

**RESEARCH PAPER****Impact of Polygamous Marriages on Marital Ties and Family Relationships in District Battagram of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan****<sup>1</sup>Fakhr Ud Din, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Khalil ur Rahman and <sup>3</sup>Khalid Ahmed\***

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This study aimed to empirically examine the impact of polygamous marriages on marital ties and family relationships in District Battagram of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The study used qualitative paradigm wherein data was collected through in-depth interviews with 22 respondents in the targeted locales. The collected data was thematically analysed and findings of the study suggest that polygamous marriage is a common social and cultural practice in the region which has certain social, psychological and financial ramifications for families, spouses, and children. It is concluded from the study that the discriminative behavior of husband and the inequitable allocation of resources among wives in polygamous marriages leads towards feeling of jealousy, marital conflict, unhealthy competition and many other mental health issues. It is recommended that the government needs to frame policies to ensure the social security of women in polygamous marriages and the practice of polygamy may be allowed under peculiar circumstances.

**Keywords:** Depressive Symptoms, Interventions, Marriages, Partnerships, Relationships**Introduction**

Polygamous marriage is a family pattern and marital arrangements in which one spouse simultaneously keeps several partners of an opposite sex is known as polygamy. This term is broad and can apply to both women who have many husbands concurrently and male partners who have multiple relationships. The most common practice in the world, known as polygyny, is for a male partner to marry more than one female spouse. Other polygamous pattern is polyandry which refers to a single woman married to many men while polygynandry, which is a type of group marriage in which several wives are concurrently married to multiple partners (Khandare, 2015).

Polygamous unions have existed on this planet since ancient times (Lodhi & Siddiqui, 2016). Polygamous unions have been documented in the ancient Far East, Mediterranean European countries, and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, reports gathered by educators and travelers indicate that during the Christian era, polygamous unions were completely practiced by indigenous tribes in Africa and the Americas. The global polygamous marriage rate is a mere 2% of the total population. In the West and Central Africa, polygamy is common; the highest percentage is seen in Burkina Faso (36%). It is also common among Muslims (40%), Christians (24%), and indigenous religions (45%) (Bahari et al., 2021). Approximately 850 societies worldwide allow polygamy, which is a behavior that transcends cultural boundaries. Polygamy is a common practice among many outside non-Western ethnic and religious communities,

especially Muslims. In Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, polygamous marriages are predominantly found in various tribes. Many countries, including, Chad, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Benin, Ghana, Algeria, Congo, Tanzania, Togo, Gabon, and many more, recognize polygamous marriage as a valid form of matrimony. For most Muslim countries, polygamy is both culturally and morally accepted (Block et al., 2021). Pre-Islamic societies included the Hindus, Israelites, Persians, Arabs, Romans, Babylonians, Tunisians, and others who practiced polygamy. Some Jewish legal experts advise against polygamy, yet they may allow it if the first married partner is barren (Ja'far et al., 2019).

Multiple weddings are allowed in Pakistan especially in remote regions even though discouraged by certain quarters. In order to handle the matter of multiple marriages, separation, and a range of other difficulties, the Pakistani authorities formed the Commission on Marriage and Family Laws ( Muzaffar, et. al. 2018; Shahjehan & Rahman, 2021). A man may have up to four companions concurrently under Islamic Sharia. To demonstrate that they are capable of giving sufficient care, they must have their husbands' formal consent (Malik et al., 2018). After seizing control in 1961, General Ayyub Khan implemented the MFLO. The new law did not penalize repeated weddings, but it did specify that agreement from the first spouse was needed, established the age of marriage at 18, and listed circumstances under which males, not only women, might request a separation. In Pakistan, polygamous relationships are legal, even though the Holy Quran permits them in many interpretations (Qayum et al., 2022).

### **Literature Review**

Polygamy may lead to a complex family structure that includes the husband's relationship with each of his subsequent wives and their children. The problems that polygamous households encounter at home are usually the result of co-wives' jealousy of their husbands' resources and affections. Scholars have discovered that polygamous partnerships not only have detrimental effects on couples' health but also increases the chance of children having adverse outcomes (Bahari et al., 2021).

Polygamous marriage affects family's function and can lead to mental health problems. In households where there are several wives, the probability of first spouses experiencing depression is relatively higher than women with single marriages. Women who have more than one marriage are more likely to experience depression because they feel unhappy, uneasy with new people, and unsatisfied (Razak et al., 2020). People who live in polygamous households often struggle with a variety of psychological issues. Family disputes are caused by negative emotions including anxiety, blame, anger, jealousy, and hostility. People who live in polygamous households often struggle with a variety of psychological issues. negative emotions including anxiety, blame, anger, jealousy, and hostility cause family disputes (Pervez & Batool, 2016).

Individuals in polygamous partnerships may face psychological and emotional difficulties due to the man's preference for the children of other spouses. Furthermore, offspring in polygamous unions have less mental stability and peace because there is less bonding between parents and offspring. This characteristic restricts how much guidance, supervision, and care each child receives from their parents, especially if one of the parents is a man (Macabangon, 2022). Children from polygamous families are less likely to succeed academically and have a harder time fitting in with the routines and expectations of school (Dissa, 2016). There was more family conflict, lower academic achievement, and less social integration for children raised in homes with multiple marriages (Phillips, 2001).

Many children live in polygamous households, making it impossible to provide each child the equal amount of time and attention. Years of hostility, contempt, prejudice, conflict, and other tense situations among the offspring of different mothers followed as a result. Some of these people suffered from fear, not receiving their rights, and violence from their parents and extended families because of the father's unfair treatment of his children in polygamy. The father's lack of support or complete absence from helping his children in multiple marriages is a factor that makes it difficult for them to continue their education. Polygamous households nevertheless suffer many of the same fundamental issues, such as the father leaving the family or neglecting the children when he is unable to provide for their basic needs. These problems can sometimes be caused by situations that are specific to multiple families, like having more kids, having more guardians, not having a father or a reliable father, being angry, and fighting among the relatives for resources and connections with one another's father (Macabangon, 2022). After the death of the male partner, polygamy caused legacy problems that destroyed most of the household. Obviously, the spouse must pay for the other woman's marriage. The costs associated with a wedding require large sums of money, particularly since the expenses of newlywed brides have remained amazingly high and steady during their lifetime. Spouses are not compatible, well together, particularly when there are miscommunications and conflicts about how to divide the household budget, alongside (Dissa, 2016).

Greater mental and emotional issues are experienced by women in several marriages. Polygamy has an adverse impact on the mental and social health of polygamous homes due to discrimination and unequal behavior from male partners, and women find it difficult to share their spouse (Naseer et al., 2021). Depression and inferiority complexes are more common among polygamous women. Women also report less marital satisfaction and more challenging mother-child relationships. Pregnant women in polygamy are especially vulnerable to depression because their partners' priorities change to priorities their other spouses. When one's spouse remarries, each spouse experiences mental instability. Many women would suffer from grief, envy, jealousy, extreme tension, and hatred because of adultery, according to numerous investigations. Relationship conflict inside the family also contributes to mental health problems in women. (Narti & SM, 2022).

Psychologically, if a wife witnessed her husband having an affair with another woman, all wives would be upset and wounded. The woman believes her husband is doing this because he can't satisfy his biological need, which makes her feel inferior. Particularly when there is stress in the family, the feeling of inferiority turns into a mental illness. Conflicts within families, particularly between spouses, between wives and stepchildren, or between kids with different mothers, might give rise to other mental illnesses (Rohmadi et al., 2022). Women in polygamous partnerships experience limitations on their fundamental liberties. In addition to discrimination based on gender, other factors that can influence it include ethnicity, social status, and economic standing (Sinal & Peleg, 2020). Women who were polygamous reported having fewer pleasurable sexual experiences and more negative psychological symptoms. There is a reciprocal relationship between depression and sexual problems. This connection is essential because sexual issues and mental diseases are common in the community. Women who are depressed are known to exhibit decreased libido and reactivity. The intensity of depressive illnesses directly correlates with the severity of sexual issues. Sex abnormalities are often associated with antidepressant medicines used to treat depression (Yilmaz, 2022).

Children reared in households with numerous relationships showed greater level of family conflict, poorer academic achievement, and less socialization (Phillips, 2001). There is no opportunity to give each child adequate and equitable time and care because polygamous households often have many children. Years of hostility, contempt, prejudice, conflict, and other tense situations among the offspring of different mothers followed as a result. There were correlations between large families and multiple households, indicating that having more children raised the probability of conflicts inside the family, including those between parents and children, siblings, and parents themselves, as well as general competition within the household (Macabangon, 2022). Living in polygamous households can put children or teenagers under ongoing stress from their parents and families, which can lead to psychological problems in them. Children of older and younger wives complained about their fathers, stepmothers, and half-siblings. However, disputes among polygamous couples are often a result of the unique marital and economic strains associated with polygamy. Many studies have discovered a connection between polygamous marriage patterns and poor mental health in children and adolescents, namely violent behaviors, low self-esteem, obsessive thoughts, depressive symptoms, and general anxiety (Merdad et al., 2023).

### **Material and Methods**

This study aimed to explore the social and cultural considerations behind the practice of polygamous marriages in the context of District Battagram where the polygamous marriages are prevailing. Further, the study also aimed to investigate the consequences of polygamous marriages on spouses, children and families.

Owing to the nature of the study, qualitative research paradigm was used to undertake an in-depth exploration of the underlying causes, social and cultural considerations and impact of polygamous marriages. Phenomenological approach was adopted to document the lived experiences of study participants with regard to polygamous marriages, its causes and consequences. This approach centers on the investigation and comprehension of individuals' lived experiences, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of their distinct viewpoints and interpretations of the phenomenon. Adopting a phenomenological approach, the researcher extracted an essence of the participants' experiences (Creswell et al., 2007).

The selected locale of the study is district Battagram. In order to collect the data from the potential respondents, three villages including Kuza Banda, Tikri Maira, and Bania were being purposively selected as these villiages are having large number of polygamous marriages allowing the researcher to collect data from sufficient number of respondents. Snow ball sampling procedure was adopted and a total of 25 male and female study participants were interviewed through Semi Structured Interview (SSIs) while using data saturation principles.

Data was acquired from a male and female respondents having polygamous marriages. Male respondents were surveyed directly by the investigator; female respondents were surveyed through interactions with female undergraduate students in the relevant villages and Lady Health Workers (LHVs) in the district. Prior to gathering data, the researcher gave the LHV and students instructions on data collection instruments. Also, with the assistance of female kin members, the researcher personally gathered data from a few relatives who were involved in polygamous marriage. Utilizing snowball sampling, the researcher gathered data from the participants. Respondents above the age of eighteen (18) were asked to provide data.

## Results and Discussion

The collected data was documented in the form of field notes in the local language. All the interviews were documented in separate files which were studied repeatedly to develop familiarity with the collected data and identify common themes. The data was analysed while using six step model of Broun and Clarke (2006). All the interviews were transcribed and themes were being extracted.

Based on the interview transcripts, themes were being extracted from the data highlighting the impacts of polygamous marriages on families, children and spouses. The researcher illuminated the different facets of family life affected by multiple marriages using in-depth interviews and narratives. The previously listed psychological impacts also include loneliness, despair, discontent, and jealousy.

### Fear, Insecurity and Jealousy

In polygamous relationships, having close physical and emotional bonds to multiple spouses can naturally breed envy. Couples may get jealous of one another due to perceived favoritism, emotional attachment, or fear of being treated differently. In the complex dynamics of polygamous marriages, managing jealousy calls for good interaction, building confidence, and a mutual dedication to facing fears. For all parties involved, navigating these emotions requires sympathy and a collaborative struggle to establish a secure and encouraging environment. respondent narrated:

*As soon I came to know about the second marriage of my husband, I became extremely worried and depressed because of losing my husband and future of my children. I could not accept the fact that my husband will start living with other women in my presence and it was difficult to accept living under the single roof. I lost all my faith and trust in my husband and it was very unwelcoming to meet him with that love and affection we had in the past. I was feeling that my children have left helpless and we have been left with no support in the coming time. I was dominated by the constant feeling of fear, discomfort and jealousy which haunted me permanently forcing me to deal with the hard truth that the trustworthy partner I had depended on was no longer there I had believed him to be.*

Because of the complicated patterns of social relationships in polygamous marriage, family environment is always dominated by negative emotions, jealousy, fear and insecurity. In this social pattern, all partners are preoccupied with negative thoughts that seriously affecting the social fabric of the family. Every one become selfish, competitive and usually ignorant of the needs and feelings of other in the family. There is a lack of understanding among spouses and all the positive channels of communication as a consequence problem, insecurity, jealousy, fear and mistrust is created among spouses. Since they build trust and mitigate the harmful consequences of jealousy in the intricate dynamics of polygamy, open communication and empathy are essential to solving these issues. Polygamy may lead to a complex family structure that includes the husband's role and the ties between subsequent wives and their children. One of the common reasons of the problems polygamous households encounter is co-wife jealousy of the husband's wealth and love. Another respondent added:

*I do not think I would be able to tolerate my husband getting married again, but it has been harder than I expected to live with him and another lady. I had not given my feelings any thought until I watched him create a life with someone else. Although I first came to terms with the difficult circumstances, there is no denying the pain. As my*

*feelings change along our shared journey, managing the challenges of having a second wife calls for constant communication and understanding.*

A difficult situation might arise when jealousy of a husband shared with a polygamous wife. Communication, maintaining emotional balance, and allocating attention fairly all become crucial. When it comes to the dynamics of a polygamous marriage, honest communication and trust help control envy and promote a calm cohabitation where each partner feels valued. A third or second wife typically causes the "senior wife" much anguish, and most women in polygamous households are unhappy. meaning that polygamous relationships are more likely to end in divorce than monogamous ones due to marital strife, stress, and jealousy. Mothers and children who live in polygamous households are more likely to experience mental health problems due to stress.

### **Depression**

Polygamous women are more prone to emotional and psychological issues. For example, findings have shown that women in polygamous marriages are more prone than women in monogamous marriages to experience depression and low self-esteem, as well as more problematic mother-child bonds and worse marital satisfaction. respondent said:

*My partner's changing feelings for another lady and he married her in presence of mine in our once happy marriage sent me into a deep state of depression and anxiety. Time tore apart the happiness we had once experienced, leaving me to struggle with the mental turmoil of a failing relationship. Our once-vibrant union was clouded by the sorrow of watching his newfound interest, destroying the joy that we had established together. The betrayal and the complicated feelings that followed were an impossible barrier for me to overcome as I faced the hard truth of a relationship ending and a shadow of sorrow and hopelessness taking its place.*

Polygamous people may find it more difficult to regulate their complex emotions, which can lead to greater worry and despair. Mental health may be impacted by the emergence of rivalry, inadequacy, and loneliness sentiments. For the polygamous household to resolve these conflicts, foster empathy, and collaborate towards emotional fortitude and balance, candid dialogue and emotional support are crucial. The women in monogamous marriages were not like the women in polygamous ones. Anger, hopelessness, somatization, and anxiety were more prevalent. Polygamous women also tend to have lower ratings of life and marriage happiness, family functioning, and self-esteem, as well as higher levels of psychoticism, general symptom severity, positive symptoms overall, and mental disease.

### **Unhappiness and loneliness**

Loneliness and dissatisfaction linked to polygamy may arise from complex emotional dynamics. In polygamous partnerships, feelings of inadequacy, jealousy, or competitiveness for affection and attention might surface. It is crucial to have open lines of communication and establish clear expectations in the partnership to handle these problems and support the emotional welfare of both parties. It is important to realize that the impact of polygamy on happiness and loneliness varies greatly among individuals and depends on the kinds of relationships and level of emotional support provided. respondent said:

*Many aspects of our relationship caused me sadness when I was left alone with my girls after my husband's second marriage. I think that I have no other source of help than turning to my God in this time of trouble. Every time, I had the thinking that no one is around here to help me in my difficult time. Caring my girl was a big challenge for me and it was a reason of great displeasure for me to look after my baby in a financially difficult situation.*

It is generally held view that women are facing serious challenges in polygamous marriages when it comes to social and emotional support. In comparison to women in monogamous marriages, polygamous women are usually experiencing poor marital quality and less marital satisfaction. They often feel socially withdrawal experiencing marital unhappiness and conflict. They are feeling at the higher risks having more problematic mother-child relationships with depressed feelings and low self-esteem.

### **Financial Implications**

Depending on the conditions of families and spouses, polygamous marriages have certain financial ramification as well. Polygamous marriage demands men to share his sources among his wives which is usually leading towards financial strains. Such financial strains may further exacerbate and seriously affecting the quality of housing, healthcare and education. Laws and social values pertaining to the marital obligations further create complications as inheritance laws demands equitable share for all wives irrespective of the prevailing conditions. One of the respondent narrated:

*It is become very difficult for me to meet the financial needs of my wives and children over the past few years. As I progress moving with polygamous marriage, the economic pressure is rising up with increasing inflation. The existing and available financial resources are not meeting my family needs and the pressure is growing with each passing day. My financial conditions were quite stable and I was easily managing the demands and needs of my spouses and children but the numbers of children, their healthcare, schooling and substance has evolved into a big challenge for me.*

Polygamy can put a strain on a husband's finances because he helps many households, which can affect daily expenses, housing costs, and income distribution. Taking care of the financial responsibilities of both partners and children may lead to increased financial strain, which could impact the husband's long-term financial stability and overall economic security.

Another respondent added:

*I was being a tailor by profession and that making and sewing clothing is the only source of revenue for me. I was initially prosperous, but as time went on, my income significantly decreased, making it more difficult for me to support my large family. The financial burden grew unbearable because there were more than ten children from two women. I had a very negative experience with polygamy. complex difficulties experienced by people navigating polygamous households within economic limits by expressing profound anxiety about my current inability to provide the necessities for my huge family.*

The spouse must pay for the other woman's marriage. The costs of marriage require large sums of money, particularly for newlyweds whose wedding prices have stayed surprisingly high and stable during their lifetime. Couples don't work well together, particularly when there are miscommunications and conflicts about how to divide the family budget, among other issues.

The husband bears the cost of marrying a second wife since money is needed for the bride price, which has historically been a significant and constant cost in Mali. In Mali, couples rarely work together, especially when there is a lack of knowledge and disagreements over how to divide up family money, among other issues. Moreover, polygamy is sometimes held accountable for the politics of injustice that support it, as is the case when child brides are involved.

### **Social impact**

Polygamy can have a deleterious social influence, especially on the women and kids of such households. Depending on their mother's status, children in polygamous households may feel neglected or receive different attention. This unfair treatment may influence their psychological well-being and feeling of self-worth. In addition, wives in polygamous relationships frequently deal with rivalry, jealousy, and the struggle for the husband's attention and finances. As a result, co-wives' relationships might suffer, which would make the home demanding and sometimes unpleasant. Wives' sharing of money, provision of emotional support, and power to make decisions can all be indicators of prejudice. Because of these interactions, polygamous families have a complicated social landscape that can intensify inequality and negatively impact each member's general well-being. Respondent narrated that:

*My partner's second marriage has significantly impacted my children's ability to form positive social ties. I witnessed discrimination among my children because my husband does not pay proper attention to my children contrary to another partner children and second partner, further, the husband also discriminates between me and his second wife in terms of time, love, and interaction. The answer stressed how this circumstance prevents the kids from forming fair and constructive social relationships. My observations highlight the difficulties caused by the dynamics of polygamous families, which have an impact on the relationships between siblings within the extended family structure as well as parent-child connections.*

The results of the study appeared to support the hypothesis that polygamous women's primary cause of aggravation stems from a poor relationship with their husband. This alliance following their partner's union with a different woman. The polygamous lifestyle, which strains normal family relationships by causing conflicts and issues within households. A difficult home situation can affect children's development and achievement, particularly in terms of their education and the lessons they learn in school. Children raised in polygamous households are less likely to succeed academically and have a harder time adjusting to academic practices and customs.

Although being commonly accepted as a societal norm, polygamy has been viewed to have complicated and tremendous impacts on family relationships especially for female spouses and children. One of the most highlighted consequences of polygamous marriage is that of jealousy and fear of losing the partner interest in one life. In other words, feelings of scantiness and rivalry among the spouses are inherited in the nature and patterns of polygamous marriage in which a husband is bound to divide and share his resources and attention among several wives. The unequal distribution of financial resources and emotional affection in polygamous relationships makes wives feel even more insecure. Even though every wife would hope for an equal portion of her husband's time, money, and emotional support, this is not often how things work out. The wives' and their children's living situations, access to healthcare, and educational opportunities may differ because of the husband's divided attention and resources. Greater mental and emotional issues are experienced by women in several marriages.

Polygamy has an adverse impact on the mental and social health of polygamous homes due to discrimination and unequal behavior from male partners, and women find it difficult to share their spouse (Naseer et al., 2021). Wives may thus feel neglected and marginalized. Furthermore, women living in polygamous households may experience feelings of loneliness and isolation due to the psychological toll of having a husband with numerous wives. Wives sometimes feel a great deal of emotional distance and alienation from their husbands even when they live close by. A persistent sensation of loneliness and disconnection can be exacerbated by the absence of exclusive emotional closeness and companionship as well as the continual reminder of their husband's relationships with other wives.

The psychological impacts of polygamy are profound and varied, especially in the case of depression. Women who are married to multiple partners may experience negative thoughts and feelings of inadequacy because of their perceived inferiority in the marriage hierarchy. Self-doubt and feelings of worthlessness can be made worse by constantly comparing oneself to other spouses and worrying about losing their husband's love. A strong sense of hopelessness and despair can also result from a spouse's lack of emotional support and validation, which can worsen depressive symptoms. Moreover, the psychological distress that women in polygamous relationships endure might be made worse by the social stigma attached to polygamy. Polygamous women may experience discrimination and exclusion from their societies where monogamy is the norm, further cutting them off from social support networks. Many women would suffer from grief, envy, jealousy, extreme tension, and hatred because of adultery, according to numerous investigations. Relationship conflict inside the family also contributes to mental health problems in women (Narti & SM, 2022).

Sibling disputes over inheritance rights in District Battagram's polygamous homes affect social cohesion outside of the family. Having half-siblings who were born to separate mothers complicates family dynamics and increases conflict around inheritance and parental preference. Sibling rivalry and strained family connections can result from succession conflicts in patriarchal societies where land, resources, and assets have great social and economic importance. In addition, ongoing intra-family disputes erode community trust and solidarity, weakening social cohesiveness and creating division. Community structures may become unstable because of these tensions, which may also show themselves in more general social dynamics like disagreements over alliances and resources. Therefore, in addition to intra-family mediation, community-wide initiatives to support fair resource allocation and encourage inclusive social interactions are also necessary to address problems resulting from polygamous unions. correlations between large families and multiple households, indicating that having more children raised the probability of conflicts inside the family, including those between parents and children, siblings, and parents themselves, as well as general competition within the household (Macabangon, 2022)

Male partners in polygamy face severe financial hardships as they attempt to support the lifestyles of numerous spouses and their offspring. Having more homes means paying more for housing, food, healthcare, education, and other expenses, which can put a strain on already tight finances. Furthermore, it takes a significant financial commitment to meet the material and emotional requirements of every wife and child, which frequently leaves the male partner feeling stressed and insecure about money. Consequently, polygamous unions may worsen inequalities in wealth and resources within the home and prolong cycles of poverty and economic instability. However,

disputes among polygamous couples are often a result of the economic strains associated with polygamy (Merdad et al., 2023).

In addition to complicating family dynamics, having half-siblings from separate moms can cause youngsters to experience identity problems and feelings of estrangement. Their sense of social integration and belonging within the family and larger community may be impacted by these processes. Many children live in polygamous households, making it impossible to provide each child the equal amount of time and attention. Years of hostility, contempt, prejudice, conflict, and other tense situations among the offspring of different mothers followed as a result (Macabangon, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

Insightful findings have emerged using qualitative approaches and snowball sampling, giving light on the varied obstacles that individuals encounter when living in polygamous family arrangements. The study shed attention on the prevalent negative psychological impacts of polygamous marriages, focusing on themes such as jealousy, sadness, loneliness, and unhappiness. Jealousy, which stems from sentiments of competitiveness and inadequacy among spouses, worsens stressed interpersonal relationships, and weakens marital peace. Depression is frequently accompanied by feelings of neglect, insecurity, and emotional anguish, which are compounded by the presence of many spouses, resulting in increased loneliness, and decreased marital satisfaction. Beyond psychological consequences, polygamous marriages have a financial cost, as the distribution of resources between spouses and their children causes economic hardship and inequities within the family unit. Individuals in polygamous relationships experience discrimination and judgement, which limits their access to support networks and contributes to feelings of loneliness and societal exclusion. Taking on these difficult challenges requires a comprehensive strategy. Policymakers, community leaders, and mental health specialists must recognize and address the needs of people in polygamous families. Interventions targeted at boosting emotional well-being, encouraging open communication, and offering support services can help to reduce the negative impacts of polygamy on family dynamics and build stronger relationships.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that women and children in polygamous marriages may be provided psycho-social support so that their emotional and social difficulties may be properly managed to prevent further harm.

The financial conditions and need assessment of women and children in polygamous marriages may be prompted in the targeted locales and financial support from Benazir Income Support Program may be immediately provided.

The government especially local government and district administration should take step to collect data of women and children in polygamous marriages of their respective regions to ensure that the husband may provide equal resources and attention to women and children. A complaint cell may be also established to address issues on daily basis.

The government should frame policies to ensure that polygamous marriages will be practiced only under the unavoidable circumstances.

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