

Polygamy and monogamy practices



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Since creation, according to bible, God created man and woman as well as animals which were both male and female. In such a situations where there exists animals of different sex, it allows the reproduction and stability of one generation after another generation. Human beings are known social beings, and in most cases need one another to survive, therefore it's difficult to exclusively depend on themselves. To produce offspring, they usually marry and have children which in turn, becomes the standard of creation for the human population. Even though we all share the similarity of being human beings, there still exists differences in what we believe in and the values that we attach to various things. One of these things, is the topic of marriage, which by definition, is a reunion of a man and a woman to come together and live together as a husband and wife. Due to the diverse objectives that people have in marriage, some people consider that having one wife (monogamy) is the ideal method, whereas others believe in having a number of wives (polygamy) (Family, 2009). This paper seeks to have an in-depth look at the two issues; polygamy and monogamy by looking at what the proponents of each thinks about it as well as look at countries that have practiced them. It will also look at pros and cons of each as well, and why people should respect one another despite which side they take. Last but not least, the paper will analyze the cultural beliefs of the two groups and dig deeper on why they hold on their beliefs and reasons they give to support their stand.

Monogamy, is one of the most widely used form of marriage and its supporters believe in one man/woman to one wife/husband. Monogamy is derived from the Greek word mono, which means alone, and gamos,

meaning re-union or marriage. It is believed that the majority of the human race practice monogamy as opposed to polygamy. One benefit considered of monogamy, is that it increases the chances of offspring survival because the parents collaborate together and raise the child (Edward, 1928). This perception does seem to be changing with time due to complexities of fast paced, modern life though. In the past, it was common for men to go to work while the woman was supposed to maintain the house hold duties, which also included raising the children. The modern world has changed this though, and now there is no distinct roles between men and women. Equally now, both must work hard to cope and deal with the challenges of modern life. Monogamy can be categorized and broken into four groups: social monogamy, sexual monogamy, marital monogamy and genetic monogamy. There exists small differences between these groups and that is why this paper all discussion will be centered on the man and woman perspective of monogamy. Many communities have in the past and are currently now practicing monogamy. Monogamy is as old as Adam and Eve, for during creation, God created one woman and one man. It is anticipated by some people that Christianity has a connection with the origin of monogamy (Edward, 1928). Europe just happens to be one of the countries where Christianity took its toll and spread rapidly. Before Christianity, Europe practiced polygamy. The roman culture believed in monogamy to such an extent that those who failed to observe the rules, faced dire consequences. Due to the severe penalties, some people even went to the extent of killing their wives so that they could have an opportunity of marrying another one. Cesar is an example of one who banished and killed his wife in order to get the opportunity of marrying another one (William, u. d.). This indicates how

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strong their culture laws were and how people desperately tried to abide by them. The great conqueror Napoleon, was also forced to divorce his first wife so that he could marry another one order to birth a son. This shows how deep rooted these cultures were by going to the extent of making a laws which were to be observed by all of the population. These cultures main goals were making sure the chances of immorality were reduced, as well as helping couples remain committed to each other. It is evident that no matter how strict a country was, monogamy is hard to uphold as it can be seen in Rome, where although marriage was monogamous, the sexual relationship did not follow the same, and mating was polygamous (Eshleman, 1994). People abided by the rules, and most cultural beliefs were upheld and embraced by the community. One downside to these beliefs, was lack in acceptance by all of its citizens and some accepted it just because they lacked any alternatives. The communities that practiced monogamy stood a better chance of having families that worked together towards a common goal like raising children, giving them parental love and attention which are very crucial to the development child. As opposed to polygamous family, where most of the time the husband can not afford to be with all wives and his children at the same time. A polygamous father quite simply, cannot afford it. The children from these families are not likely in most cases to fully enjoy the parental love of both parents like those from monogamous family. In the Roman Empire, the consequences of bigamy were severe as death. This means that the citizens had no other option but to abide by them. The Empire saw it as a way to reduce the numbers of unwanted children, lower the levels of immorality, and lessen the amount of single mothers resulting from divorce, due to unfavorable conditions that arise with polygamy. Even <https://assignbuster.com/polygamy-and-monogamy-practices/>

though this culture was imitated, it still has its weakness because most it's foremost people had children outside marriage as well as concubines on the side. It showed disregard for human rights, because some women were divorced or murdered so that the men could get the opportunity to marry another one. The culture also lacked proportion matching especially in comparison to modern days since the male to female ratio does not compute. This means that a great number of women would turn out to be single since their population is so high. In turn, the women who birth children out of marriage, will raise children that are not able to receive parental love from the father. Those children then do not have much choice but to lean on what they see their mother doing, and in some cases, the traits they acquire, might not be ideal ones.

Polygamy is derived from the Greek word, which means the practice of having many women. This practice is very old and was practiced in many countries throughout the world. The practice is predominant in many African countries, where ones wealth is calculated in terms of how many children one has. They believe that when one person is in position to feed many mouths, that it translates to that one person having enough wealth since poor people could not afford to feed numerous children. Other countries have different reasons to why they allowed its citizens to practice polygamy. This discussion will focus on one of the African countries, Kenya, where currently, some of its communities still do practice polygamy (volume 10, 1967).

Before colonization, people used to have their own standards of living as well as doctrines and laws that they had to abide by. Kenya happens to have <https://assignbuster.com/polygamy-and-monogamy-practices/>

more than 42 tribes where each tribe has its own beliefs and culture to follow. Most of these tribes, acknowledge polygamy and it is suggested by Ngugi (2006) that women once they perceive that they are reaching old age, could suggest that their husband marry another younger woman who to help him with house hold chores as well as marital needs. To many Kenyans, they believed polygamy to be essential in making it possible for the continuation of a generation. This was a time when children used to die in large numbers at extremely tender ages, due to diseases like measles, polio amongst others. It was then considered vital for a man to marry many women and reproduce many children so that even if a majority of them were dying, the hopes and chances that a few of them would survive was increased. The Kenyan culture accepted polygamy and even women themselves did not feel cheated nor did they object to it. A good example is the Luo community in Kenya in currently, polygamy is still practiced. Wife inheritance which is also a part of polygamy is being practiced as well (Ngugi, 2008)).

According to their culture, this habit is encouraged to discourage the chances of the widowed woman from going out to look for other men, and instead be inherited by one of the brothers of her deceased husband.

Another reason that is supported by those who practice polygamy, is to bring about a balance between men and women. Since the women's numbers are many, it is believed by the men practicing it, that more women in turn will be able to get husbands. The African culture means well in practicing polygamy, and has good intentions in doing so. These women and communities as a whole, believe it better to have a co-wife and abolish the need for their men to have hidden relations with other women outside the marriage. Therefore

there was no more secret business, and men could inform their wives of their intention to marry another woman as they deemed right (Ngugi, 2008).

Lately though there has been a decline in the practice of polygamy, resulting from many people embracing Christianity in Kenya. Many are now abiding by doctrines of the church and because of this immorality and promiscuity is on the rise. Research has shown that both married women and men are having other relationships outside their marriages, contributing to a high HIV infection rate in these groups. Polygamy is associated with such benefits as the impartiality in the distribution of wealth. This is because polygamy in most cases is practiced by men who are financially stable. By them marrying many women, there will be a steady flow of cash, either through gift or even just by merely supporting the women that he marries (William, 2009).

Immorality and promiscuity rates also decline along with sexually transmitted diseases, for the simple fact that a man will be content with women he has. There are also more morals imposed in such a society, and instead of women resulting to using devices such as sex toys to fulfill their needs, they stand a much better chance of getting men who will satisfy their needs sexually instead. Human beings are emotional and require a channel or means of satisfying those feelings. When that opportunity is not presented, they can result to other untraditional means to satisfy their emotions. Polygamy also has its shortcomings which can vary depending on how it is practiced. When it occurs with individuals who are not economically stable, children might suffer and lack basic needs due to the number of children the man will be providing for. It also neglects the children of paternal love since they can not have their father on daily basis. It can also make women feel not fully appreciated and wonder why their man would be

looking at other women. In the current times, it can lead to mistrust, and increasing the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Mirriam, 2006).

In looking at both polygamy and monogamy, each one of them seems to have its advantages and disadvantages. Keeping in mind that humans are social beings who like to interact with each other, people should learn to appreciate other peoples cultures since we can perceive things differently and what some may consider as right, may be considered as very wrong in another country. Even though this has always been a controversial topic as to what people recognize as its pertaining issues, but it is really time for people to appreciate the difference that exists between people and the only way to solve this is by learning about the positive things from the given cultural community and disregard what could be perceived to be of less importance (Jenks, 2006). Communities can not exist on their own and they require a collaboration with others to co-exist peacefully. It is important to not only realize but appreciate that there are disparities between these two types of marriages and the children brought out of each of them exhibit the differences in the values that they learned from their parents. Research done has indicated that children from polygamous family might have more negative attitudes towards their step siblings and are often lacking in genuine love towards each other. In extreme cases, they sometimes rise against one another and even cause bodily harm to one another. Often lacking in fatherly love, they generally seem to perceive their father in a negative light as well. All that having been said, people will continue behaving differently and that is why laws play a vital role ensuring that

people abide by them and operate within those boundaries. Through social interaction, people get to discover other peoples different ways of living and their abilities to interact with each other.

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