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RESEARCH PAPER

Socio-Psychological Impacts of Polygyny on Upbringing Children, With Special Reference to Pashtun Community in Quetta, Balochistan

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to analyze the socio-psychological impacts of polygyny on upbringing children within Pashtun community. Polygyny is practiced in Muslim societies with greater frequency. Its implications on the upbringing of children has not been investigated within the Pashtun community of Quetta. It was imperative to address the gap comprehensively. This study defined polygyny as marriage to multiple wives, including children aged (15 to 24) years.The research employed a qualitative methodology, using snowball sampling and semi-structured interviews to collect data from fourteen young male and female children in polygynous families. Data was analyzed through thematic process. The results demonstrated social and psychological impacts in the form of insecurity, overcrowd family environment, family disintegration and emotional distress. Two respondents exhibited social connections marked by healthy sibling relationships. The study highlighted parental absence, and adverse life experiences toward father inheritance, rivalry, jealousy and psychological suffering. This study recommended that social interventions should focus on family dynamics and promote psychological-wellbeing to overcome the unfavorable impacts of polygyny on upbringing children and highlighting the necessity for further research. Additionally, the researcher urged, the Pashtun community to review its collective perspectives inorder to reform polygynous practices in alignment with Islamic values.

| **KEYWORDS** | Polygyny, Polygamy, Upbringing Children, Family Integration, Intimate Relationship, Economic Status ,Psychological Implications |

Introduction

Polygyny implies a family situation in which a man is married to two or more female partners. Polygyny is a scenario or tradition of having numerous spouses or female companions together (Yang ,2003). Polygyny is a separate form of polygamy. The term "polygamy" stems from Greek word "*polygamia*" and relates to the practice of having several marriages (Al-Shamsi &Fulcher,2005). Polygamy is a practice characterized by the ownership of many spouses. Polygamy encompasses two distinct forms: polygyny, the practice of having several wives or female partners, and polyandry, the practice of having several husbands or male partners Merriam-Webster). The legal status of polygamy exhibits significant variation across different regions globally. In numerous countries, particularly in the Western world, polygamy is deemed illegal. Nonetheless, there exist countries where polygamy is formally acknowledged or embraced, typically within the framework of specific religious or cultural traditions. Various religious traditions hold distinct perspectives on the practice of polygamy. In the Islamic tradition, it is permissible for men to have up to four wives, provided that they maintain equitable and fair treatment towards each partner. In contrast, Christianity frequently denounces polygyny, advocating for monogamy as the standard practice. Polygyny is observed in specific nations for reasons related to economic, social, or demographic factors (Muzaffar, et. al., 2018; Ja'far etal.,2022). In specific contexts, polygyny can function as a marker of social standing, reflecting wealth and power.

Social, political, and academic fields have thoroughly studied polygamy over the past two decades. The most prevalent practice among Muslims in Pakistan is polygyny, which

permits a man to have four wives at the same time. Moreover, (Barfield,2003) views polygyny as a typical feature of Muslim culture and a constant practice in Pashtun households. The legal sexual relationship between one male and several females, usually one to four partners, is what defines polygynous marriages, which were examined in this study. The purpose of this research was to investigate qualitatively how polygyny affects the rearing of young children in Pashtun polygynous families in Quetta, Baluchistan. The impact on financial status, family integration, and interpersonal interactions was the main emphasis of the study. Polygynous marriages are prevalent in Pashtun communities. However, the literature reviews that are now accessible demonstrate that there was a lack of reliable data about how these marriages affect Pashtuns in Quetta. The researcher selected the present study to fill this long-standing gap in knowledge. The primary goal of the research was to find out how polygyny affected the socio-psychological situation of upbringing children. Society views children as interconnected assets that embrace both the present and the future. Because of its importance, which has been emphasized in previous studies, this phenomenon needed to be studied in the contemporary context. Additionally, the researcher has seen firsthand the significant effects that polygynous marriages have on the lives of children and adolescents (Al-Sharfi et.al., 2016.

Family-based interventional research (Rediy Tefera, 2020) recently underscored the importance of family cohesiveness in polygamous household. Numerous problems have been linked to multiple marriages in previous literature studies, such as unfavorable social and economic conditions and emotional difficulties that spouses and children endure (Yamani, M. 2022). The adolescents' diminished tendency for harmful behavior and worse emotional well-being was demonstrated to be associated with an insufficient parental focus and an inadequate emotional attachment (Moretti and Peled, 2004). The study of (Macabangon ,2022) found that polygamous households often had lower levels of cohesiveness and efficient family functioning. Even though the Pashtun population in Quetta frequently experiences the same problem.The researcher needed to take appropriate action to cover this gap. In modern culture, the father's central role and the strong, close bond between parents are viewed as essential to preserving children's sense of self, emotional health, and social development. The purpose of this study was to understand whether the father's focus would shift to the second wife if a third person appeared between the mother and father. How did the children perceive their family integration in a polygynous home ? Secondly, the study scrutinized the socio-psychological impacts of polygyny on s upbringing children.

Literature Review

According to historical viewpoints, polygamy has been practiced for a very long time.Many non-Western ethnic and religious groups, especially Muslim ones, practice polygamy. Polygamous marriages are common among most different tribes in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Many countries recognise polygamous marriage as a valid form of matrimony, including Chad, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Benin, Ghana, Algeria, Congo, Tanzania, Togo, Gabon, and others. The majority of Muslim countries ethically and culturally support polygamy. Approximately eighty-three percent of human societies endorse polygyny, a phenomenon attributed to the worldwide imbalance in the male-to-female ratio, as noted by Thobejane and Flora, (2014).

Pervez & Batool, (2016) argued that polygamy can lead to a complex family structure, characterized by the husband's connections with each of his additional wives and their children. Polygamous households often encounter difficulties arising from the rivalry among co-wives concerning their husband's financial resources and affections. Although some Jewish legal academics opposed polygamy, they could allow it in cases when the first spouse is unable to conceive. Polygamous relationships have existed for a very long time in human history, claim Bahari et al., (2021). It has long been a component of all cultures across the world. The Hindus, Israelites, Persians, Romans, Arabs, Babylonians, and Tunisians were

among the many pre-Islamic peoples that engaged in polygamy according to Ja'far etal., (2022.This occurrence has been documented in the United Kingdom, Mediterranean European countries, and the ancient Far East. The educators and explorers showed that polygamous unions were common among local communities in Africa and the Americas during the Christian era. Polygamous marriages make up only 2% of the world's population. In West and Central Africa, polygamy is common; Burkina Faso has the highest rate, at 36%. It is common among local religious followers (45%), Muslims (40%), and Christians (24%) stated by Block et al. (2021). Scholarly investigations indicate that polygamous unions detrimentally impact the well-being of partners and increase the probability of adverse outcomes for their offspring. A further investigation revealed that individuals engaged in polygamous relationships might experience psychological and emotional difficulties stemming from the man's preferential treatment towards the children of his other partners illustrated by Macabangon (2022). According to Merdad, (2022) research, teenagers from polygamous households face significant challenges. The father's lack of commitment or absence may impact adolescent integration in polygamous households, leading to disturbances in family dynamics. One of the most common causes of family members' sorrow was the lack of parental involvement. This study's inclusion of family cohesiveness clarified the association between polygamy and internalizing problems. According to the Merdad research, both children and the mother herself mentioned that the lack of father involvement had a significant impact on the day-to-day operations of the polygamous family. Hamama & Arazi, (2012) research indicated that vital integration and efficient family functioning are undermined in polygamous families.

Having half-siblings from different mothers can cause identity problems and alienation in youngsters as well as strain family relationships. Their sense of social acceptance and belonging within the family and society at large may be impacted by these estrangement behaviors, as described by Macabangon, (2022). The study showed signs of a less close and hostile connection with their dad. Second, their connection with their stepfamily was likewise presented in an adverse perspective, with avoidance, discomfort, a lack of loyalty, and a stressful and upsetting atmosphere Yang, (2003). According to Ibiloglu et al, (2018), sibling rivalry and family unrest can result from succession disputes in patriarchal societies where land, resources, and belongings are valued. Since Pakistan is a Muslim nation, polygyny is permitted by law there. According to Islamic law, males are permitted to marry up to four women at the same time, as long as certain strict conditions are fulfilled (Al-Quran, Sura Nisa 4:3; 4:129). Unfortunately, this phenomenon's real existence in our society has shown that men typically enter into second marriages with young, attractive, and socially prominent people. This conduct is wholly at variance with what the Quran teaches about Islam. However, by creating an uneven power dynamic between husbands and wives, polygamy negatively impacts women's lives, especially in developing countries (Malik et al., 2021). This circumstance encourages disagreement and rejection, leading to negative effects on women, families, and society as a whole. A prior research discovered that Swat men would remarry in order to get revenge on their first spouses. In order to preserve peace within the family, the Swat Pashtun group prefers patrilineal cousin marriages, according to Saboory (2005).

Material and Methods

Moreover, the researcher utilized qualitative approach to investigate in-depth data. The interpretative social science technique with a phenomenological perspective was used in this study to get understanding into children's subjective experiences and genuine sentiments. In addition to qualitative research, using a descriptive research methodology,this study sought to answer the following question: How do younger generations perceive their own relationships and family integration in a polygynous household? This study's main goal was to investigate, socio-psychological impacts of polygyny on upbringing children.

Study Area

The universe of the study was Quetta city. Quetta serves as the capital of the Baluchistan province. It covers several cultures and languages. The current study population consisted only of polygynous Pashtun families.

Sampling Size

The unit of analysis for this study comprised young children both boys and girls aged 15 to 24 years. The total fourteen (14) respondents were selected for this study. The sample size comprised for the current investigation was based on data saturation. The researchers opted snowball sampling in order to identify and investigate situations inside a network. The snowball sampling is an appropriate technique when it is difficult to reach possible participants or researching hidden communities by Neuman (2014).

Data Collection Method

The semi-structure interviewed guide was applied for the tools of data collection. The researcher engaged in an in-depth, face-to-face dialogue to get comprehensive and detailed information on the targeted phenomena. The participants replied to a series of open-ended questions in their native language, Pashto. The researcher subsequently translated the complete collection of Pashto audio recordings into English to fulfil the study's requirements. The interview durations ranged from 47 to 60 minutes. To preserve the anonymity of the respondents, the researcher assigned numeric identifiers ranging from 1 to 14 to the names of respondents to safeguard their privacy.

Thematic Analysis

In current study, the qualitative thematic analysis was employed. The researcher evaluated the data, using the six-step process established by Braun and Clarke (2006). Firstly, all interviews were recorded in separate files that were analyzed many times to improve familiarity with the collected material and identify recurring themes. Secondly, the researcher came up with a draft list of ideas and confirmed that the first codes were generated from the data. In third phase, the researcher examined codes thoroughly to form a main themes. At this stage, the researcher discovered the links between codes and themes. Fourthly, the researcher evaluated that various themes coherence with central themes wheather they adequately reflected the sense and meanings included in the data overall.During fifth phase, the researcher concentrated on characterising and naming the themes. In the last phase, the researcher completed the final analysis and report of principal themes in relation to the specific study objectives that highlighted the impact of polygamous marriages on upbringing children.

Ethical Consideration

In the realm of social science inquiry, maintaining ethical standards is considered crucial to the exploration process. The examination of ethical considerations in the current research the researcher established trust and offered assurances to the participants to collect information regarding their personal relationships. Furthermore, the individual maintained the confidentiality of the participants and utilized their expertise for academic purposes without showing any information to the public. The numerical figures were utilized to ascertain the identity of the respondent. While taking care to prevent any emotional distress the researcher pursued safety within an atmosphere of peace to safeguard against outside dangers.

Results and Discussion

Social Impacts of Polygny on Upbringing Children

However, based on their own experiences, young Pashtuns have an unfavorable perception of polygyny. Polygyny was believed detrimental, particularly for children. Several harmful impacts were identified as a result of the children's views and opinions about father polygyny.

Polygyny: Threats to Social Security

The majo rity of children expressed that the circumstances within polygynous households were exceedingly concerning and insecure. They argued that their father had committed an irrevocable error, which provoked mutual animosity between their mother and stepmother. They assumed that the other party might be involved in supernatural practices with the assistance of a religious authority.

Respondent 4 stated that,

"We are especially susceptible to feelings of uncertainty, particularly when our mother tells us of her intention to depart from our residence." At times, I consider the likelihood that my mother might take to suicide".

Respondent 11 showed that they come across frequent disputes within their polygynous household. They perceived themselves as nervous particularly due to their mother's frequent warnings regarding her departure resulting from their father's second marriage. Nevertheless, the youngsters were occasionally unjustly accused or deemed accountable for issues. Their lives lacked little, pleasurable acts of fun. The affection of the parents remained a surprise to them. Ultimately, the practice of polygyny was linked to overcrowded domestic conditions.

Overpopulated Residence

The structure of the display that caused discomfort for those in attendance was the polygynous family arrangement; they had only two rooms: one for the prime family and one for the stepfamily; and because there were no separate rooms, they had to put up with excessive noise during study periods. The results of the current study were connected to a previous study conducted in the Gambia, which found that in polygamous households, members live in close quarters, creating a social environment characterized by stress and conflict between co-wives and their children, and that polygamists sometimes struggle to effectively manage multiple homes for each wife and her children (Angela Campbell, 2005).

Respondent 12 said that,

"My father would have continued to give us his whole attention if he hadn't been married again. Father used to just think about our bright future. But because of the tension on both sides, the polygynous arrangement has caused our father's attention to be split between two houses, making it hard for him to offer each one equal attention. The father's numerous children have made it impossible for us to provide basic needs. Being overpopulate family environment, negatively affects our social and emotional health".

The presence of numerous children deprived them of their father's affection. The number of children increased as a result of the father's second marriage. Hence, large family size caused to overcrowded residence. But there was also a substantial financial need for these children. Regrettably, the father showed no concern for the distribution of these resources. For young children, this created a very uncomfortable environment.

Disparity in Financial Resources

The supply of financial support has become a source of stress and anxiety, as it can be altered at any moment within a polygamous framework, leading to concerns of insecurity about one's finances. The father's reaction about fundamental life necessities was inadequate or insincere. He predominantly disregarded their requirements and desires, viewing them as insignificant.

Respondent 9 reported that

"My dad forgot to get my sisters and step-siblings' new clothes for the past Eid. He said that you are now older and that they are young when I asked for clarification. I felt tremendous sympathy for my siblings and broke down in tears at hearing this. In every way, the father's preference for the second family is on full display".

Nevertheless, their distaste for polygamous homes was evident as they discussed each other's experiences. Because of their father's prosperous company, they initially had a luxurious lifestyle. However, as he spent more time at home with his second wife and became more involved in raising his children, his ability to manage a successful business gradually declined. The financial situation for the family therefore deteriorated. The father's salary is currently not enough to cover both households' essential expenses.

Respondents 6,7 and 8 claimed that

"Because our father doesn't have enough money to support us, we work the land".

"We must work very hard to augment our daily expenses since our budget is inadequate and does not support our livelihood (Respondent,7)".

"The second wife receives the father's money; if he gives her even a small portion, the stepmother gets upset with him and us" (Respondent 8).

The researcher derived the primary theme of economic hardship from fundamental concepts taken from the respondents' personal accounts. Inequitable resource distribution, self-sufficiency in satisfying basic needs, and the termination of children's schooling are all considered general reactions.

Adverse Cultural Tradition

After sharing their current life experiences, the respondents provided the following impacts:

"As a man, I would not allow my mother to go through what she has gone through." (Respondent,12).

My best option is to pray since only Allah knows how to deal with the negative things that have happened, including laws that forbid men from having several wives. Respondent,11

They solely use this cultural practice in connection with their mistresses and incarceration. If I were empowered to change the societal custom of polygyny, I would prohibit men from taking many wives. There is no peace in a polygamous household; instead, there is a fight for control*.*

Respondent 3

Male responders misunderstand polygyny in the context of Islam. For a man to marry a younger woman only because his existing wife is getting older is a grave mistake. Respondent,2

Polygyny is acceptable but not required for Muslim males. I don't understand the encouragement of such actions, as it enables men to evade legal consequences more easily. Our society and religion permit polygyny, but future generations shouldn't engage in it. Respondent 14

The need to work and pray to Allah, the act of simply praying to Allah, wanting to stop the practice, opposition to the cultural practice, the risk of mental health problems and depression, and the desire for the scenario to not recur within the family are the main ideas from which the topic originated. These reactions are classified as universal. The most common responses, on the other hand, were the "survival of the fittest" theory, being strong in tough situations, passing laws against polygamy, letting people marry multiple times without holding anyone accountable, misinterpreting cultural norms, and telling the next generation not to do it.

Normal bonds within a supportive polygynist family

The polygynous household was depicted as a dynamic setting in which the father upheld a sense of harmony among all family members. They demonstrated a remarkable degree of collaboration among themselves. The degree of collaboration among the children with their stepfamily was shaped by the presence of polygyny in the father's particular scenario. In the wake of their uncle's passing, it became imperative to extend support to his family. As a result, the father got involved to provide support to the bereaved mother and her offspring. The singular contributor who exhibited a complete transformation in her responses underwent a thorough analysis of her insights. She stated that when an individual is compelled by emotional or other obligations, they ought to engage in such pursuits, provided they can uphold equity for all stakeholders involved.

According to respondent 13,

"Polygyny is not only regarded as disrespectful but rather a serious issue. Nevertheless, they will never suffer if it is properly taken into account. However, the environment seems to be joyful if the father offers each woman equal attention. Since family ties are stronger than any other kind of relationship, I feel a tremendous deal of affection for my step-siblings."

Respondent 13, gave different explanations than the other respondents. She underlined that people should not voice their doubt in polygyny since doing so may lead to difficulties in life. People perceive polygyny as a problem because of their attitudes. The respondent struggled with acceptance because she realized that her mother is the most severely harmed person on the earth. The young children would not have been distressed if the mother had considered it a normal occurrence. They blamed the general attitude of the populace for their acceptance of being victims. As soon as the siblings learnt the specific reason for their father's decision, they really embraced his polygyny.

Maximum Kinship network

Additionally, one participant acknowledged the advantages of polygyny regarding the large number of children.

Respondent 7 reported that,

"I think it is advantageous for our father to have married three women. Our older siblings, although having different mothers, have been offering us much support. They assist us in our academic activities and provide the necessary learning resources for our success. My stepsister and I have engaged in collaborative study and competed intensely in class, leading to considerable increase in our performance. Both of us routinely place within the top seven students across all subjects, and we take satisfaction in this accomplishment."

Societal Acceptance of Reality

Regardless of the unusual family structure, the respondents' actual experiences were challenging, but they survived. Many faiths do not recognize polygamy, which has led to negative perceptions of the practice. Despite this, there are certain benefits to polygamy. Those that understand polygamy in its whole may find this to be highly beneficial. Gaining a sufficient understanding of this cultural practice can facilitate the building of strong family relationships. For acceptance to take place, feelings of jealousy, animosity, and irritation must be eradicated. Such things are clear from the responses given by the respondents 13, who said that

"I will always prioritize taking care of my parents, no matter how difficult things become. They are the reason I am here. I have learnt to forgive them and accept reality. As a Muslim, I accepted myself as I am, a product of my faith and culture. We saw each other as real siblings, and when there was a misunderstanding, we tried to put it aside so that we could get along."

(Respondent-1).

"The factors that unite us are shared understanding and the capacity to follow individual desires. They are fundamentally our relatives, and our aspiration for a harmonious and cohesive family drives us to do the appropriate actions to re-establish and strengthen familial connections. Hence, animosity and jealousy and other conflict provoke the family environment worse. Therefore, I request to my family members to accept the reality as soon as possible".

Psychological impacts

Children reared in houses where a man has numerous wives, a practice known as polygyny, may experience complicated and multidimensional psychological impacts. Numerous studies suggest that these youngsters might experience a variety of psychological difficulties, even if cultural and socioeconomic factors may have an impact on results.

Emotional Distress

The father's time and emotional resources are split across several houses in polygynous families. Emotional instability and reduced father-child ties may result from absence of parental attention:Children's sense of self-worth might be undermined if they believe their father favors other spouses or children. Feelings of inferiority and inadequacy result from half-siblings and co-wives' children constantly comparing themselves to one another. Further, conflict among co-wives in polygynous families, which frequently affects the kids and results in long-term stress. Emotional dress is a result of unstable familial relationships. Anxiety disorders and depression symptoms exacerbated by inconsistent and unpredictable emotions.

Depression among children

As demonstrated by female respondent 6,

"When I see my parents' relationship deteriorating and their ongoing disputes, I feel depressed and unable to pursue academic goals, which leads to arguments with my father and stepmother and ultimately a breakdown in family relationships." The existence of a polygamous household structure impacts my daily activities directly. My peers are often the targets of my aggressive conduct due to family issues".

The polygamous family environment was the main cause of disintegration, resulting in the separation of children from their parents and exposing them to a stressful and vulnerable life. The previously cited data showed a strong link with the previous study. The previous research also revealed a rise in antisocial behavior, elevated anxiety, and increased ambiguity in the parent-child connection. Parental polygyny likely exacerbated the participants' emotional distress. The young person asserted that the father's work has become burdensome and rejected and that feelings are worthless in polygynous households. The person's mental state was worsened by the lack of consideration of their schooling. According to nine female responders, the experience was emotionally taxing and difficult to explain to others.

Lack of self confidence

They felt that their polygynous heritage put them at a disadvantage. Compared to their peer groups, they reported feeling less confident when living in polygynous households. They felt jealous of their peers when their friends talked about happy times and happy recollections of their father, which made them uncomfortable participating in such discussions since they lacked confidence. Compared to their peer groups, individuals reported feeling less confident when living in polygynous families. Many lacked the confidence to voice their opinions and feelings in their own families. s

Respondent 9 said

"*Talking to my friends about my father's second marriage makes me feel extremely ashamed. My friends wanted to know why your father got married again. Was there something wrong with your mother? On the other side, your mother might not be able to manage household duties. It may be rather difficult to answer queries like these from people.*"

Children familial Relationship with polygynous Father

Polygyny was characterized by adverse conditions, including strained and fractured relationships stemming from interpersonal, economic, and emotional challenges. All respondents had negative responses regarding their connection with their father. The father's subsequent marriage led to strained relationships, parental absence, neglect, parenting within fragmented families, less paternal engagement, disturbed connections, and challenging, distressing experiences with their fathers.

Strained Relationships: Disconnected Relationships

The majority of respondents indicated that polygyny negatively impacted their intimate relationship with their father, resulting in a sense of alienation comparable to being connected by a thin thread. It resulted in the breakdown of the intimate relationship between a parent and kid. Communication was infrequent and mostly motivated by need. Polygyny adversely affects the father's intimate and personal relationship. The most recent data exhibits comparable characteristics to earlier studies conducted in Pakistan and Arab countries. These investigations have shown significant deceit and emotional evasion, resulting in strained and broken connections between children and their dads in polygynous family structures (Yang, 2003).

Female responder 5 articulated an isolated Pashtu phrase.

"Che mor mehra shi no palar lehwi shi""When the stepmother arrives, the father's attitude transforms into that of a wolf."

Respondent 9 reported that

"Before his second marriage, he was seen as my father. However, he now sees us as strangers simply because he lacks a connection with our real father if he does not have a favorable view of our mom. This harsh sentiment was conveyed by the participants."

Respondent 5 and 9 asserted that young children perceive their father's presence as alien, leading to a stressful and disliked relationship. Their relationship with their father was profoundly problematic due to his neglect, and it underwent a significant change after his remarriage. All elements disappeared as his affection and presence weakened. The youth contended that to sustain a peaceful home, it is essential for the father to cultivate a positive relationship with the mother. Without a robust maternal bond, the father's role becomes alien and insignificant. Polygyny influences the love sentiments of young people towards one another.

Respondent 10 expressed that

"My close bond with my father has not only diminished but has completely collapsed. I believe that relationships intensify and deepen with increased time spent together, and I do not remember my father dedicating much time to us. Upon returning home, he immediately goes to my stepmother's room. Aside from the usual communication, there were periods in my childhood when I experienced months of complete disconnection from my father."

In her discussion of the respondent's remarks, she indicated that her formerly tight connection with her father had deteriorated. They did not maintain consistent communication, and there were times during their childhood when they had no contact with their father for months. The children's home setting saw a significant transformation owing to the father's remarriage. The father's presence at both joyful and difficult times was exceptional in a polygamous family, particularly concerning the first wife and her children.

Lack of Family Integration

Significantly, the current study noticed a full transformation in the father's lack of commitment, which severely affected the family's integrated system. Children from polygynous families demonstrated heightened familial dysfunction and diminished family cohesion, resulting in fewer connections with their fathers. Consequently, sibling conflicts about inheritance rights undermine societal cohesion. Persistent familial disputes have weakened communal trust and unity, thereby diminishing social cohesiveness and fostering division. Polygyny has drastically and persistently impacted the interpersonal interactions of children. The children recorded the lasting effects of polygyny, highlighting that it not only undermines the welfare of one generation (namely, the offspring) but also adversely affects subsequent generations and their opportunities.

Children becomes as a Scapegoat Toward Father Absenteeism

The absence of a strong connection between parents greatly impacts the lives of young children. Children are frequently designated as scapegoats. The young children were compelled to sacrifice their happiness and contentment in life.

Respondent 3 reported that

"I am presently confronted with multiple obligations as the eldest family member, compounded by the lack of my father's complete support." I am accountable for the care and welfare of my siblings and mother. Upon completing my Matric, I was necessitated to undertake menial employment due to my family's financial constraints. The father continually recognizes his mistakes, and his behavior towards me is average. Nonetheless, my behavior is quite odd, as I evidently remembrance every scene as if it occurred recently, despite my advanced age. Moreover, he eliminated the general level of happiness in our lives, an act for

which I shall never extend forgiveness. It has resulted in considerable upheaval in the lives of both my mother and me."

Respondent 8 claimed that

"Polygamous partnerships weaken happy households. My father aspired to do so, leading to turmoil for everyone, including the children's education."

Currently, only the youngest kids are attending school, while their older siblings have been forced to forgo their education to seek low-paying employment, since their father can no longer support their studies due to the large number of children in the household. Children suffered due to the absence of legal demands, so compelling mothers to depend on sewing, teaching, and other means to sustain their children. Individuals apathetic to women's wellbeing may view the strife, egotism, subjugation, and unrest present in the lives of children from polygamous unions as compelling Justifications for rejecting these kinds of marriages.

Mother lack of Concentration toward Children

In polygynous families, participants reported that the children's bond with their biological mother was adversely affected by the father's disrespect for her.

Respondent 9 reported that

"My father's second marriage caused my mother a great deal of distress. At first, she was worried about his relationship with this girl. But when her father married the girl and turned his full attention to his second wife, her worries grew. The mother then goes through periods of extreme hopelessness and frustration, perhaps realising that her husband is not giving her enough attention. She might not be able to give us her whole concentration because of these factors. since she is already dealing with a lot of grief in her life."

The female responder indicated that her mother's mental condition, resulting from the polygamous household including stepmother, and father, perpetually diverted her mother's attention from them. Owing to family issues, she was unable to dedicate herself fully to the concentration she sincerely desires to offer. These circumstances also influenced both the mother and her siblings together.

Another respondent 5 said that

"Since my father is totally devoted to his second family, which constantly affects us, my mother is emotionally troubled and upset. Given the situation, my mother's personal problems prevent her from giving us the proper attention."

Polygamy has been shown to have detrimental effects on partners and carries significant negative consequences for children, particularly those born from such unions. The results from the respondents indicated that an increase in the number of spouses and children was associated with a decrease in possessions, as well as a diminishment in respect and the dynamics of relationships. In a scenario where a father fathered more than ten children through various unions, the offspring often found themselves grappling with a loss of personal identity. They would frequently seek clarification regarding their maternal heritage, particularly when in pursuit of financial assistance for their educational needs. The bond between the children and their mothers was compromised, as the children viewed their mothers as powerless and incapable of obtaining sufficient attention from their parents. Given that their mother was the only parent they engaged with consistently, they frequently ascribed their father's lack of involvement to her influence.

Children Relationship with step family

The establishment of stepfamilies develops when a father enters into marriage with another woman. The participants indicated a lack of favorable personal connections with their stepfamilies. The observed behaviors exhibited by young children encompassed hostile competition, disownment, a deficiency in sharing, jealousy, insecurity, fear, and familial disagreements concerning paternal inheritance.

Hostile competition

A significant number of participants expressed a deficiency in communication with their stepmother, frequently leading to a perception of hostile rivalry. Significant hostility was observed among children and stepfamily members within polygynous households. The observation regarding the tenuous connection between the individual and their stepmother, along with her children, stems not from the nature of their step-relationship, but rather from the considerable bias that has been cultivated by their father and stepmother. Likewise, to education, essential aspects of life, including sustenance and various other elements, also played a crucial role.

Respondent 3 stated that,

"A step-family poses challenges to our overall well-being. I maintain a distance and dispassionate closeness with them. I refrain from participating in any form of sharing with my stepmother. Her treatment of us is lacking in kindness, and she has wholly captivated my father. She persistently used deceit, skillfully provoking my father to become unsettled regarding our matters. I perceive her as the reason for the conflicts that emerge between our father and ourselves."

The existing empirical evidence firmly corroborates prior research, suggesting a contentious and less intimate relationship with the father. Furthermore, the dynamics with the stepfamily were observed to be markedly adverse, marked by considerable avoidance, diminished comfort, decreased loyalty, and a tense and tumultuous environment (Yang, 2003).

Disintegration Regarding Father Inheritance

Although it is commonly accepted as a cultural norm, polygyny is understood to have complicated and profound implications for familial relationships, especially concerning spouses and children. A notable outcome of polygamous marriage is the development of jealousy and the apprehension regarding the potential loss of one's partner's focus.

As respondent 2 argued that,

"Fundamentally, feelings of insufficiency and rivalry among young individuals are inherent to the complexities of polygamous unions, as a father is required to allocate and distribute his resources and attention among multiple women and offspring." The unequal distribution of property inheritance and emotional support by my father in polygamous unions intensifies the insecurity felt by all of us.

The circumstances concerning women and their children, particularly in relation to healthcare access and educational opportunities, can shift as a result of the husband's divided focus and financial capabilities.

Respondent 9 expressed her perception that,

"The inheritance from our father has become an issue of considerable dispute among us and our step-family members. My step-brother took the life of my biological brother over a dispute regarding the division of our father's inheritance. My father shifted all land and property to my stepmother and her children name. Consequently, the inequity in the allocation of land led to a catastrophic fragmentation within familial relationships. Following the passing of my brother, our two families have now become adversaries."

When it comes to inheritance, the young children of several marriages face significant social and emotional obstacles. The societal cohesiveness of the polygamous household is undermined by sibling disputes concerning inheritance rights. The intricacies of familial relationships became increasingly complex, exacerbated by disputes over inheritance and parental favoritism arising from the birth of half-siblings to different mothers. In societies characterized by patriarchal structures, where land, resources, and possessions are associated with considerable social and economic significance, disputes over succession may engender sibling rivalry and adversely affect familial relationships. Persistent disputes among family members have destroyed communal trust and unity, subsequently undermining social cohesion and fostering division. The conflicts, which emerged within wider social dynamics including disagreements over affiliations and resources, possess the capacity to undermine community systems.

Discussion

The integrity of this study is evident in its establishment of an initial foundation for subsequent enquiries into children within polygamous families, offering preliminary data relevant to the Pashtun community in Quetta. This qualitative research aimed to explore the effects of polygyny on child upbringing, particularly in relation to intimate relationships, family integration structures, and psychological circumstances .Nonetheless, the results of the present study revealed a significant relationship with the reviews that have been published previously. While the results are consistent with earlier studies, this research offers unique insights, especially as it marks the inaugural sociological exploration of polygyny practices among Pashtuns in Quetta city, Baluchistan.

However, the specific findings of the study underscored the socio-psychological impacts of polygyny on upbringing children, which encompassed potential risks such as social insecurity, overcrowded living conditions, familial disputes, an uneven distribution of financial resources, an inattentive father within polygynous arrangements, and the deterioration of social relationships. The children originating from a polygynous household encountered detrimental psychological impacts, Including; emotional distress, depression and lack of confidence on their interpersonal dynamics within the familial context. The children regarded polygyny as a context marked by social instability and congestion, alongside a deficiency in both emotional and material support from their father. However, the prior research conducted by Din et al. (2024) provided comprehensive support for these findings. Beyond the emotional ramifications, polygamous unions frequently give rise to financial challenges, as the allocation of resources among spouses and their progeny can precipitate economic hardships and inequalities within the familial framework. Individuals engaged in polygamous relationships encounter bias and condemnation, which limits their access to supportive communities and intensifies feelings of isolation and societal exclusion.

According to earlier research, the relationship between children and stepfamilies in Hmong culture is marked by hostility, avoidance, reduced comfort, diminished loyalty, and a stressful and disruptive environment (Yang, 2003). Similarly, the current study examined the children's relationship experience with their step-families and found that they were characterized by fierce competition, disownment, and lack of sharing, as well as feelings of jealousy, insecurity, fear, and family conflict regarding father inheritance. Having half-siblings from different mothers can further complicate family relationships and cause identity problems and alienation in children, which may impact their sense of social

acceptance and belonging in the family and society at large.Lastly, the parallels and differences between recent empirical data and earlier empirical literature were covered in the discussion above. Additionally, there were notable similarities between the current study's empirical findings and earlier empirical research.

Conclusion

Polygyny, according to previous study, has been seen as a contentious issue on both global and national levels. Over the last two decades, polygamy has garnered significant attention and progress in public, political, and theoretical discourse. In Muslim society Polygyny was linked to Islam and traditional values. Several interviewees viewed this traditional attitude as an impediment to financial and interpersonal interactions among family members. Notwithstanding this reality, identical occurrences observed within the Pashtun community of Quetta city were accompanied by a notable lack of useful information. This research aimed to explore the experiences of children in polygamous marriages, focusing on their socio-psychological implications pashtun community of Quetta, Baluchistan. By employing interpretive techniques, the researcher investigated the subjective feelings and experiences of young children.The researcher conducted comprehensive interviews to examine each respondent thoroughly .The interview sessions spanned a duration of 47 to 60 minutes.The selection of the 14s participants was conducted through snowball sampling, adhering to the established criteria for data saturation. The investigator carefully reviewed the interview transcripts in alignment with the specified research enquiries to find related themes. The investigator evaluated the data through the six-step methodology outlined by Braun and Clarke in 2006. Furthermore, by structuring the fundamental questions regarding the understanding of children, this research addressed the existing gap and explored the understanding the socio-psychological impactss of polygyny on upbringing children.

As a result, the researcher demonstrated that the detrimental impacts of a polygynous household on the upbringing of children were considerable.The study described findings concerning impacts of polygyny, which encompass: potential risks to social insecurity, overcrowded households, financial distress, the deterioration of social relationships. In the present scenario, most respondents indicated the emergence of negative emotions linked to personal connections stemming from the father's second marriage, which led to strained relationships, paternal absence and a series of challenging life experiences. In addition to social impacts, psychological well-being of upbringing children was conducted in the form of frustration, fear, tension and lack of confidence. The current study examined the dynamics of children's relationships with their step-families, revealing patterns characterized by hostile competition, feelings of disownment, a lack of sharing, jealousy, and familial conflict regarding paternal inheritance.The children observed the long-term impacts of polygyny, highlighting the fact that it not only jeopardizes the welfare of one generation but also negatively influence the chances of subsequent generations. It certainly has long-lasting impacts.

Recommendations

Nevertheless, recent investigations have identified the adverse occurrence of polygynys. An observable variation was presented through the investigation of this phenomenon among various demographics in Quetta. Future researchers are recommended to indicate these occurrences through a combination of qualitative and quantitative studies. To enhance the understanding of the effects of polygyny, it is essential to conduct a comparative analysis between households with a single partner and those with multiple partners. The present investigation solely focused on the socio-psychological impats of polygyny concerning upbringing children practices and the arrangement of family integration. Future scholars ought to investigate the numerous factors associated with polygyny, particularly the influence of stepfamilies and the specific responsibilities of

fathers in its establishment. Moreover, subsequent research may explore the perspectives of diverse age demographics within this region, encompassing adolescents, husbands, and wives, and analyses their levels of comprehension regarding polygynous practices through a gendered lens. The majority of studies on polygyny have utilized a cross-sectional methodology. Comprehensive longitudinal research is essential for a better understanding and effective response to the implications of polygyny. In addition to the aforementioned recommendations, the researcher advocates for a heightened understanding and consciousness within Pashtun community about the realities of polygyny practices. If the husband upholds equality and justice in all matters, the first wife and her children would not experience oppression. Moreover, assuming the role of a second wife does not indicate an inferior status in the marriage. Pashtun culture must critically review its collective perspectives and modify its polygamous practices to align with Islamic standards.

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