. Premarital counselling, group therapy, training projects and pastoral care are suggested. We are to arbitrate and provide a secure environment with confidence.

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