The Effects of Marital Infidelity amongst Women in Contemporary World: A Critical Analysis from Islamic Ethics

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Abstract — In our contemporary world, a large number of women are involved in extra-marital sexual relations. In consideration of the fact that women play a key role in the development of the society, the paper sought to examine the causes and consequences of marital infidelity amongst women. It also looked at the ethical teachings of Islam in view of the misdemeanour. The paper used secondary data from monographs, manuscripts, books, journals, internet, magazines as well as the Glorious Qur’an and Hadith. The paper revealed that sexual deprivation, prior waywardness, the negative effects of globalization and the likes, are the key factors responsible for marital infidelity. Also, the negative consequences of marital infidelity by women identified by the paper include contact with venereal diseases, subjecting to disgrace and neglect, and bad precedence to children. It was also evident that the ethical teachings of Islam teach that when women are sexually attended to and are given due financial care, it might redeem them from falling victims of illicit sexual desire. The paper recommends that prostitution should be abolished and those who engage in the ‘business’ should be encouraged to marry. And that Poverty Eradication Programmes should be redesigned to cater for the less privileged people in the society in order to bail them out from committing all kinds of social vices such as marital infidelity and theft.

Key Terms - extra-marital, marital infidelity, promiscuity, sexual deprivation, sexual desire, venereal diseases, waywardness.

INTRODUCTION

Infidelity cannot be defined precisely. Even a stolen kiss, a lap dance and a sexual encounter, all fall in the range of infidelity. Psychologists state that the intention of such behaviour defines its course (Essortment, 2017). Sulaiman (2011) describes infidelity as the secret violation of monogamy and commitment to a single person. Also, Hornby (2001, p. 631) defines infidelity as “having sex with someone who is not one's wife or husband. Women and infidelity therefore means a situation in which a married woman undergoes sexual intercourse with someone else other than her husband. This is an inclusive definition. Precisely, infidelity can be described as an affair conducted for various reasons by a member of the opposite sex for romantic and sexual love or lust. Usually, it has been found that about half (50%) of women engage in infidelity.

One of the inherent natures of human being which often occurs from time to time is the desire to fulfil one’s sexual urge. To prevent man from being promiscuous in his attempt to satisfy this natural desire, the institution of marriage was ordained by Allah (S.W.T.), as the moral ground for its fulfilment (Balogun, 2003). The goals of marriage, based on the teachings of the Glorious Qur’an and the Hadith, literature may be summarized as follows:

(a) Procreation of the human species, who may in turn worship Allah,
(b) Generation of love, comfort and peace between husband and wife,
(c) Love for offspring which should eventually transcend and encompass all creatures so that each and every member of the human race develops a sense of belonging,
(d) Protection of loneliness. Family helps one to feel a sense of security in that there are other concerned members around to assist one to overcome one’s difficulties, and
(e) Entrenchment of responsibility.

In spite of this noble channel instituted for man, some men and women often transgress by engaging in extra-marital relationships. There are quite a number of factors responsible for extra-marital relationships.

The Factors of Marital Infidelity of Women

A lot of factors are responsible for the rate at which marital infidelity amongst women is becoming rampant in Nigeria today. These include:

Sexual deprivation/lack of sexual satisfaction. Some married men work in places far away from their wives due to one reason or the other. In some instances, the cumbersome nature of work some men often engage in weakens their sexual desire and consequently, prevents them from attending to or satisfying their wives sexually.

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According to Abubakar (2003), if a married woman is denied sexual satisfaction by her husband, either by total abstinence, for a prolonged period of time or inadequately attended to, she is likely to seek for succour through illegal means (extra-marital affair).

Also, in a polygamous family, some women are sexually neglected by their husbands in preference for the other wives (Hamza, 2001). This usually results in a bitter experience on the part of the deprived women and the effect could be quite worrisome. This unfortunate situation often permits some married women to engage in extra-marital affairs.

In the same vain, a woman may be stronger than her husband in term of sexual relation (Sulaiman, 2015b). If the husband fails to adjust to her taste, she may decide to have a male friend elsewhere to make up for her extra sexual needs.

**Materialistic tendency.** Many women want to be rich as early as possible at all costs, or want to meet their financial needs at all times. In an attempt to achieve their inordinate ambition, they attach themselves to a ‘sugar daddy.’ Whatever money or property that is realized from this unlawful association is normally used to satisfy their insatiable wants. Some women even go to the extent of engaging in prostitution. Also, some women are loved and well taken care by their husbands but unfortunately, they are so demanding that they never get satisfied with whatever is provided for them by their husbands. This is affirmed by Kakaki (2007, p. 35) who noted that:

Due to a woman’s demands and wants, she easily gets attracted to men with money, power and fame. A woman may love her husband and also continue to stay in marriage but would date a man who can give her gold, expensive jewellery, high class lace materials

Such materialistic women are likely to engage in extra-marital affairs in order to satisfy their quest for material lust.

**Prior waywardness.** A woman who has earlier been exposed to sexual intercourse before marriage often exhibits a high tendency to seek for sexual satisfaction with others in the society. Kakaki (2007) again observed that:

There is a great tendency for a woman who was fun seeker and who loved partying, clubbing and had countless sexual encounters with different men for fun not necessarily for money before she got married, to continue cheating after marriage (p.20).

Such habit is common in many families where children are loosely handled by their parents or guardians. These types of women are often prone to extra marital affairs.

In many instances, women who have reached the age of marriage but are pursuing one programme or the other usually attach themselves to ‘man-friendship.’ Their understanding of ‘man-friendship’ may include sexual intercourse. In this way, they start extra-marital sexual intercourse (Sulaiman, 2015a).

Likewise, inordinate ambition to attain unmerited achievements is more common to job seekers and students, especially women. Many women, who want to secure employment at all costs, do not mind to have sexual relationship with the man in charge of the employment in order to be employed. This is also applicable to students who would not attend lectures but want to pass examinations at all costs. This accounts for one of the reasons for examination malpractices in most sectors of our education in the present day.

**The negative effect of globalization.** The advent of globalization had impacted negatively on the lives of many Muslim countries as they became exposed to many foreign cultures which are abhorrent to their moral and religious values. Some of these obnoxious attitudes include the flow of pornographic pictures, films or videos, the culture of wearing very tight or transparent dress which facilitates greater tendency for proliferation of illegal sexual relationship especially amongst young girls and even married women. Aliyu (2008, p. 23) lamented that:

Sexual corruption like pornography, obscenity and dancing becomes a great phenomenon today in most of the Muslim countries. Some media encourage women to dress in tight or scanty clothes purposely to expose their body contour. Most of the western societies have ceased to regard adultery as a sin. They have created the sex industry to cater mainly for the need and desires of adulterous and sexually perverted people.

A woman that dresses in a transparent and translucent dress is susceptible to sexual harassment by men in the society. She is easily lured into illegal sexual engagement as she can easily give in especially where and when nobody is around to keep surveillance on her. Odum (2007, p.13) asserted that:

… even women in purdah have been known to engage in immoralities, in reality, over the millennia. One primary way to identify women of questionable virtue is by their dressing and general deportment. Their naked mode of dressing is usually a trademark which they favour in their effort to seduce men.
Such fashions tend to reveal flesh, shape or contours of the body.

**Vengeance against men’s infidelity.** The infidelity of some faithful and committed women stems from attitude of revenge. When such women incidentally find a piece of condom in the pocket of their husbands or catch their husbands red handed in a sexual romance with a girl or other women they tend to behave in a way similar to avenge the illicit behaviour of their husbands (Sulaiman, 2012b).

The least rumour about their husbands’ infidelity is sufficient grounds to instigate them into similar infidelity. Any past secret immorality by a woman usually becomes a stimulant for her to continue with such irritating game. Extra-marital

**Financial neglect by husbands.** The infidelity of some women is born out of the need to sustain themselves and their children for being financially neglected by their husbands. The irresponsibility of husbands in the welfare of their family, sometimes lure women into illicit sexual acts in order to survive (Abubakar, 2003).

**Lack of husband or wife.** Many women, who have divorce or lost their husbands, prefer to remain without re-marrying. Their reasons may be because they have had enough children or they are tired of having husband or they are too old to remarry. Many women who belong to this group usually look for sexual partners, to satisfy their sexual urge. They do not mind whether the person they prefer is married or not. What they are all after is their own sexual satisfaction, irrespective of its negative effects to the sexual partner.

**Dressing.** The tight, half-nakedness and transparent dressing of women have become sources of temptation for infidelity. Men who cannot control their sexual emotion are usually tempted to have sexual relation with such women at all costs.

**Barrenness.** There are two major types of barrenness: The natural barrenness and the man-made barrenness which usually occur through abortion or misuse of preventive drugs. A woman that falls in either of these two categories may not want to accept that she is barren until she has proved it beyond reasonable doubt through sexual relation with variety of men, who may not necessarily be her husband.

**Peer group.** One of the major causes of infidelity in the modern day is the influence of bad peer group. This is true of those who are friends to women who are ardent in infidelity. They normally initiate their friends to it through persuasion and insinuation.

**Women as a prey of dubious traditional herbalists.** Salisu (2006) argued that those who seek for traditional medicine to their marital problems often fall victims of false traditional herbalists who engage them in illicit sexual affairs. In some societies, the traditional healers do not stop at mere extra-marital sexual affairs with such women but sometimes go to the extent of snatching them from their husbands. This is mostly common amongst women in a polygamous family or those who are alone with their husbands but believe that such healers help them prevent their husbands from marrying additional wife.

**Forced marriage.** This is a common phenomenon amongst African societies; a woman is forced to marry a man against her choice (Sulaiman, 2016). This type of marriage sometimes gives room for the propagation of extra-marital relationship between the woman who was forced to marry a man and the man she had wanted to marry as they still communicate with each other. Jawando (2012, p. 23) buttressed on the assertion that:

How can a person build a happy matrimonial home with a woman who does not love him? This form of marriage situation leads to adultery whereby the girl sneaks out at the least opportunity to see the man she loves while she is still married to another man.

**Poverty.** Many women who come from poor families are easily lured into committing illicit sexual acts by men who could provide them with their basic necessities. Many of them would want to be like their counterparts from rich homes. In an attempt to satisfy their wants, they attach themselves to rich men, who provide them with their needs with the compensation of surrendering themselves to the sexual needs of the man.

**Gender-based violence.** Gender-based violence and violence against women are terms that are often used interchangeably as most gender-based violence is inflicted by men on women. However, it is important to retain the ‘gender-based’ aspect of the concept as this highlights the fact that violence against women is an expression of power inequalities between women and men. The infidelity of some faithful and committed women stems from attitude of violence against women.

Also, gender-based violence undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims, yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence. Victims of violence can suffer sexual and reproductive health consequences, including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, traumatic fistula, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and even death.

**War/displaced.** Common acts of gender-based violence committed against women and girls during armed conflict and consequent social disruption include sexual assault, often associated with violent
physical assault; mass, multiple, and gang rapes; early or forced marriage and forced pregnancies; enforced sterilization; forced or coerced prostitution; military sexual slavery; human trafficking; and domestic violence. Women also suffer from sexual abuse and rape, and are usually the main targets of forced conscription. Other acts of GBV that may increase during conflict and particularly affect women and girls are female infanticide, female genital mutilation, and honour killing. In addition to rape and sexual violence committed in the context of attacks on villages, many women and girls have been raped during or following displacement from their homes.

**Alcohol and drug consumption.** Increased vulnerability to sexual violence also stems from the use of alcohol and other drugs. Consuming alcohol or drugs makes it more difficult for people to protect themselves by interpreting and effectively acting on warning signs. Drinking alcohol may also place a person in settings where his or her chances of encountering a potential offender are greater.

**Other causes of women infidelity.** Sometimes perceived/real lack of emotional intimacy is the cause of infidelity. Typically, women are more prone to indulging in infidelity if they feel they are not validated, accepted, nurtured and loved in their relationship. If the affection is missing or if one of the partners seems less committed or unable to provide time for the relationship, this can drive an individual to infidelity. Emotional affairs are often the result of lack of emotional intimacy between couples (Essortment, 2017).

Too much familiarity can be the cause of infidelity amongst couple. After some time in relationship, couples turn to be addicted to each other and this can ultimately diminish any excitement their relationship. If a renewed excitement is found outside their relationship, it might urge them into cheating. The element of ‘grass being greener on the other side of the fence’ becomes glaringly true in some cases (Sulaiman, 2012a).

Sometimes unexpressed anger or desire to get even with the partner/spouse for some perceived pain can drive people to infidelity. A new baby may take much of the mother’s attention and if the spouse is not able to adjust to the change or understand it, a desire for an extra marital affair may be taken by such an individual. Ompede (2007) asserted that long standing unresolved issues can also drive a person to cheating.

In fact, not every individual is able to deal with aging gracefully. Some people may cheat if they get a chance just to prove that they still can ‘achieve’ it, or that they still ‘have it’ in them. Sulaiman (2013) confirmed that sometimes if a person perceives lack of support from his/her spouse when it is most needed and finds such a support elsewhere then it can lead to infidelity.

Occasionally, a simply desire for different sexual experiences may end up having extra-marital affairs. Some may do it because they feel they have sexual addiction. While others may feel they have grown out of the relationship or fallen out of love with their partners/spouses. Consequently, they simply go out and seek other relationships just to get rid of the present relationship (Sulaiman, 2017 & Bhayat, 1997).

**The Effects of Infidelity among Women**

When a woman engages in extra-marital affair for whichever reason she is bound to face one negative consequence or the other, such as:

**Lack of trust.** According to Moi (2012), infidelity affects the trust level in a relationship. A relationship is a commitment to each other as a family. Infidelity breaks the trust that one has for his/her partner whenever they are alone. Therefore it is difficult to believe what one says.

Family also share the effects of infidelity as children in the relationship, they are being lied to. The time spent away with the ex-marital lover, is time away from the children. One turns to lie to them about their absence. Where children are keen and are able see through and dissect lies eventually feel disappointed and resented. With resentment and lack of trust, it is impossible to have a healthy relationship with one’s children.

Lack of trust may cause constant suspicion and interrogation. This can create a tense and hostile home environment, even if the affair is over. The lingering aura of the affair is enough to cause spontaneous arguments.

**Contact with sexually transmittable diseases.** A woman who engages in rampant sexual relation with many men is highly vulnerable to diseases such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, gonorrhoea and many others. These diseases are killer diseases the World Health Organisation is seriously battling in contemporary times. According to Ompede (2007, p. 35), this is evident nowadays as the rampaging efforts of infection rise daily to the extent that:

My friend who works in a hospital laments about how more ladies are becoming HIV positive these days. That, when premarital couples come for voluntary test, more of them are found to be positive than men and I am not surprised at all because ladies are keeping more sexual partners today than men, even married women.

**Subjugation to disgrace, neglect and marital mistrust.** It is extremely difficult to track down women who engage in adultery. However, the few ones that are
caught often subjected to indelible disgrace in our society. Some men go to the extent of breaking the bond of marriage with such women. This situation is often not conducive for the wellbeing of such women because it sometimes lead to a permanent stigma which can result in psychological trauma, hypertension or prompt her to commit suicide. Extramarital relations often lead to disgrace, disrespect and lack of dignity of the woman, such as in the sight of her family in particular and the society at large Oluwatimilehin (2004).

Furthermore, some women when caught often seek for forgiveness from their husbands, promising to abstain from it throughout their life. The truth of the matter is that, it is natural for a man to have the psychological feelings that such a woman would still repeat this act. Marital trust once betrayed, hardly affords to the betrayer the honour of being trusted again, even if she does all she could to convince her husband to his confidence (The Quranblog, 2010).

**Scepticism about the legitimacy of children.**
When a woman is known to engage in this heinous offence, the trust wanes so much so that it makes her husband might be doubtful about the legitimacy of their children. In some cases, some men even resort to denouncing the legitimacy of such children.

**Ruining of image.** If one holds a high profile position, locally or internationally, infidelity can ruin one’s public image. Politicians, religious leaders and activists cannot afford any moral-based scandals. Infidelity can cost high profile persons their career.

Infidelity is an expensive habit. It usually leads to divorce and the consequent legal judgment is binding on all parties. Pain, suffering and alimony allotments are weighed against the reason of the marriage dissolution.

Infidelity can also affect child custody rulings. Character judgments will be filtered through the affair. It may be embarrassing for the adulterer and their lover to be publicly scrutinized. Infidelity usually makes for a messy divorce. And post-divorce relationships can often be bitter and hostile.

**Psychological and family trauma.** When a man realizes that someone is having sexual affair with his wife, he is bound to be psychologically disturbed. And when the situation goes to the extent of denouncing the legitimacy of that woman's children then, it creates a rift between the man, his in-laws and the wife. The husband and the wife together with the children suffer under this traumatic condition and are subjected to psychological problem. In a situation where the child does not resemble the husband or resembles the man under suspicion or caught having illegal sexual affairs with the wife, the psychological feelings of the man are then worsened (Muhammad, 2010; Aaron, 2017).

**Negative effects on children.** The hatred of a husband against a sexually licentious wife is likely to affect her children. In some cases, the faithful wives and their children are likely to be given preferential treatment over a licentious wife and her children – which could be love, affection and financial support. The situation could be aggravated to the extent of having negative influence on the development of her children. Consequently, children are made to suffer for offences committed by their mother.

According to Karwai (2006), adultery promotes procreation of illegitimate children in the society. To corroborate this argument is the affirmation that as a result of the prevalence of indiscriminate sexual relationship among single and married couples, the number of illegitimate children in the society often increases at an alarming rate.

**Setting bad precedence for the children.** An adulterous woman bequeaths bad legacy to her children especially the female ones. Time and again, the children adopt what they usually learn from their parents. The reality in this situation is the destruction of the family structure that serves as the foundation upon which a good society survives.

**Divorce and broken home.** Marriage when contracted is structured a lifelong engagement. One of the things that endanger marriage bond is infidelity. Many marriages have been shattered due to the involvement of women in indiscriminate sexual affairs. When a woman is divorced as a result of this kind of illicit act, she and her children become perpetual objects of disgrace; derision and stigma. Alexander (2012) added that, the life of such people becomes miserable where the woman can hardly get a reasonable man to marry her again. In effect, involvement of women in extramarital affair in some cases leads to divorce.

As a result of divorce, children are left at the mercy of single parent or foster parent. The obvious fact is that children become deviant and are susceptible to all kinds of social vices. Some consequences of infidelity include:

(a) The person who is at the receiving end of the infidelity ends up having a shattered self-image /esteem. He/she goes into severe self-doubt mode or then tends to indulge in self-blame.

(b) Such a person may become extremely depressed and even suicidal. The individual may lose complete faith in relationships and also the ability to trust people because of the immense betrayal caused by infidelity.

(c) Extramarital affairs may lead to a feeling of tremendous insecurity and anger. Without professional help the blame game between the cheating partner and the cheated partner may not cease.
(d) Where children are involved, their lives may experience a lot of turmoil and in unfortunate cases they may be used against the cheating partner. The desire to get even with the cheating spouse may be tremendous and this can result in the individual making some irrational decisions.

(e) Since infidelity can mean death of the relationship and annihilation of everything trustworthy and sacred, the person at the receiving end of infidelity relationship, may experience a barrage of emotions and may feel like being on some roller coaster ride.

(f) Infidelity may result in long drawn out and bitter divorce proceedings and custody battles.

(g) Sometimes the effects of infidelity can also be positive. Infidelity in certain cases may force individuals to take a good hard look at themselves and their relationships. It can help them to recognize that they need professional help which can help them to work through the problems and build an even stronger bond and save the marriage.

The ethical teachings of Islam as panacea to marital infidelity

The Qur’an cautions against infidelity, because it is a shameful and an evil act which opens way for other evil acts (The Qur’an, al_Isra’i 17:32). When man deviates from the right path and turns deaf ear to the teachings of Islam he faces difficulties and tribulations, and life becomes miserable. Islamic ethics entails the ethical conduct of life contained in the Glorious Qur’an and exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The problem of marital infidelity of women and its consequences as analysed in this paper can therefore be addressed adequately by teachings of Islam(Imruddin, 1962; Ibrahim, 2012).

Abstinence from pre-marital and extra-marital sexual intercourse. In Islam, sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are not married to each other is called ‘zina.’ In the concept of Zina in Shari’ah, it is immaterial whether one or both parties have their own spouses or are unmarried. It is also immaterial whether it is with the consent of the two parties. The word Zina according to Sulaiman (2010), applies to both adultery and fornication. Islam regards it in any case as a sin as indicated in the following verses: “Do not come near adultery for it is a shameful deed and an evil opening the road to other evils” (The Qur’an, al_Isra’i 17:32). This verse considers ‘Zina’ not only as a great sin but also as an act which opens the gate for many other shameful acts that destroy the very foundation of the family such as quarrels, ruined reputation, destruction of property and spreading of diseases like HIV/AIDS and gonorrhoea.

In other to avoid this mess, Allah encourages Muslims to guard their private parts by being chaste and loyal to one’s sex partners so that they will not become blame worthy (The Qur’an, al_Ma’munun 23: 1-7). Prophet Muhammed (SAW) also declared fornication or adultery as the greatest evil after shirk, that is association of partnership to Allah: “There is no sin after associating partners with Allah in eyes of Allah than a drop of semen which a man places in the womb which is not lawful for him” (The Qur’an, Yasin 36:2).

Being faithful. Islam regards men and women as being of the same essence, who created from a single soul (The Qur’an, an_Nisa’i 4:1-2). The objective of marriage, according to Qur’an30:21 is faithfulness to each other through repose, affection and mercy which are the real commenting factor of marriage. The sincere observation of marriage ethics is a great barrier against HIV/AIDS. If a woman refuses her husband’s request for sexual intercourse, she may be led to evil thoughts searching such the urge for unlawful satisfaction which may lead to contagious disease. Such situations are also detrimental both physically and mentally to the sustenance of marriage in Islam. The Prophet is reported to have said: “If a man calls his wife to sleep with him and she does not respond, causing him to be angry with her, angels will (continue) to curse her until morning” (The Hadith Bukhari, 1985).

Likewise, Islam applies the same towards the husband to satisfy his wife’s sexual desire in order to protect her against evil thoughts and acts as well. It would be deduced from the above that love and affection are some of the qualities expected from each couple. These qualities lead to faithfulness and abstinence from extra-marital sexual intercourse that could lead to contacting HIV/AIDS.

Emotional and sexual satisfaction. Islam forbids illicit sexual relationship for both single and married men and women. It ordains the institution of marriage as a legal means of fulfilment of sexual gratification. Allah says:

And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them, and He places between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought (The Qur’an, ar_Ram 30: 21).

Efforts should be made by man towards according women her divine rights and attending to their sexual needs. Marriage and the search for a legal means of sustenance are both unavoidable and inevitable in man’s life, and as such, man should try to strike a balance between the two in a way that the attainment of one does not hinder the other.
The same balance is expected between the worship of Allah and giving attention to one’s wife. Prophet Muhammad (May peace be upon him) taught Muslims how to strike a balance between the various aims they intend to achieve in life and sexual satisfaction of one’s wife which is equally an obligation. Abdullah bn Amr b. al-As was said to have abandoned his wife because of his devotional worship to Allah. When the Prophet (SAW) was informed about it, he replied saying:

I am told that you pray all the night and fast during the day, I said yes I do so. He said, if you do so, your eye-sight will become weak and you will become weak. No doubt, your body has a right on you, and your family has a right on you, so fast (for some days) abstain from fast for some days (The Hadith Bukhari, 1985).

A man should spend the night in the room of his wife at least once in every four nights to satisfy her sexual demands in accordance with the verdict given by Umar b. Khattab (R.A.) the second Caliph of Islam (Jazaery, 1963).

Depriving one’s wife of her sexual right to the advantage of another wife is strictly forbidden in Islam. The following Prophetic traditions stated further on the consequences of doing such injustice to one’s wife:

Whoever is married to two wives, and has liking for one of them and deals unjustly with the other, will come unbalanced with one-half of his body bent on the Day of Resurrection (The Hadith Nasa’i, 1984).

The punishment is more severe when one abandons his wife and be more inclined to his concubines. This sin attracts death penalty under the Shari’ah. This injunction is among the verse abrogated of the opposite sex, and its advantage of another wife is sexual demands in accordance with the verdict given wife at least once in every four nights to satisfy her (The Hadith Bukhari, 1985).

According to Maududi (1967) and Imran (2005), the first look is allowed, but not the second. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said even looking at the member of the opposite sex with lust and desire is tantamount to zina (adultery) of the eyes. The eyes also commit zina, and its zina is the (lustful) look (Manji, 1992).

Reflecting on Biblical and Qur’anic commandments which pertain to adultery, injunctions of the Old Testament as enumerated in the Ten Commandments states that: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus, 20:14 and Matthew, 5:27). Also, the Glorious Qur’an states that: “Do not come near to adultery. It is a shameful deed, an evil, opening the way to other evils” (The Qur’an, Ghafir 40:7).

It is evident that the Old Testament only uses the imperative to caution against the actual engagement in the act of adultery, while the Glorious Qur’an warns against coming near to adultery. It is for this reason that the Glorious Qur’an further commands believing women should cover themselves with a loose outer-garment whenever they go out in public, for this would protect them from being molested (Niazi, 1976). Adeyinka (1997) added that believing women are also cautioned not to talk or walk invitingly as this may attract the attention of lustful men. They should not walk in such a manner as to draw men’s attention towards them. It must be noted though that these Qur’anic injunctions do not suggest that women on the whole are not to be trusted. Nay, these injunctions are meant to protect them from being victims of rape and other sexual crimes.

Proper child upbringing. Charity, is said to begin at home. To reform the society parents must play the most salient role. They must make concerted efforts in ensuring proper moral upbringing of their children right from early childhood. This moral responsibility vested on parents over their children is...
adequately advocated in the primary sources of Islam. Allah says:

O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from the fire whose fuel is people and stones over which are (appointed) angels harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded (The Qur’an, al_Tahrim 66:6).

In another Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said that:

All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is a guardian for his subjects and the man is a guardian of his family, the lady is a guardian for her husband house and his offspring; and so all of you are responsible for your wards (The Hadith, Sahih Muslim 1829).

Parents especially fathers must therefore try to set good examples for their wives and children. They must take care of their financial expenses to prevent them from waywardness. All avenues leading to illicit sexual affair of young girls like hawkwing, having bad friends, lack of proper handling and watching of pornographic or inciting films, must be avoided. Parents should, from all ramifications, be good examples to their children. Their utterances and actions must be confined within the realm of the Shariah.

Modesty in dress. The nature of women is such that it easily attracts the attention of the opposite sex. In the pre-Islamic era, women were in the habit of wearing all forms of unethical dresses, a factor which partly accounts for the prevalence of illicit sexual affair among them. In order to prevent the devil from having influence over man, Islam advocates that women should use hijab to cover up their bodies with exception of their palms and faces. Allah says: “...and abide by your houses and do not display yourselves as (was) the display of the former times of Ignorance ...” (The Qur’an, al_Ahzab 33:33).

O Prophet, tell your wives and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garment. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused... And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful (The Qur’an, al_Ahzab 33:59).

Financial Responsibility. Maintenance of the family is the sole responsibility vested in the husband and as such he is given one edge over the wife. Allah SWT says: “Men are in charge of women by (right of) what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend (for maintenance) from their wealth” (The Qur’an, an_Nisa’i 4:34).

Therefore, to prevent women from engaging in extra marital affairs, they must be clothed, fed and well taken care by their husband (Doi, 1987 & Al-Sheha, 2001). In addition, the children also must enjoy a similar treatment. When men discharge their duties on their families, it would go a long way in preventing women from engaging in extra marital affairs.

Allah consciousness. Both men and women should cultivate the spirit of God consciousness in their dealings. This would hinder all avenues that could lead to illicit sexual affair. Consciousness of Allah SWT is the best provision a person could make to curtail the occurrence of all types of sins. Allah says: “And take provision but the best provision is fear of Allah. And fear me O you men of understanding” (The Qur’an, al_Bagash 2:197). With the consciousness of Allah luring women can be protected from evil manipulations by men to engage in extra-marital affairs. The overzealous quest for materialism by women which often lead extra marital affairs could also be effectively tackled.

Guiding women as against force marriage. In the matter of marriage, Islam enjoins women the leverage to make choice of their marriage partners. The following Prophetic tradition attests to this:

A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her, and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission. The people asked, O Allah's Apostle! How can we know her permission? He said: Her silence (indicates her permission) (The Hadith, Sahih Bukhari 7:51-52).

Parents should therefore assist in guiding their daughters through soft admonition and counselling instead of forcing them to marry men they dislike.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper has revealed that societal problems are sometimes man-made, because they occur due to his refusal to follow the guidelines meant for proper well-being. Infidelity of married women as we have discussed could be as a result of sexual deprivation, prior waywardness, and the negative effects of globalization. And that some of the negative consequences of marital infidelity of women include contact with venereal diseases, subjection to disgrace and neglect, and bad precedence to children. It is also evident that the ethical teachings of Islam as emphasized in this paper teaches that attending to wives sexually and financially is very significant in redeeming them from falling victims of illicit sexual desire. An adulterous woman stands the chance of being contacted with AIDS, disgrace, divorce or
neglect by the husband. The paper concludes that stakeholders should redesign the Poverty Eradication Programme to cater for all the less privileged people in the society. This will bail them out from committing all kinds of evil, such as marital infidelity and theft.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Allah cautions people against zina, because, it is a shameful act and an evil which opens way for other evils. To avert all evils that may arise from shameful act and an evil which opens way for other evils, the following recommendations are hereby made:

(a) The essence of modesty in dressing is to conceal one’s nakedness and not to display beauty and ornaments to people except the parts that must ordinarily appear. In addition, a man or woman is not expected to enter into the house or room of another person without seeking for permission, probably through salutation. If there is no response or the permission is not granted, he or she is expected to go back. The essence of this is to prevent accidental sight of the nakedness of the opposite sex. This acts as a guide against rape.

(b) Early marriage should be encouraged to prevent the prevalence of pre-marital sexual relations. Widows, widowers, divorcees should be encourage re-marry as a solution to controlling their sexual urge - because, there is no celibacy in Islam.

(c) Prostitution is a non-progressive canker and should be abolished throughout Nigeria as was done in Zamfara State and should be encourage to go into marry, Nigerians who can afford more than a wife should be encouraged to practise polygamy without transgressing the dictates the Qur'an.

(d) The current sex education curriculum in Nigeria should be overhauled to address effects of pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations based on religious injunctions and scientific proofs.

(e) Muslims scholars should reiterate in their sermons the need for couples to be responsible in the discharge of their duties and rights in marriage.

(f) Stakeholders should legislate on the prohibition of sales of all forms of films or adverts that tend to promote pornography, and sexual promiscuity.

(g) Parents should avoid forcing their daughters into marriages against their taste of partners.

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Biography

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