

**A STUDY OF MARITAL  
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT  
AMONG COUPLES IN  
AINAMOI DIVISION OF  
KERICHO COUNTY**

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# Introduction

- In a world of finite human beings, conflict is inevitably. Without conflict there is no major personal change or social progress. On the other hand, unmanaged conflict can destroy what men intended to save by it.

# Intro/cont.

- Conflict management therefore becomes crucially important. Conflict Management involves accepting or even encouraging such conflict as is necessary, but at the same time, doing everything possible to keep it to the minimum amount essential to change. This is done by confining conflict to the least destructive forms and to resolve it as rapidly and constructively as possible, (Bolton, 1979: 203).

# **Intro/cont.**

- Marital conflict is a part of everyday life and how couples handle conflict in their relationship affects the strength and type of relationship a couple may have. Conflict may have the power to destroy or to build a marriage. This makes it essential for married couples to know how to manage conflict effectively.

# Problem Statement

- Conflict exists everywhere. Conflicts exist in people's jobs, families, schools and even in the church. This can neither be avoided nor ignored. Conflict that is not managed correctly diminishes happiness and has the potential to destroy people, it leaves them broken (Mkolesia, 2004: 2).

# Problem Statement cont.

- Marital conflicts exist in many marriages; many couples do not have the ability to manage conflict in such a way that will strengthen their marriage. It is important to find ways to equip couples with conflict management skills to curb the effects of many escalated conflicts like fighting among couples, abuse of one another, separation and divorce as a result of conflict, and murder which is the end result of escalated conflict. There is a need to teach couples principles and skills of marital conflict management that will help to build better marriages and better families' and a better society.

# Purpose Statement

- The purpose of this study is to begin to understand the principles and skills of managing conflict based on the Bible that married couples in Ainamoi Division in Kericho county need in order to sustain and maintain their marriages.

# Presuppositions

- The Bible is God's Holy Word and provides solutions to all problems facing mankind.
- Man was created in God's image and should use all he has including his/her ability to manage marital conflict to bring glory to God.
- Existence of conflict in any relationship is inevitable but inability to manage may result in sin against others and God.
- Christians have biblical standards to uphold and should not conform to the patterns of this world. Christians are the salt of the earth.



# Presuppositions cont.

- Effective biblical counselling helps couples who have experienced marital conflicts cope with emotional and psychological challenges that come with it.
- This research was conducted with the hope that the counselling profession will use it to help victims of marital conflicts.
- It is also presupposed that the final thesis will be useful to churches, various institutions, seminaries and even social gatherings that are concerned with improving society's ability to manage marital conflicts well.

# Limitations

The following are the limitations the researchers experienced during the research:

1. The research was conducted within Ainamoi Division in Kericho County. It was hoped that the findings were generalizable beyond Kericho County.
2. Some of the participants delayed in responding, which affected the number of participants used in this study and the generalizability of the results.
3. Couples who have experienced intense marital conflicts were not open to share their ordeal due to cultural and religious norms associated with marriage and the negative view of marital discord. This affected the amount and quality of data gathered for this research.

# Scope

- The study on the issues of marital conflict among couples and the need to manage it was conducted through randomly interviewing forty married individuals in Ainamoi Division in Kericho District. The researchers chose the couples who were randomly selected within the area. The data was collected using questionnaires, and interviews. The researchers employed a descriptive approach to analyse the data. The study in particular sought to answer the following questions:

# Scope cont.

- How marital conflict among the couples affected their relationship?
- What conflict management skills couples found most helpful in strengthening their marriage?

# Significance of the Study

- It was hoped that the results of this study would yield information that will be useful to marriage counsellors, pastors and church leaders to evaluate the effects of marital conflict among couples, and the need to manage the conflict based on the biblical perspective of marriage. The research also sets a foundation for future studies on marital conflict and the necessity of counselling and teaching conflict management principles and skills to couples.



# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design** The researchers employed a qualitative survey design. The researchers identified the potential causes of conflict in marriage, how the couples have been able to manage marital conflict, and what they need in order to manage conflict that may arise in their marriage. This formed the basis of collecting information by administering a questionnaire to sixteen married men and fourteen married women and also interviewed six married men and four married women randomly selected across Ainamoi division of Kericho County

# Population

- The study targeted at least forty randomly selected married spouses in Ainamoi Division in Kericho District. The estimated population of the married spouses within the division is one thousand. The ethnic group living in this area are the Kipsigis people, a sub-tribe of Kalenjin in Rift-Valley province.

## Sampling/cont

- The spouses targeted were those who have been married between five to thirty years. These are spouses who are within the age bracket of 20 to 50 years. Their economic status is middle class. The study tried to determine the causes and effects of marital conflicts among the couples, so as to seek ways on how such couples can be helped by marriage counsellors to manage the conflict without causing disharmony or harm to each other.



# Sampling Procedure

- In a random sampling, every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Chanran, 2004: 90). In this research study, forty spouses were studied, ten interviewed and another thirty spouses given questionnaires to respond to. These spouses were twenty two males and eighteen females. The participants were randomly selected throughout the division and the collected data was analyzed and generalized.

# Sampling/cont

- The researchers visited ten spouses: six males and four females in different places in the division without biasness. They also identified research assistants in the different points in the division, who assisted in distributing the questionnaires to thirty spouses: sixteen males and fourteen females within the division, all having equal chance to be selected. The researchers did this by training the research assistants on the contents of the questionnaire and how to distribute the questionnaires to the respondents.

# Data Collection Procedures

- The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The researchers identified five research assistants picked across the division, trained them on the contents of the questionnaire and how they were to randomly select spouses in their locations. The spouses who responded to the questionnaires were thirty in number. The researchers also selected ten spouses across Ainamoi division who were interviewed on marital conflict management.

# Research Findings

- Marital counselling is a dire need in the society.
- Marital conflicts among the married couples exist.
- The top three areas of conflict are communication, finances, and sexual life.
- Married couples felt that the following skills are useful to them in developing an effective marriage: love, trust, forgiveness, listening, self-control, submission, and dialogue.
- Married couples would love to be given marital counselling on the following areas: love, listening, trust, forgiveness, self-control, submission, and dialogue.

# Summary of Areas of Marital Conflict among Couples

- The research has shown the following factors causing conflict in marriage in their order of priority: majority of the respondents acknowledged that they have experienced conflict in the
  - Area of communication,
  - Conflict in the area of financial management,
  - Issues surrounding children,
  - Relational issues in connection to in-laws,
  - Sexual issues,
  - Personality/ behaviour.
  - Behaviour Issues
  - Domestic Violence and Emotional Abuse
  - Time management

# Conclusion

- factors that contribute to marital conflict are dynamic and therefore, keep on changing with time and culture.
- Marital counselling needs to be updated to fit the changing times and challenges that married couples experience every day.
- This study concludes that marital counselling is in dire need in the society, and so counsellors, pastors and church leaders should create awareness of it's importance and the value of getting counselling help before the marriage goal is distorted and yet its the foundation that God established in order for the married couple to enjoy companionship, enjoy sex and procreate for God's glory (Gen. 2:18-25).

# Recommendations

- Marital counselling should be given priority by counsellors, pastors and church leaders.
- Marital counselling program should cover factors that contribute to conflict in marriage i.e. communication, financial management, sexual relations, in-laws, children, behaviour, domestic violence and emotional abuse, time management and career development.
- The married couples should be helped to develop and apply the following skills in their marriage: listening, love, submission, forgiveness, dialogue, trust and

# Recommendations

- Couples should be faithful, and have self- control.
- The couples should be taken through a structured counselling program with the word of God being the final authority.
- More research should be done on the following areas which were expressed by the respondents:



# Recommendations cont.

- Financial management
- Time management
- Hygiene
- The counsellor or pastor should relate with the married couple as individuals needing both meaning and love, each of the spouses should be perceived as pursuing a goal in life to build one another in marriage i.e. companionship, sexual intimacy, and procreation, and be encouraged and motivated through God's word in order to manage conflict in marriage.

# Recommendations cont.

- This research further recommends that marital counselling be divided into lessons and assignments covering issues that contribute to conflict in marriage and skills needed as indicted in the below marital counselling outline. The counselling duration per session should cover between 45 minutes to one hour.