

Decolonizing the Parallel Marriage Ceremonies in the Ghanaian Context

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Abstract

This research sought to answer the double or parallel marriage rites performed by couples and how it affects the institution of marriage in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality of Ghana. A qualitative approach was used to provide a successful conduct of the research given the complexity of the phenomenon under study. The research design used for the study was case study. The targeted population for the study were married people who performed parallel marriage ceremonies, adults who have reached their marital age but are not married, parents, opinion leaders (pastors) and marriage counsellors. In all, fifteen individuals were chosen as the target population for the study. This consist of five (5) married individuals who performed parallel marriage ceremonies, four (4) unmarried individuals who have reached their marital but are not married, two (2) opinion leaders, two (2) parents and two (2) marriage counsellors. The convenience sampling technique was used to select the elements such as married individuals who performed parallel marriages ceremonies, adult who have reached their marital age but are not married, parents and opinion leaders (pastors). Also, critical case sampling technique was used to sample the marriage counselors involved in the research work. A semi-structured interview guide was used for data collection. The items in the interview guide were structured from the various themes under the literature review which have a direct link with the research questions. One of the major findings was although the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 is nicely carved it is still far from the people it was made for. That is, most of the participants did not know much about the Marriage Act 1884-1984, Cap. 127 and it demands. Also, one of the negative effects of the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage is that marriage has being perceived to be an expensive venture by most of the young people hence creating a kind of fear in almost all the unmarried individuals that were interviewed. The study recommends that the concept of marriage contraction and the demands of the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 should be added to the Senior High School curriculum to help educate the youth about the dynamics in the marriage contraction and registration process. Also, the state should make premarital counselling as part of the requirement for the marriage registration. This would help the

08-10 December 2022

Berlin, Germany

would-be couples either reduce or deal with the challenges associated with the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies.

Keywords: Marriage, Parallel Marriage Effects, Parallel Marriage, Marriage Ceremony