

As such women were
being exploited and



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As a matter of fact, the limited polygamy was allowed because of the social need of that time. In the wars with disbelievers, a large number of male Muslims lost their lives as a result of which the females outnumbered males in the society. There were several war-widows and orphans to whom nobody was ready to maintain and give protection. Rather, such women were being exploited and children born to them too could not get any social status. To avoid injustice being done to them, Islam permitted four wives so that one man could solve the problem of at least four females at a time. But in order to avoid any injustice towards such women, this was allowed subject to a very strict condition.

Quran lays down this condition in very clear words: 'Marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four, if you fear that you cannot do justice (i. e. treat equally) to so many, then one (only).' Giving equal treatment to two or more wives does not mean only providing them equal food and clothing's etc. but it also guarantees them equal love and affection. But, it is not humanly possible to love all the wives equally without any favour to one and prejudice to the other. This was very well apprehended, and the Quran lays down in a subsequent Ayat that: 'You will not be able to deal equally between your wives however much you wish to do so'.

It is therefore, submitted, that although four wives at a time are permitted yet the Quran is in favour of monogamy. On the basis of these two verses of Quran, sometimes the progressive Muslims plead that since the fulfillment of this Quranic condition is not possible, monogamy should be the rule of law. There is already a strict monogamy among the Motazila Muslims.

But the fact is that following the tradition of the Prophet, Muslims in every part of the world including India, have been legally practising polygamy of four wives. It is significant to note that the Indian Muslims, in the recent years, are in favour of monogamy. Now-a-days, the Indian Muslims avoid polygamy of four wives. Economic stresses, desire to live a decent modern life and spread of education etc. are some of the reasons due to which more and more educated Muslims in India now prefer to contract only one marriage at a time.

On the basis of a survey conducted by the Indian Statistical Institute and from other official sources it has been found that the percentage of polygamous marriage among the Muslims is less than that among the Hindus. A report submitted by the Deputy Registrar General of India revealed the fact that polygamous marriage in the Hindu community was 5. 1% whereas in the Muslim community the percentage of polygamous marriage was 4. 8%. Some of the Muslim countries e. g.

Turkey and Tunisia have already made laws for monogamy. In Pakistan, where polygamy of four wives has not been totally abolished, it has been discouraged by making such laws under which it is difficult to marry two or more wives. In India, two or more than two (up to four) wives are legally allowed to Muslims. But where such Muslim is a Government-servant, he cannot contract the second marriage without prior permission of the Government.