



Study of Cultural – Social Factors Associated with Polygamy in the Bastak City, Iran

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ABSTRACT: This study was performed to determine social-cultural polygamy-related factors. This is a descriptive-correlational research. The statistical population of this study included all the polygamous men of Bastak in 2011. Since there was no formal statistics on these men, 105 individuals were selected randomly from available samples. This research was performed considering Maslow hierarchy of needs, functionalism and conflict scientific theories, and using a questionnaire. At first a number of Bastakian polygamous men were interviewed, and then the final questionnaire of the study, which was consisted of 49 items, was prepared and implemented. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between men's education, cultural factors and traditional components, and between judicial factors and justice, the first wife's permission, and terms of the marriage contract components. Furthermore, the individuals' responses showed that sexual beliefs are effective as a subjective factor.

Keywords: Cultural Factors, Social Factors, Polygamy

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTRODUCTION

A picture of a family is usually consisted of a husband as the breadwinner, a housewife and a few kids. This kind of nuclear family has been known as the promise and ideal of the third wave. According to Toffler, the protection of these nuclear families depends on maintaining the society in mass production and factory system (Toffler, 1984).

Studying polygamy has been considered by many social scientists. The notable point of these explanations is the different, and sometimes contradictory, attitudes towards this subject. Not only biased defending of or strong opposition to polygamy are common among ordinary people, but they have been also expanded to social scientists (Ganji, 2005). Although polygamy is not the dominant family system in Iran, it increased considerably in 1986, due to critical circumstances caused by the Iran-Iraq war (Amani, 2001). Forthun, et al. (mentioned by Salimzadeh et al., 2005) believe that those families which lack the required structure and flexibility (disturbed and inflexible), have discrete or inter twined boundaries, have problematic collaborations and covered and indirect relationships, are dysfunctional families.

Various researches have been studied polygamy and polygamy-related factors. In a study named "the effects of remarriage on the first wife and children in UAE", AL-SHAMSI et al. (2005) found that half of these children showed a decline in academic performance due to psychological problems. Furthermore, after the second marriage, the fathers of these children spend less time with them. In this study, snow sampling was used and the results were comparatively put together

with previous studies of this subject, and were offered in social-cultural frames.

GhasemiArdahai (2007) noted that, in the past, the economic factor generally had a negative correlational critical role in the age at first marriage; that is, the improvement of economy led to a decline in the women's age at first marriage, and downturn and recession increased it. Moreover, women considered marriage as a way to raise their social status.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Considering our subject, the descriptive-correlational method was used, which is the suitable method for this kind of study. The statistical population of this study included all the polygamous men in Bastak. As a descriptive/survey study, the sample size was determined using Morgan Table. The sample of this study included 105 polygamous men in Bastak, who were selected using simple random sampling. The means of data gathering was a questionnaire with closed questions and the data were gathered personally. The questionnaire includes 55 questions and items, which have one or more answers. This questionnaire is consisted of five factors. The distribution of questions and items of each factor is as follows:

Economic: 10- 11- 27- 28

Cultural: 14- 17- 20- 23- 29- 31- 33- 34- 35- 49 (items 3-4 and 6)

Judicial: 12- 13- 16- 18- 21- 22- 25- 26- 48- 49 (items 5, 1 and 2)

Religious: 36- 37- 38- 39- 40- 41- 42- 43- 44- 45

Social: 15- 19- 24- 30

Based on previous studies of theoretical sources of research and interviewing with some individuals of our sample, a set of polygamy-related factors and components was developed. The draft of this inventory was handed to the supervisor and some of the experts, and they were asked to examine each of the considered components and comment on them. In this way, the face validity of the questionnaire was confirmed. Then, in order to determine the content validity, 15 questionnaires were distributed among the sample to be completed, which led to revision and modification of some of the questions. In this way, the instrument of our study, which was consisted of 55 questions and items, was prepared. The test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. For this purpose, at first the questionnaire was completed by 30 individuals of the sample and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.81. Based on the reliability of the questionnaire in the first step, it was implemented on the given sample. The results showed that the reliability of the questionnaire with 55 questions and items, and for 105 individuals, was 0.84, which is a high reliability for research instruments. The results of this study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including mean, standard deviation, and the correlation coefficient, using SPSS system.

RESULTS

The table 1, shows the statistical distribution of marital age of given sample. The marital age has been divided into the age at first marriage and the age at second marriage. In other words, both ages of the first and second marriages of the given sample are provided in the following table.

Table 1 shows that the highest frequency of the first marriage belongs to 15-31 years of old which, with 95 individuals, is equal to 90.4% of the given sample. On the other hand, the lowest frequency of the first marriage belongs to 46-64 years of old which, with 3 individuals, is equal to 2.9% of the given sample. None of the participants were 61 years of old or older at the time of their marriage. The statistical distribution of the age at second marriage shows that the highest frequency belongs to 31-45 years of old which, with 68 individuals, is equal to 64.8% of the given sample, and the lowest frequency of the second marriage belongs to 61 years of old or older which, with 3 individuals, is equal to 2.9% of the given sample.

1- There was no relationship between men's education and polygamy (remarriage). The first hypothesis examined the relationship between men's education and polygamy (remarriage). Spearman correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis. The table 2 shows the results:

Table 2 shows that there is a negative relationship between men's education and polygamy in $p=0.02$; that is, when level of men's education is higher, polygamy occurs less and when level of their education is lower, polygamy occurs more. According to $p=0.02$, this relationship is significant. In other words, it can be said with 95% confidence that there is a significant relationship between men's education and polygamy, and the research hypothesis is confirmed.

2- There is a relationship between the couples' age and men's polygamy. Spearman correlation coefficient was used to test the second hypothesis and the relationship between the couples' age and men's polygamy. Table 3 shows the results. Based on the data of the table 3, there is no significant relationship between couples' age and men's polygamy.

3- There is a relationship between social factors and men's polygamy. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test the third research hypothesis and the relationship between social factors and men's polygamy. Table 4 shows the results. Based on the data of the table 4, there is no significant relationship between social factors and men's polygamy, and this hypothesis is rejected.

4. There is a relationship between economic factors and polygamy. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between economic factors and men's polygamy. Table 5 shows the results. Based on the data of the table 5, there is no significant relationship between economic factors and men's polygamy, and this hypothesis is rejected.

5- There is a relationship between cultural factors and men's polygamy. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between cultural factors and men's polygamy. The results are in the table 6 that shows there is a positive relationship between cultural factors and men's polygamy in $p=0.001$. According to $p=0.001$, this relationship is significant with 99% confidence, and there is a significant relationship between cultural factors and men's polygamy. Therefore, the research hypothesis is confirmed.

6- There is a relationship between judicial factors and men's polygamy. The sixth hypothesis examined the relationship between judicial factors and men's polygamy. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis.

Table 7 shows that there is a positive relationship between judicial factors and men's polygamy in $p=0.001$. According to $p=0.001$, this relationship is significant with 99% confidence, and there is a significant relationship between judicial factors and men's polygamy. Therefore, the research hypothesis is confirmed.

7- There is a relationship between religious attitudes and men's polygamy. The seventh hypothesis examined the relationship between religious attitudes and men's polygamy. Pearson correlation coefficient

was used to test this hypothesis. Table 8 shows the results. Based on the data of the table 8, there is no significant relationship between religious attitudes and men's polygamy, and this hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1. Frequency and frequency percentage at marital age

Age at first marriage	Age at first marriage		Age at second marriage	
	Frequency	Frequency Percentage	Frequency	Frequency Percentage
15-30 years of old	95	90.4	12	11.4
31-45 years of old	7	6.7	68	64.8
46-60 years of old	3	2.9	22	21
61 years of old or older	0	0	3	2.9
Total	105	100	105	100

Table 2. Test of Spearman correlation coefficient between men's education and polygamy

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Polygamy: Men's education	-0.227	0.02

Table 3. Test of Spearman correlation coefficient between couples' age and men's polygamy

Variables	polygamy	
	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Men's age at the time of second marriage	-0.14	0.1
Wives' age at the time of their husbands' second marriage	0.055	0.5

Table 4. Test of Pearson correlation coefficient between social factors and men's polygamy

Variables	polygamy	
	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Polygamy		
Social factors	0.023	0.8

Table 5. Test of Pearson correlation coefficient between economic factors and men's polygamy

Variables	polygamy	
	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Polygamy		
Economic factors	0.167	0.08

Table 6. Test of Pearson correlation coefficient between cultural factors and men's polygamy

Variables	polygamy	
	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Polygamy		
Cultural factors	0.433	0.001

Table 7. Test of Pearson correlation coefficient between judicial factors and men's polygamy

Variables	polygamy	
	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Polygamy		
Judicial factors	0.497	0.001

Table 8. Test of Pearson correlation coefficient between social factors and men's polygamy

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Polygamy: Religious attitudes	0.059	0.05

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to determine the polygamy-related factors in Bastak. The results showed that education plays a role in the occurrence of polygamy; that is, less educated men show more

polygamy. Hilman (1975) found that men's illiteracy or low literacy is related to polygamy and, in fact, illiterate or low literate men have more tendencies towards polygamy. Lack of knowledge or impaired knowledge cause the individual to observe

phenomena superficially, neglect the consequences, different aspects or problems, and take action. It should be noted that in those societies, in which there is a severe social mobility and professional immigrations are increasing, individuals' social origin makes the level and type of education and its continuation qualified and helpful.

Therefore, the couples' professional congruency requires matching levels of education. In France, the couples have the same levels of education in 66% of marriages; considering the similar levels of education increases this ratio up to 88%. Burnet, in his study "social mobility and marriage", found that in 71% of marriages the couples' system of thoughts and their level of education had been the same. Stewart showed that there is a reasonable congruence between the individual's education and what is expected from his wife.

The results also showed that cultural and judicial factors play roles in the explanation of polygamy. In fact, the results suggested that the dominant traditions and culture of the society, and individuals' judicial and humanistic beliefs about wives and women rights play critical roles in polygamy. This results of the current study is consistent with results of Javid (2010), Rafi'ee (2007), and Zare' (1999). It seems that the culture and traditions of the studied society play critical roles. The traditional structure and preservation of dominant beliefs and culture of family and society have caused Bastakian men to follow their past beliefs or, in other words, preserve their family traditions and choose polygamy. A large number of social science researchers and experts believe that the impact of culture and tradition on behaviors of those individuals who live in traditional regions is undeniable.

On the other hand, the results showed that none of the financial, religious, cultural and social factors were related to polygamy, and in other words, they did not explain men's polygamy. The results showed that men choose polygamy, regardless of the amount of their income or the severity of cultural, religious, and social attitudes toward polygamy.

According to radical feminists the existence of family is based on the exploitation of women by men, and it's an exploitative entity. Furthermore, it becomes the product of men's desires, not "functional requirements" of "capitalism". Some of these principled believers go further and believe that family not only benefits men but it also upsets women and even makes them ill (Kendall, 2003).

In order to prevent inappropriate and non-normative polygamies, which bring along a lot of social and cultural problems and consequences, it is suggested that a special and regular legal framework

get defined. In this way, its social and cultural consequences, which most of all affect the wife and children of the first marriage, may be prevented.

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