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Probing polygamous marriages in Zimbabwe

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my family and my late grandmother who always believed in me.

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DECLARATION

I, Takayindisa Flora Maruva, hereby declare that the dissertation for Master Degree in Gender Studies submitted at the University of Venda has not been previously submitted at any University, and that it is my own work, own design and execution, and all reference materials contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

Signature .....

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ABSTRACT

This study highlights the daily experiences of people in polygamous marriages face on a daily basis. It argues that there are more disadvantages for women in polygamous marriages than their counterparts in monogamous relationships. The study further suggests that the patriarchal power structure seems to take a powerful and effective role on polygamous marriages in our societies, particularly in Zimbabwe where this study took place. The study explored the intricacies of polygamous marriages and how these dominances can be resolved. The research is therefore presented through the 'lived realities' of the affected women in polygamous marriages in Gutu District located in Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe. The study was conducted in a village called Matizha. In the study, a qualitative research approach was employed to stimulate awareness of the social, cultural, religious and the effect of economic factors in polygamous marriages. This approach facilitates a unique understanding of the experiences of women in polygamous marriages.

Keywords: Polygamy, Polyandry, Co-wives, Egalitarianism, Experiences, Woman

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR -	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
CEDAW-	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
ICCPR -	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
FLDS -	Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints
MPL -	Muslim Personal Law
RCMA-	Recognition of Customary Law
TLC -	The Learning Channel
UDHR -	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN-	United Nations
USA-	United States of America
ZINATHA-	Zimbabwe National African Traditional Healers
ZWLA-	Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Eighty-three percent of human societies permit polygamy Berkowitz (2007), although the worldwide percentage of men with more than one wife is relatively minuscule, as many as a third of the world's population belongs to a community that allows it. Polygamy has been a prominent feature in most communities worldwide. It is deeply rooted on cultural norms, it emanates from the early lifestyles of our ancestors. Over the years, polygamy has become the subject of numerous books, journal articles, heated debates, discussion papers, and theme for women activist groups, internet and social media, and even cable television shows. Consequently, many complex in different communities have been adopted in relation to polygamy. Polygamy is the exercise of marrying more than one wife or husband at a given time.

If one were to consider the patriarchal characteristic of many societies around the world, it is safe to conclude that there is a potential for the unequal and discriminative treatment of wives by their husbands in polygamous marriages. With this in mind, there is an urgent need to address such treatment of women in polygamous marriages, regardless of their social, cultural, religious and economic background.

There are some cases where wives in polygamous marriages have suffered. In a study of 9 women in polygamous marriages conducted by Nurrohmah (2003) it was found out that all 9 women had experienced psychological abuse; 5 of them suffered physical, economic and sexual abuse.

It would be a mistake to believe that all polygamous marriages are abusive. These views were often rationalised by feelings that polygamy forms unfair treatment amongst co-wives since the husband cannot take care and cater for the needs of more than one wife, and that polygamy provides men with "boundless power and authority" (Dangor 2001).

Where co-existence amongst the families seems to be practiced, relationships between co-wives have been found to be especially beneficial to women's economic and political power (Yanca & Low 2003). While women might initially feel uncomfortable and envious when a new woman enters the household, these sentiments usually fade away as the family and community work to ensure harmonious relationships and the equal treatment of the wives. In a study conducted by Rehman (2011), a small proportion of women indicated that they would agree to enter into

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polygamous marriages if given such an option. Many women living in polygamy support plural marriage and appear to find happiness and satisfaction within their family structures (D'Amour & Carmichael 2004). Some women even encourage their husbands to marry additional wives (Chambers 1997). Certain anecdotes reveal genuine love and companionship among polygamous spouses and within their entire family unit, leaving us to question whether polygamy is intrinsically damaging to the spousal relationship (Palmer & Perrin 2004; Solomon 2003).

Children, however, can be badly affected by polygamous marriages. The disputes that happen between co-wives more often than not prove damaging to the children in polygamous families. In addition, polygamous thoughts and beliefs may be limiting to children thus blinding them "from the existence of life outside polygamy" (Ward 2004). Such children tend to believe that the polygamous lifestyle is the only way out and hence they often end up attached to a polygamous life style. Children attached to polygamous lifestyle view polygamy as the only key leading to happiness in life.

Christian polygamists who claim to come from conservative churches quote Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and cite Biblical patriarchs to support their accepting of polygamy as something scriptural. Shipps (1987) depicts Mormonism as the fourth great Abrahamic tradition, standing in relation to contemporary Christianity just as early Christianity once did to Judaism. Sullivan (2007) and Gordon (2001) illustrate the centrality of federal efforts to eradicate Mormon polygamy by defining the nature and limits of what is officially, legally, and constitutionally legitimate religious practice in the US. Polygamy is prevalent in Muslim communities. The polygamous communities are related with a religious principle that supports it. Muslims practicing polygamy give reference to the verse in the Qur'an (4:3) which states that a man may marry up to four wives. However, polygamy is not exclusive to Islamic countries. Roughly 30,000 people also exercise polygamy in the Western United States and Canada. Polygamy in America was historically despised as anti-democratic and a threat to the modern way of living. Over time, this perception of threat has worn out, letting those exercising polygamy generally go unobserved.

While polygamy is strongly denounced in several passages of the Book of Mormon, the Old Testament provides ample evidence that it was acceptable in ancient Israel. The Bible has evidence of the existence of polygamy in societies of that time. For instance, Genesis 4 verse 19

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states: "And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah." The importance of this verse is that during these times, in Biblical communities, polygamy was in existence and accepted by the society. It is notable that most of the Old Testament prophets were polygamous according to Judaism. According to the Old Testament, Abraham "the friend of God" and had many wives, David had 100 wives; and Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. This serves to show that the culture or concept of polygamy is deeply rooted even in the so-called sacred history of Israel.

In other countries such as Cameroon polygamy is practiced due to economic factors. The way people take issues of wealth is the heart of the issue. Women and children are seen as labourers and producers goods. Wives bear children, while girl children produce wedding gifts and also provide personal service, and are valuable for increasing garden income. The money from a man's gardens belongs to him alone and he gives very little to his wives. Wives always want to get an equal portion of the produce from the husband so if they do not get what they wished for they look for other means to show what they desire. Wives may do so by urging the husband to look for other wives so that they increase the productivity level. This gives each wife chance to free herself from the close control of her husband, to do their own thing. The wives are then able to sell their garden produce in a town market, to look for employment and to have financially rewarding extramarital sex relations.

In Utah, in the United States of America, polygamy is constitutionally and statutorily prohibited. Article III, Section 1 of Utah's Constitution guarantees perfect toleration of religious sentiment. It further provides that no inhabitant of that State shall ever be mistreated in person or property on account of his or her type of religion he attends. However, polygamous or plural marriages are forever prohibited. Thus, in Utah, polygamous marriages are not allowed. However, specific actions to be taken and punishments to be given in relation to the breach of such laws are not specified.

Polygamy in the United States has been practiced primarily by the Mormon Church, although the practice is much more prevalent in other parts of the world. There are various reality programmes on television that show that polygamy is indeed happening. The Learning Channel's ("TLC") hit reality television show; Sister Wives shows the prevalence of polygamy in the United States. Polygamy is most prevalent among Fundamentalist Mormons and among some

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Muslim communities. Nonetheless, the actual prevalence of these families is uncertain and there is limited literature on Muslim polygamists' families in North America.

Hassouneh-Phillips' (2001) produced an unusual insight into American Muslim polygamy. The study was carried out on spousal abuse in American Muslim families, the and respondents were people involved in the abuse or someone who knew someone who had been abused. Most women who had an experience with polygamy testified that they or their mothers got into polygamous marriages against their will, some giving it some similarity to "lawful adultery" (Hassouneh-Phillips 2001). The coming of the new wives to be part of the family was described by the women as stressful involvement for the older sisters and their children. The problem of unfair treatment of wives by their husbands was the main concern.

Polygamy, according to Anderson (2000), is more prevalent in Africa than other places in the world. Polygamy is exercised in communities in a number of African countries, particularly those in the western region (Timaeus & Reynar 1998). According to Elbedour (2002) and Bergstrom (1994), in some parts of Africa an estimated 20% to 50% of all marriages are polygamous. In Africa, polygamy is motivated by a number of factors and its prevalence shows differences in tribes and religions, as well as the economic and social structures. Plural marriages, in Africa, mainly are Muslim, but some Muslim men who are not entering plural marriages for fiscal, prestige, or social reasons (Ezra 2003, Madhavan 2002, Klomegah 1997, Meekers & Franklin 1995).

In the African context, according to Musumbi Kanyoro, "before marriage, a woman did not have an independent identity. A woman was regarded as the daughter of her father. After marriage, she became the wife of her husband" (Kanyoro 1993). In this case, women are found to be objects, even after marriage. They might not have that freedom to be objective. Polygamy is not common where there are high levels of education and development. However, there is a conflict in striving to balance the conservative beliefs and culture which has long been practiced within the communities and the growth of recognizing women's rights (Simmons 1999).

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Polygamy is common in much of Africa. In Africa, women's polygamous family experience varies as a result of socio-cultural features of their surrounding tribe, community or region. Most follow a patriarchal structure. However, the degree of authority held by the husband often depends on the cultural and social expectations for his behaviour (Madhavan 2002; Agadjanian & Ezeh 2000). According to Madhavan (2002), the way a husband wives co-operate or compete rest on a number of factors, both internal and external to the family.

More than 10% of married women are in polygamous unions in several sub-Saharan countries (Tertilt 2005). Between Senegal and Tanzania stretches a "polygamy belt" in which it is common to find that more than one third of married women are polygamous (Jacoby 1995). Similarly, Bergstrom (1994) views polygamy to be a result of inequality in the male exploration of both wealth and wives where wealth can be exchanged for wives. This effect is tempered, however, by the self-interest of the elite. Lager (2010) suggests that a self-interested ruler may impose coupledom to reduce competition by lesser men disadvantaged of wives.

In countries where there is overpopulation, there are some measures that were taken to control the population. In Thailand in 1935, polygamy was forbidden, in China in 1953, among the Hindus in India in 1955, and in Nepal in 1963. Despite the Quran's tolerance of up to four wives, some Islamic countries such as Turkey (1926) and Tunisia (1956) have formally outlawed polygamy and others have imposed judicial restrictions on this practice. However, looking at the overall proportion of population between the males and females, females are relatively many, hence some people see it as convenient for males to marry as many wives as possible. It is only in a closed population, with a balanced sex ratio, that these features cannot possibly be reconciled.

Polygamy has been prohibited in Canada since 1890, but many people openly engage in the practice either as a matter of lifestyle choice, because the practice is culturally familiar and accepted, or because it is religiously mandated, as it is in the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (FLDS), whose followers are also known as 'fundamentalist Mormons'.

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The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (120 of 1998) (the "RCMA") brought about fundamental changes to the legal position of a customary marriage in South African law. The RCMA ensured that a customary marriage is, for all purposes of South African law, recognised as a valid marriage. It is evident that in South Africa, different people from different backgrounds and cultures practise polygamous marriages. The President of South Africa also lives a polygamous lifestyle that is common/normal in the Zulu culture.

In Zimbabwe, there are places where a polygamous lifestyle is practised. Fourteen percent of married Zimbabwean women stated being in polygamous unions according to Khumalo-Sakutukwa (2003). Rodriquez (2007) observes that Zimbabwean women conform to polygamy in order to conform to culture and for fear of social discrimination from their societies.

In Gutu, if a man dies, his wife traditionally becomes the property of his brothers, together with his livestock, house and land. The wife is 'forced' to choose a husband among the brothers of the late husband, even if all the brothers are already married. Intricate ceremonies involve the woman placing a bowl of water in front of her late husband's brothers as she "chooses" one to be her next master, while he still lives with his other wife or wives. Polygamy in such instances is, therefore, forced upon the wife. Her only option is to choose a husband or be cast out of the family and the community, resulting in her being separated from her children who will be forced to stay with her late husband's family.

1.1 Problem statement

Polygamous marriages are practised in different societies. Some women who are practising a polygamous lifestyle are emotionally and physically abused in their relationships. Evidence also suggests children from polygamous marriages also suffer psychologically when their fathers take other wives. Relationships within the family are very difficult because of the husband's seeming favouritism for one wife. Children are mostly affected by disputes between co-wives and they often lack quality time with their fathers. A study conducted by Ndubani and Hojer (2001) indicates that in an area where traditional practices allow men to have more than one wife, and where manhood demonstrated through sexual relations with many women, men are usually the dominant gender.

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The researcher conducted a study in Matizha village, in Gutu, Zimbabwe. The village is located approximately 15km from Gutu Growth Point. In the village, there are polygamous marriages and the women have different experiences. In this study, the researcher explored the experiences that individuals have in polygamous marriages.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- Examine the experiences of women in polygamous marriages in Matizha village;
- Analyse the socio-cultural practices of polygamy in Matizha village;
- Analyse the religious practices of polygamous individuals in Matizha village;
- Examine whether one's economic status has an influence on the decision to be in polygamous marriages in Matizha village; and
- Examine whether women's voices are heard in polygamous relationships in Matizha village.

1.3 Research question

The following are the research questions:

- What are the experiences of women in polygamous marriages?
- What role do socio-cultural practices play in polygamous marriages?
- What role do religious practices have on polygamy?
- Does the economic status have an influence on polygamous marriages?
- Are women being adequately given the right to voice their problems and in polygamous marriages?

1.4 Significance of the study

This study offers some insights into the experiences of Karanga women in polygamous marriages. The study explored what really happens in polygamous marriages, ranging from disputes between co-wives, lack of attention on the children because of the divided attention, to

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the religious arguments on polygamy. The study will also highlight the positive aspects of polygamy. It will also capture what women are saying about the issue of polygamy.

The study contributes to the documentation and to better growing body of knowledge about polygamy. The research will also offer ideas that will enlighten and equip policy and law makers in Zimbabwe about the practice of polygamy. It will also help the government in its documentation of the phenomenon and for future references.

1.5 Definition of terms

1.5.1 Polygamy

The term polygamy is derived from the Greek word 'polygamous', which literally means 'often marrying'. In popular speech, the term 'polygamy' refers to the simultaneous coming together of a husband to multiple spouses or a practice or practice of having more than one wife at the same time (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary 2011). Polygamy is defined as the custom of having more than one wife at the same time. It is noted that in many contexts, when one refers to the issue of polygamy, one is referring to men marrying many wives. In its widest sense, polygamy refers to a marriage, which includes more than one partner (Koktevdgaard 2008). There are two types of polygamous marriages which are there, polygyny and polyandry. The first one refers to the husband marrying more than one wife. This type of marriage is the one which is common in many countries. On the other hand, there is polyandry which is the marrying of more than one husband by a woman. This is not commonly practiced in most societies.

1.5.2 Marriage

This is an action where a man and woman, who are in love, are lawfully joined in a ceremony as husband and wife.

1.5.3 Religion

According to sociologists Vaughn and Heaton (1997), "No single dimension of religion adequately describes the effect of religious experience on marital stability." There are various bible quotes that support different views on marriage from different religious groups. Religious traditions and denominations differ in the kinds and degree of emphasis they place on marriage.

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1.5.4 Culture

Culture has many definitions, and it affects everything people do in their society because of their ideas, values, attitudes, and normative or expected patterns of behaviour. Culture is not genetically inherited, and cannot exist on its own, but is always shared by members of a society (Hall 1976). Hofstede (1980) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another". This is passed from generation to generation, it is dynamic all the time because each generation adds something of its own before passing it on. It is usual that one's culture is taken for granted and assumed to be correct because it is the only one, or at least the first, to be learned.

1.5.5 Woman

A woman is a female human. The term woman is usually reserved for an adult, with the term girl being the usual term for a female child or adolescent. However, the term woman is also sometimes used to identify a female human, regardless of age, as in phrases such as "women's rights". "Woman" may also refer to a person's gender identity instead of their sex.

1.5.6 Experience

Experience is the knowledge or mastery of an event or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it. The concept of experience generally refers to know how or procedural knowledge, rather than propositional knowledge. The experience involves the knowing of specific knowledge of certain events.

1.5.7 Growth Point

The term growth point means increasing in size both in number of facilities, building and services provided at an identified centre. Thus, once a centre has been established there should be an observable change in spatial structure and pattern.

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CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Polygamy remains one of the key topics in various societies. It is through cultural practices, beliefs and individuals' choices that people commit themselves to polygamous lifestyles. Polygamy remains widespread across the world; over seventy percent of the societies known to Anthropologists permit men to marry more than one wife (Coult & Habenstein 1965). There are consequences for each type of marriage that certain individuals might adapt to. Women who have entered into polygamous marriages have different experiences. This might result in sadness or happiness for the people involved in the polygamous marriages.

There are two types of polygamous marriages which are polygyny and polyandry. The one which is mostly practiced is the earlier one. The latter one is practiced, but in very minor cases. The practice of polyandry in India has brought so much attention to researchers. It has been associated with the decline of the overall population. Throughout Tibet and the neighboring Himalayan areas of India, Nepal, and Bhutan, polyandry has been common for generations. In this area, a polyandrous marriage is usually one in which a woman marries two or more brothers. Like other polyandrous societies, the people of this region do not limit themselves strictly to polyandry (Levine & Sangree 1980).

In Africa, polyandry is best known among the tribes of the Jos Plateau, the Lele of the Kasai in western Congo. These tribes, however, practice a different form of polyandry. The Lele's type of polyandry is uncommon, and perhaps unique only to their group. Unity within the village is very important, and the sort of polyandry they practice supports that.

Historically, polyandry was also found among some Native North American groups. One such society that practiced this marriage form was the Shoshoni of Nevada. They were known to participate in polyandrous marriages; they were a hunting and gathering society. This is a brief of what is polyandry and where it is practiced but it is not restricted to those places only.

On the other hand, polygyny is the one which is practiced in most countries, whereby men marry more than one wife. Mainly, the terms are used interchangeably polygyny and polygamy

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referring to the same thing. For the purpose of this research, it will be referred to as polygamy, referring to a man who marries more than one wife.

2.2 Polygamy in Western countries

Polygamy is as irresistibly fascinating to the American public as it is controversial. It is the subject of numerous books, web pages, and even a hit cable television show called "TLC" where there are reality shows featuring polygamists and their lifestyles. The moral issues in relation to polygamy have been debated in the United States for over 150 years, and these debates will likely continue for more years to come. In the United States of America, there are some states which prohibit polygamy. In the Western countries, there are diverse cultures and religions. For example Islam and the Mormons both permit the practice of polygamy.

Although polygamy is not legal in most Western countries, it is practiced in specific ethnic and religious communities (Al-Krenawi 1998; Phillips, 1998). The Muslim community, estimated to be 6 million in the United States (Goodwin 1994 & Power 1998), is an example of a religious group in which formal polygamy is practiced by some members as part of their culture. Specifically, the form of polygamy practiced by Muslims is called polygamy. The practice of polygamy is different from the practice of serial polygamy, which allows a husband to marry and divorce several times throughout their lifetime. Some prefer to have outside affairs and mistresses. In the end, this will result in the man having more than one wife.

The understanding of polygamy varies from each group of people to one another and also from individuals. In some parts of America, there are people like the Muslims and Mormons who practice the type of polygamy where one marries more than one wife without necessarily divorcing the other. On the other hand, serial polygamy is when one is having a chain of different wives, marrying and divorcing them.

2.3 Africa

Polygamy continues to be widely practiced by statesmen in Africa. For example, the current president of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, and the Monarchs of Swaziland and KwaZulu-Natal, King Zwelithini Zulu and King Moswati Dlamini are all to several wives. Africans continue to practice polygamy and have steadfastly resisted viewing family through a Western prism (Njoh

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2006). This is despite the bid by Western feminists to try and eradicate the practice in an effort to improve the status of African women. As the states of different countries within Africa observe and practice the issues of polygamous marriages, it is something that is legalized and is permitted within the society.

Njoh (2006) states that Christianity implores Africans to forsake their traditional practices, cultures and beliefs, and teaches them that polygamy is ungodly. This is despite the pervasiveness of polygamy in the Biblical narratives. Njoh (2006) gives examples of such prominent figures as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who practiced polygamy in the Bible.

A study in Swaziland by Mbirimtengerenji (2007) found that patriarchy and polygamy are strong in the culture and history of the country, making it difficult for the monarch, King Mswati, and his government to reconcile cultural norms such as polygamy and the fight against HIV and AIDS. In North African countries, it is Muslims who widely practice polygamy (Altman & Ginat 1996). Polygamy is also prevalent in Western/ Eastern African countries. For instance, in Uganda there is also a comparatively high prevalence of polygamy, especially among Muslims.

Polygamy is prevalent in societies where people are seen to be conservative or act as if they are conservative in their African cultural beliefs. In the name of preserving their cultural beliefs, the bible is used to support individuals in their actions of pursuing polygamous marriages. The spread of the HIV/Aids virus has also raised a lot of question about the wisdom of practicing polygamy.

2.4 South Africa

In South Africa, customary marriages are recognised. The protection of cultural rights in sections 30 and 31 is given further impetus by section 185 of the Constitution which provides for the creation of a Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. It is also recognised by section 211(3) of the Constitution, which provides for the application of customary law by the courts, "subject to the Constitution and any legislation that specifically deals with customary law." This is because, it has been argued, the right to culture implies the right to recognition and application of customary law (Grant 2006).

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Legally, women get married at the age of 15 and men when they are 18 years old. The consent of both parties is required before marriage. There are certain ethnic groups that allow earlier marriages. Although arranged marriages are illegal, they still exist within other religious groupings. Customary marriages oblige a widow after her husband's death to marry another man who is a family member. Even though polygamy is prohibited in civil marriage, it is practiced within customary marriages in South Africa (Lamanna 1997).

The provisions dealing with culture and religion in the South African Constitution are less prescriptive, guaranteeing rights to freedom of religion and the practice of culture, but subjecting these rights to the other provisions of the Bill of Rights, which include the prohibition on sex and gender discrimination. In addition, the ability of the State to give legislative recognition to customary and religious marriages is subject to the same limitation. These provisions are the result of a long process of negotiation to which both women's groups and traditional leaders were parties.

African and Muslim women have taken the lead in criticising certain aspects of customary law and the Muslim Personal Law (MPL). Since 1990, it has focused on the status of African women in the family and community, including issues facing women married under customary law. The Rural Women's Movement identified polygamy, the legal status of women married under customary law, access to resources by women and access to health facilities in areas where they live, as issues requiring urgent reform.

Muslim men are allowed, according to MPL, to have up to four wives, on condition that the wives receive equal treatment, both materially and otherwise. Customary law places no limit on the number of wives which a man can have and also obliges a man to treat all wives equally in terms of material and emotional needs.

The reasons generally given for the legal antipathy towards polygamy are, firstly, that it does not resonate with the Judeo-Christian ideal of monogamy, and, secondly, that it embodies gender inequality and the oppression of women. It is argued by both customary marriages and MPL that polygamy originally arose to provide, materially and socially, for women who would otherwise be destitute. In addition, studies indicate that women may experience some benefits from polygamy, such as sharing the burden of work with other wives and also obtaining opportunities to work outside the home and to accumulate wealth. The social and economic conditions which

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made polygamy a beneficial option for women no longer exist. Nowadays, marriage is no longer the only avenue for women obtaining material resources. Unemployment and poverty make it difficult for men to support several wives. The counter argument is that this depends on the value placed on husbands (Kaganas & Murray 1991).

South African laws are there to protect the cultural practices of all ethnic groups. The recognition of young children as young as 15 to get into marriages is to enslave them into being physically, emotionally and socially abused. Early marriages deny children the opportunity to enjoy their childhood before maturing to take up heavy responsibilities such as having children and parenting. It can also be argued that polygamy provides men with access to the sexual, reproductive and other services from several women, while wives in polygamous marriages have to share the material and emotional benefits provided by a single man.

2.5 Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, there are two types of polygamous marriages that are practiced. The first is a registered customary marriage prescribed under the Customary Marriages Act [Chapter 5:07], formerly known as Chapter 231, or in vernacular 'muchatowekwamudzviti.' Such a marriage allows a man to marry more than one wife. This marriage is recognised as a marriage at law. A man in such a marriage is not obliged under any law to notify (inform) his wife of his intention to marry a second wife. Neither does he have an obligation to request the consent of his first wife or other wives before marrying other women.

Such a law where women have no say in what a man is planning to do is unfair. As a marriage is a mutual understanding between two parties, when a woman does not have any say, the benefits are being fully enjoyed by the man, who does as he pleases. Customary Marriages Act [Chapter 5:07] is a patriarchal law in favour of men. Even within the laws of the country that protect women against unfair treatment in marriages, women are not fully protected. When a woman gets married to a partner, under that marriage she would have become a prisoner in her own home as she would not be able to be protected.

The second potentially polygamous marriage is an unregistered customary law union. This type of marriage is limited to the cultural practice of the payment of the bride price *(roora/lobola)* by the man to the woman's family. Although all the other types of marriages may be preceded by

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the payment of *roora,* their uniqueness lies in the registration of the marriage. For an unregistered customary law union, once the *roora* process is done, then the two are considered married and can live together. The Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA) estimates that 70% of people in Zimbabwe are living in unregistered customary law unions (The ZWLA Concept Paper on Marriage Law Reform, 2000).

There are many women who are getting married customarily. It is mainly in the rural areas where the marriages go unrecorded. These are issues which can lead to the abuse of women and children in the polygamous marriages. The act of paying *roora* is the one which empowers man to do as they please and have custody of children.

International human rights instruments protect both right to culture and religion on the one hand, and gender equality on the other hand. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Zimbabwe is a signatory to these international instruments, hence it is bound and obligated to act in accordance within their provisions.

Some of these instruments clearly indicate that state parties must abolish practices associated with customary and religious marriages, like polygamy. For instance, the United Nation Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) expressed the view that:

equality of treatment with regard to the right to marry implies that polygamy is incompatible with this principle. Polygamy violates the dignity of women. It is an inadmissible discrimination against women. Consequently, it should be abolished wherever it continues to exist.' (United Nations Human Rights Committee General Comment No 28).

Article 16 of CEDAW, specifically requires state parties to take measures to eradicate the various forms of discrimination against women in matters relating to marriage, including polygamy. Zimbabwe became party to this instrument by accession on the 13th of May 1991. In 1994 the CEDAW Committee recommended that polygamy and the payment of bride price should be outlawed and that family law rules should be determined by CEDAW rather than customary or religious systems. This particular article has, however, attracted vitriolic criticism

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from a number of countries, particularly countries with Islamic religion and also those still practicing African traditional cultures. For instance, although Niger is a party to this international human rights instrument, it has made a reservation in regards to article 16, declaring that the provision of this article concerning family relations, cannot be implemented immediately, as they are contrary to existing African custom and practices, which, by their nature, can be modified only with the passage of time and the evolution of society and cannot, therefore, be abolished by an act of authority.

Many other African and Muslim countries, including Egypt, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Iraq, Libya and Tunisia, amongst others, have also made a reservation to this particular article. It is important to note, however, that Zimbabwe has not made such a reservation in relation to this article even though there is still widespread practice of the African traditional culture in the country, which adversely affects the rights of women to be heard in matters affecting them in their marriages, and in their respective societies.

Blunt asserts that elements of customary and religious law, like polygamy, are irrevocably opposed to gender equality and demands for their immediate abolition. This has antagonised many African and Muslim gender activists. In actual fact, the provisions of the Islamic Shariah accords women rights equivalent to the rights of their spouses so as to ensure a just balance between them. Such arguments assume that African and Muslim women are in need of help, that customary and religious laws are always opposed to gender equality and that western feminists are qualified to define the problems and solutions facing African and customary and religious systems. Western feminists also assume that their analyses of patriarchy can be transposed unchanged into other contexts. Oyewumi summaries the problem,

Perhaps the two questions that are most asked by Westerners of African women are…. "how it felt to share a husband with another woman?"… and "did spouses love one another?"… No doubt, foreigners are often obsessed with perceived curiosities they encounter in other cultures. However, the problem is that in feminist discourse, these questions are rhetorical not because they demand no answers, but because they have pre-ordained answers, such as, monogamy as the only "normal" (read "civilized," "true") form of marriage, and polygamy and love as mutually exclusive. For many Western feminists, polygamy is barbaric, it degrades and oppresses women, and it is alien to the civilized societies from which they come. No attention is paid to the feelings

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and perspective of those who experience it as the only form of marriage and no examination is made of its implications of social organisation.

The same assumption is often made of Muslim women, namely that they are uniquely oppressed by the Islamic religion and are in need of 'rescue' by western feminist solutions.

In Zimbabwe, there are places where polygamous lifestyle is still practiced. According to Khumalo-Sakutukwa (2003), 14% of married Zimbabwean women report that they are in polygamous unions. Sharing the demands of a husband with other women may prove to be a benefit to wives in polygamous marriages. One solution would be to allow wives to marry several husbands, thus treating women the same as men (Banda 2002). However, this solution is based on a formal notion of equality and in a patriarchal society; it may, in fact, expose women to greater oppression, rather than empower them (Kaganas and Murray 1991; Acta Juridica 128)

There are mixed feelings about polygamous marriages. There are some people who condemn it saying inhumane.. However, considerations must be made of what it might mean to other people who do not have choices of any other form of marriage. The other factor that has to be noted is that polygamous marriages are not always negative. There are some positive things that result from the polygamous marriages.

2.6 The impact of polygamy on children

Children who live in polygamous marriages are positively or negatively affected by their experiences. The usual large polygamous households are associated with low resources per head, which adversely impact on child health and survival. Notwithstanding the conflicting views on the fertility implications of polygamy for individual women, the overall family size of polygamous households tends to be larger than their monogamous counterpart.

The family, being a powerful influence on the child and its importance as a primary agent of socialization could in no doubt enhance or hinder the academic achievement of the child depending on the social climate in the family. Variance in psycho-social, emotional fortification in the monogamy and polygamy family background could be an indicator to high or low academic performance of students. Emeke (1984) stressed that the environmental condition and the nature of social interaction that goes on in the family may have some positive or negative influence on the academic achievement of a child. Adesehinwa and Aremu (2010) (A Personal

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Communication at The World Conference For Psychology and Counselling, Antalya, Turkey) posit that factors resident in child, family, society, government and the school may be composite causative effects for this downtrend. They, however, conclude that there is a need for each of these variables to be considered extensively. It is for this reason that the focus of this study is to critically consider family type and effects on academic achievements of secondary school students.

American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929) proposed the concept of primary groups, those characterized by close, long-lasting, intimate, and face-to-face interaction. The family is a critical primary group because it provides the nurturance, love, and emotional sustenance that its members need to be happy, healthy, and secure. Our close friends are usually members of our primary groups, but they may come and go (especially when they move to another state). In contrast, our family is usually our steadfast and enduring emotional anchor throughout life.

Sociologists view polygamy as a reproductive strategy by which men increase the number of their offspring while decreasing the level of investment in each child (White, 1988). In certain societies, polygamy can be economically useful by increasing the labor power available to the family, and it is also likely to increase the power and prestige of the family (Ware, 1979). Several studies carried out in different countries in the Middle East and Africa indicate that children of polygamous families may suffer from emotional, behavioral, and physical problems, negative self-concept, lower school achievement, and greater difficulties in social adjustment than children of monogamous marriages (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000; Cherian, 1990; Owuamanam, 1984).

Primary care and the nurturing of children as they are grow up comes from the immediate family. It is important that children who belong to any family get all this as they grow up to be adults. However, in the setting of polygamous marriages where they are a lot of children who will be involved, they will end up fighting for their parents' attention. In any case, there may be problems when children feel deprived of what are requisites in their life. It is the height of irresponsibility for men whose positions do not allow them to ensure that all wives and children are treated equitably and adequately supported, to enter into polygamous unions. Some children are generally slow in learning about basic things in life and may manifest problems if they are

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not given individually attention. Children in polygamous marriages may end up adopting different things that they see from the different mothers whom they try to imitate. This may lead to an identity crisis in these children.

Polygamous families are very productive when it comes to the number of children born per family. This is seen as a positive thing as it may also account for the productivity within the family. However, children may suffer because they get less food and they have to attend school on moderately empty stomachs. As a result their concentrating may be strained. The production level will be very low compared to the ones who are from families which are financially stable. It is important that children are nurtured in an environment that brings up positive values and morals in them. It is very hard for children who live in strained environments to be positive.

2.7 The social effects of polygamy

Due to the practice of polygamy, there are lot positive and negative outcomes for the individuals. George (1965:26) in his article on "Marital Cohesiveness" discusses three factors related to marital stability: positive attractions within the marriage, barriers to divorce, and alternative attractions outside the marriage. Some notable positive attractions within marriage are the status it gives, attraction to the spouse, children, and financial success through the economic cooperation of family members.

Alternative attractions outside the marriage include such considerations as a new partner or increased status. If the marriage relationship is poor, escaping the marriage may be seen as an alternative attraction. In most societies, however, there are some barriers to divorce, such as "the emotional, religious and moral commitments that a partner feels toward his marriage or toward his children; the external pressures of kin and community, of the law, the church and other associational membership" George (1965).

There are some social issues which make people end up being in polygamous marriages. A study of marriage patterns in South Africa concluded that there is often a shortage of men (usually because of war), that poor women would rather marry a rich polygamist than a poor monogamist, that wives often pool incomes and engage in cooperative child care, and that rural wives often

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contact urban wives when they are looking for jobs. Thus, polygamy is functional because it meets many women's needs (Anderson, 2002).

Some women end up marrying men who already have established family because they are fewer men. The other reason is that men who are polygamists in some cases, seem rich compared to those who are monogamists and this lures women to be married to the already established men.

Caldwell, Caldwell & Quiggin 1989 reported that a large proportion of women are infected with HIV by their male partners where polygamy is widely accepted as culture. In this study, polygamy seems to be acceptable as well. Some researchers argue that polygamy poses a risk of spreading HIV (Noble, 2008). Sexual necessity and economic factors have been cited as contributing factors in the spread of HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS, 2008). As mentioned, there are ongoing social ills like poverty and concubinage that lead to polygamy (Moller & Welch, 1981). Sringi (2010) found that polygamy perpetuates HIV and AIDS as co-wives compete among themselves on having more children leading to not using any protection. This situation was found to be worse among the less educated women. In this study, older polygamous man showed no inclination towards using condoms, and there was no reference made to the educational level of the women.

A study by Mbirimtengerenji (2007) found that found that for some women in Zimbabwe, sexual relations represent the only means of social and economic survival. Traditional subordination makes it difficult for these women to be able to reduce HIV infection. The author, however, though not specifically referring to women in polygamous marriages in this context, does cite polygamy as a levirate social practice that is used to ensure that widows and orphans survive within an established family structure. This is in contrast to the findings by Chimbete (2011), who found that the risk of contracting HIV and AIDS in polygamous relationships is greater because sexual intercourse intervals are uneven in polygamy, resulting in partners looking for sexual pleasure and satisfaction outside marriage. Some of the participants felt that there was a way of stopping this kind of "grazing" by using muthi.

In Norton, Zimbabwe, where girls undergo initiation ceremonies, reports of child marriages also abound. An early marriage of girls interferes with their right to education and exposes them to

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HIV infection at an early age, since older men are more likely to be infected and the girls are unable to negotiate condom use. Girls end up getting involved in sexual activities, not on their own terms.

Infecting each other with the HIV/AIDS virus is something that is prominent in many polygamous marriages. This is often the result of the unfaithfulness of the wives to the man of the house. It is common among the woman in polygamous marriages not to be satisfied in terms of intimacy since the man has to make sure that he really satisfies them. The women who will not be sexually satisfied often get satisfaction outside marriage. There is a problem pertaining the lack of education on contracting of the HIV virus. People tend to have some general myths about how one can contract and also how it can be contained.

In doing so, the woman may get infected by someone by the virus and then spread it to everyone with the marriage. The other social constraint which happens when people get sick is that they cannot be as productive as they were before contracting the disease. Children will then suffer due to from the sickness of their caregivers. Without children, therefore the family genealogy and identity ultimately dies (Mawere M & Mawere A.M 2010).

2.8 The cultural beliefs on polygamy

In any just system which recognises polygamous relationships, husbands and wives should have reciprocal rights and responsibilities, and both polygyny and polyandry should be permitted (Calhoun 2005). No social norm should imply that men must be obeyed by their wives or that women should demure and be submissive to their husbands. It is through the norms that were established a long time ago that women have been forced to be submissive to their husbands. Through modernization of the world women now go to school and are empowered to speak out against their abusive husbands.

The importance of children and the pressure for women to bear children may also encourage polygamy because "infertility in Hmong society sees as the woman's problem" (Rice 2000). If a couple is unable to produce children, especially a son, then "the husband is encouraged to take a second wife" (Rice 2000). This is because the husband's family and clan see her as unable to produce children to carry the clan name into the future. More often than not, this lowers the first

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wife's status. Her status is worsened by her inability to bear a son who will not only carry the last name of her husband's family, but one who will also care for his parents in old age. The issue of cultural emancipation also stretches to the value of men as important. It is evident that male children are regarded as more important than girl children. When a male child passes on; the elders usually kill a cow for him, but when a daughter dies nothing is done.

Infertility is something that can be from either a man or a woman. It is unfortunate that when a couple fails to have children the fault is always attributed to the woman. Such stereotyping is common in many ethnic groups. The perceived infertility of a woman is often a factor that motivates men to enter into polygamous marriages.

In Zimbabwe, there are four main types of marital unions that exist, namely traditional customary marriage, religious marriage, civil marriage and the mutual consent union or cohabitation. The marriages that are under traditional customary are anchored on the payment of bride price to the family of the bride's family. The payment of *roora* gives man custody of the children resulting from the union-rights to be genetically inherited (Goody, 1990). The father of the bride would not allow the daughter to go and stay with the man until they pay the bride price. The procedures that are included in the marriage are a process that can go for a long time from months to a year so as to get the consent between two families.

In the Shona culture, once a man and a woman are married they are expected to have children. Not having children is considered a curse from the ancestors or God. In such cases, men often feel compelled to prove their manhood by marrying another wife.

2.9 The effect of religion on polygamy

There are many religions which are against the issue of practicing polygamy. However, there are other religions which support the issue of polygamous marriages. There are churches like Johane Marange, Mormons, FDLS and the Muslims which practice polygamy. It is, however, unfortunate that in the countries that do not permit such practices; in some instances there will be churches that encourage polygamy.

The Mormon story, for example, presents an interesting case study. Marx claimed that changes in consciousness and ideological formation must be preceded and underpinned by changes in material conditions and social relations. Despite the heresy of new scripture and heavenly

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visitations which cast the whole of traditional Christianity as irredeemably apostate, by all accounts, early Mormonism was recognisably christian, with strong theological overlaps with Methodism. It follows an essentially Protestant organizational structure.

Mormonism arose in the United States in the first half of the 19thcentury.The United States (1878), tested and formally defined the limits of what reasonably constitutes religious behaviour, religiosity, and religion in the Republic. The court upheld the federal regulation of Mormon religious practice by creating a formal, legal distinction between belief and action. During the painful transition away from plural marriages (Smith 2006; Hardy 1992), some Mormons sought refuge from prosecution by moving outside the physical space or state jurisdiction (to the polygamist colonies in northern Mexico and southern Alberta). Mormons in the American west found refuge in the private space of the mind, arguing that merely believing in the eternal principle of celestial (plural) marriage was enough to qualify one for exaltation in God's eternal kingdom.

Although this was not an official church doctrine, there was considerable pressure in Mormon communities to enter into polygamy. During one of the October conference meetings in 1875, Apostle Wilford Woodruff asserted:

We have many bishops and elders who have but one wife. They are a abundantly qualified to enter the higher law and take more, but their wives will not let them. Any man who will permit a woman to lead him and bind him down is but little account in the Church and Kingdom of God. The law of Patriarchal marriage and plurality of wives is a revelation and commandment of God to us, and we should obey it. . . .1X

This was a clear call from a church leader for men to marry more than one wife. The issue of men dominating their women is significant. The feelings of women and what they think about polygamous marriages does not really matter, especially when the women are opposing what the men want. It is the abuse of women which still continues and the use of religion as a medium to abuse women. Women who are too bound to the bible feel obliged to obey their husbands in everything.

It is important to note that although polygamous marriages to some extent make families to be dysfunctional, religions have a very positive impact on the issue of families. It promotes families

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to be intact. There will be a lot of explanations that one has to make when one decides to break up with any of the wives. It would not be the explanation of the two of them only, but to every around them. In churches, divorces are condemned, so it not a swift move to make.

Religious beliefs also appear to play a role in the formation of formalised polygamous unions. Islam permits men to have as many as four wives (El Azayem & Hedayat- Diba, 1994; Madhavan, 2002) and views polygamy as protecting the family from possible deviation to illegal sexual intercourse and from contracting sexually transmitted diseases (El Azayem & Hedayat-Diba, 1994).

The pesantren is a centre of Islamic high-culture and the influence of the Tuan Guru teachings encompasses entire communities and government, not just the pesantren (Hamdi & Smith, 2009). Maulana Syeikh's teachings and practices play important roles in the reproduction of the pesantren. They remind teachers and students of the struggle to spread Islam through the practice of polygamy. He himself, practised it with a total of seven women, and he also encouraged endogamous marriages between pesantren students. This use of religion has been so evident in many religious sectors. Muslims and Mormons have a strong belief that having a polygamous marriage will lead them to heaven.

The Muslims strongly believe in the Qur'an which supports a man marrying multiple wives. In the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, the fourth Sirah (chapter), entitled ("The Women"), third(verse), states:

> 'If ye fear that ye shall not
> Be able to deal just
> With the orphans,
> Marry women of your choice
> Two, or three, or four;
> But if ye fear that ye shall not
> Be able to deal justly (with them),
> Then only one.... '

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From this, Muslims have justified multiple marriages for over a millennium. To be more specific, Sirah 4:3 permits polygamy, or a male having many wives, as opposed to the more general polygamy, which could apply to either sex. In fact, polyandry, which entails a female having many husbands, is strictly forbidden in Sirah 4:24.

However, there are some congregations which only allow one to marry one husband or wife until death do them part. The marriage that is practiced at all levels is the civil marriage. The marriages that take place under the priest will later on be recorded in the books within the church and then the recordings will be done on a national database in Zimbabwe. The practice of polygamy is a criminal offense in countries like the United Kingdom (UK), in some parts of the United States of America (USA) and many countries in the West. Nevertheless, it is estimated that over three billion people around the world still practice polygamy (CAPWOI, 2004).

2.10 The effect of economic factors on polygamy

Polygamy in the eastern Cameroon today is motivated more by economic considerations than anything else. Some supporters of polygamy claim it makes for an economically stronger family because there are more people working and bringing money into the home, including children. The debate about the economics of polygamy is not unique to Africa. In Kyrgyzstan, many believe that due to ongoing financial instability, a collective approach to making ends meet is more pragmatic than an individual effort. According to sociologist Minojat Tashbayeva polygamy exists due to the poverty of the majority of the population, and there is no way to eliminate it without improvement of living standards. Hamid Toursunof (2007) spoke to many women in Kyrgyzstan who said they would marry a man who is already married if he is prepared to care for them and their children.

However, polygamy often brings a heavy economic burden. The standard of living is higher today and consumer items and other basic necessities of life, such as education, medical care, shelter, and clothing, are much more expensive than they used to be. A negative effect results from this economic stress, as the wives do not take care of the children they are not given a good education, and the man feels his inability to meet his economic responsibilities. As a result, the burden is invariably transferred to the extended family that is uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, in-

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laws and other relations. These relatives are sometimes unable to help financially because they too have their own economic problems. Thus, marrying more than one wife does not only cause economic hardship to the man, but also to other members of the extended family network in the community.

2.11 Bigamy/ types of marriages

Bigamy is the act of entering into a marriage with one person while still legally married to another. The general law of Zimbabwe through the Marriages Act, Chapter 5:11, provides for different ages of marriage for girls (16) and boys (18) under civil ceremony. The traditional laws and practices do not generally provide an age of marriage, even though the Customary Marriages Act Chapter 5:07. Some traditional practices such as (giving a young girl to a rich man in exchange for some economic benefit) (appeasement of an avenging spirit by paying with a young girl) and (giving a young girl to a son-in-law in place of a deceased sister or aunt or one who cannot bear children) still happen as private family arrangements that go unreported, although they are not so widely practiced as in the past.

There are many reports of child marriages within apostolic sects where children as young as 11 years are given away in marriage. One newspaper on November 2004 reported a case of a 10 year old that was forced to marry a 22 year old man in Nyazura, after failing a virginity test. Her family belonged to the Johane Marange Apostolic sect and it is reported that it is their custom to have all girls aged nine years and above undergo virginity testing, which is conducted by the female elders of the church. In a newspaper report of 1 May 2003, girls within various apostolic sects lamented the forced marriage practices after a report of a 12 year old girl who was to be married as the fourth wife of a 69 year old, whilst her 14 year old friend had also married an older man on the basis of an alleged prophecy. Inspector Andrew Phiri of the Zimbabwe Republic Police reported in the same article that cases of forced marriage were rampant, even outside apostolic sects, but offenders were not arrested as the victims tend not to make a report.

2.12 Polygamy and labour

People get married into polygamous marriages because of different reasons. They tend to share the labour so that they lessen burden on each other. When wives are in polygamous marriages they help each other in the agricultural production, thereby helping sustain the family. The more

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hands they are, the easier the workload is. In contrast, most anthropological studies of polygamy have used "economical" in a more restricted sense. Murdock (1949), who stresses the "basic importance of economic factors" in explaining the incidence of polygamy in a society, includes in his concept of economic labor in agriculture, trades, and crafts, preparation of food, and political and religious functions. While Murdock excludes certain domestic activities, Boserup (1974) leaves them all out. It is the same restricted concept of economic factors that Goody (1974) has in mind when he criticizes Boserup, maintaining that the reasons behind polygamy are sexual and reproductive rather than economic and productive. Economic factors thus defined invalidate Goody's dichotomy: the economic analysis of polygamy treats both its productive and its reproductive aspects.

For any production that has to be in place there is need for labour input. There are those families which need some input in terms of work. As the families need to eat at the end of the day, there are extra measures taken to improve productivity and this sometimes leads to the exploiting of children. Both Murdock and Boserup emphasize the issue of productivity for families. The issue of domestic chores and reproductively depends in which context it is used. Exploitation can never be overlooked in the both scenarios.

2.13 Consequences of polygamy

The major theoretical efforts in the field of polygamy have been directed toward uncovering the antecedents of polygamy. Very few studies treat polygamy as an independent variable of consequence. In this respect, the work of Chojnacka (1980) is exceptional. She explores the connections between marriage form and population increase. The starting point of Chojnacka's analysis is the premise that fertility among polygamous wives is lower than among monogamous wives.

Chojnacka (1980) cites a United Nation (UN) publication which concludes that as African countries become more industrialised and polygamous marriages become less common fertility may rise. Chojnacka (1980) reports on cross-sectional evidence collected in rural Nigeria in which no consistent tendency towards lower or higher fertility between polygamous and monogamous women was found. Divergences which occurred between groups resulted to a large extent from the higher incidence of childlessness among polygamous women. In view of the lack

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of significant variation in fertility between the two types of marriage forms, Chojnacka (1980) concludes that fertility differentials may be of secondary importance from the point of view of demographic implications.

According to Chojnacka, a far more important consequence of polygamy is reflected in the very young neutrality pattern for women, which directly affects population growth. Age at first marriage was consistently lower among the polygamous than monogamous unions she studied. Chojnacka's (1980) work is also suggestive that family size rather than fertility is the critical variable. A discrepancy between conventional fertility indices and the popular perception of fertility size existed among the indigenous population she studied.

On the other hand, Henrich described three consequences of polygamy; creation of a pool of unmarried, low-status men decreased male parental investment in children, and increased demand for women leading to lower marriage age and increased inequality between men and women. Women who mostly married are those who are way younger than the husband himself. The husbands will prefer taking the younger wives compared to the older ones. This will result in the unfair treatment because of the difference in the age gaps. Henrich also brings about the other aspect of the consequences of getting into the polygamous marriages, research shows that marriage makes men much less likely to commit crimes such as murder, robbery and rape. The patterns observed in recent studies of polygamous African societies are similar. The point brought about by Henry is valuable to some extent since the responsibility makes people concentrate on their families. However, the issue of some burden on the head of the house might end up leading them to fall in some actions which are not good like stealing to make ends meet since there will be high demand of food within the family.

The 7 studies of this nature cited by Henrich reported that "children of polygamous families are at increased risk of diminished nutritional status, poor health outcomes, and mortality". Women in polygamous relationships are at increased risk of mental health problems as a result of higher rates of domestic violence, including sexual abuse, and co-wife conflict. Children in polygamous marriages end up suffering as the family might be experiencing financial problems, malnutrition and poor health might be a problem. On the other hand, women in polygamous marriages suffer a lot as they have to deal with a lot of stressing things. Women in polygamous marriages have to

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deal with disputes between each other, deal with the needs of their children using limited resources.

2.14 Theoretical framework

This research explores the experiences of women in polygamous marriages. The research was motivated by gender theories which analyse the binaries of race, class and gender. Polygamy has been discussed from different dimensions ranging from different cultural groups, social, religious to economic aspects. This brings about different perspectives on the subject. In this research, both the Southern and Northern context of polygamy will be highlighted, in order to understand this practice from an international perspective.

There are various feminist theories that will be used in the research. Radical feminism, for instance, seeks to draw a line between the biologically-determined behaviour and the culturally-determined behaviour to free both men and women all over the world. While there is no denying the fact that polygamy is culturally and easily acceptable in many societies, this research argues that at the core of its practice lies a contradiction between race, class and gender. This research is going to be motivated by mainly the radical theory although there are some theories which are also going to be included. The radical feminists seek to emancipate women from the society where men are dominating in many aspects. What began as a movement to free all black people from racist oppression became a movement whose primary goal was to establish a black male patriarchy (Hooks 1996). Bell Hooks notes that the oppression that happened was between races.

There are also socialist feminists who bring about the argument of pro-creation. They believe that the importance of families is that they help with the process of reproduction within the society. This implies that polygamy is of great importance as it will help in maintaining the size of population within the society. It results in reproduction which helps in the sustaining of the society, the new offspring aid in the development of the society. Socialists place great value on the issue of family. Thus, polygamous marriages are valued because many children will be born as many wives are involved.

Bell Hooks also pointed out the issue of gender contradictions. Women, in a patriarchal society where men are dominant are oppressed and exploited. The suffering that they experience is sometimes due to the experiences that they had when they were young. Bell Hooks says:

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Often men who have been emotionally neglected and abused as children by dominating mothers bond with assertive women, only to have their childhood feelings of being engulfed surface.

However, Bell Hooks point of view comes from the African-American praxis which is not entirely representative of the African societies. The use of the standpoint theory, it is hoped, will amplify women's voices regarding polygamy. Women have been suppressed, oppressed and exploited resulting in their voices being silenced. Standpoint feminism highlights the need to recognise women's voices as different from men's, and hence women must be heard if existing hegemonic values are to be challenged.

It is important for feminists to acknowledge the need to amplify women's voices despite the consequences that the women might face if their voices are heard. This will set women free and allow them to articulate their challenges. However, it is not just bad things that women in polygamous marriages experience. There are also good things that must not be overlooked.

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CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter seeks to highlight the research methods that were used in this study. It explains how the participants were selected, ethical considerations, data collection, the interview process, the research instruments and the summary.

3.2 Research Design

A qualitative approach was used in the study. This method was used because it allowed the researcher to ask the participants open ended questions, where they were allowed to elaborate in their own words on their experiences of the problem of the study. For the qualitative approach, the researcher wanted to obtain first-hand information and in-depth information about the problem of the study. The researcher also wanted to gain more understanding of the phenomena as this approach allows any researcher to ask participants open ended questions during the interview process. Standpoint feminism allowed the women's voices to be heard. This theory allowed women to express themselves, thereby producing knowledge on the phenomenon.

3.3 Population and Sample size

Population is a group of elements or cases whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which one intends to generalize the results of the results of the research (Mudau, 2013). Population for this study was women residing in Matizha village in Gutu, Zimbabwe. Most of the residents in this region are rural people. It is the third largest district in Masvingo. Matizha village is approximately 15 km from the Growth point.

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole Cresswell (2007). When dealing with people, a sample can be defined as a set of respondents (people) selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey. A sample of 10 participants was used in the collection of data.

3.4 Sampling method

This research used non-probability sampling methods. Snowball or chain sampling was used to identify cases of interest from people rich with information. This sampling method is commonly used in studies that may be looking at issues such as polygamy. The participant gets hold of one

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and who tells where others are or could be found. When one finds those others, they tell where more people can be found and the chain continues. This type of sampling method uses a small pool of initial informants to nominate, through their social networks, other participants who meet the eligibility criteria and could potentially contribute to the study. The advantage of snowball sampling is that the researcher is able to locate hidden populations. It starts with few individuals within a place or an organization and asking those few selected people to identify other members of the within a place end up turning those identified becoming the basis of further data collection.

3.5 Limitations of the study

The researcher encountered some limitations as she was collecting data from the field. Participants were not comfortable to describe their experiences in full especially those who had negative experiences, but the researcher kept on ensuring them about confidentiality. The participants did not want to stay for long in the interview as they were hesitant that people from the house would think that they were saying a lot of negative things.

The researcher encountered the problem of making the participants talk freely when the husband would start strolling up and down outside the house. We would take more time in the interview than the anticipated time prior to the interview. It was really an emotional experience for participants to say exactly what felt so some of the time was consumed in trying to make participants calm down.

3.6 Semi-structured interviews

An interview guide was used, but additional questions were asked. Additional questions were asked and some questions that might not have been anticipated at the beginning of the interview were asked. This type of interview gives the researcher opportunities to probe for the views and opinions of the interviewee. Probing is a way for the interview to explore new paths which might not have been considered initially (Gray 2004).

3.7 Individual in- depth interviews

An in depth interview is an open ended, discovery oriented method that is well suited for describing both programme processes and outcomes from the perspective of the target audience

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or key stakeholder. An in depth interview is a conversation with an individual conducted by trained staff. The goal of the interview is to deeply explore the respondent's point of view, feelings and perspectives. In essence, in depth interviews involve not only asking questions, but also the systematic recording and documentation of responses as well as the intense probing for deeper meaning and understanding of the responses. Thus, in depth interviewing often requires repeated interview sessions with the target audience under study.

3.8 Data collection

Data collection is the gathering of information from the participants it includes interviews and observations are discussions, usually one-on-one between an interviewer and an individuals, meant to gather information on a specific set of topics Cresswell, J.W. (2007). Interviews can be conducted in person or over the phone. Interviews differ from surveys by the level of structure placed on the interaction. Examples of this include observing the behaviour of the respondents as they respond to the questions or how respond to the questions. However, it should be noted that the researcher's very presence may have some influence on how the respondent might end up responding.

The selection process included a discussion with the chiefs and the headmen of the village. The discussion focused on how to get participants from the village and what the research was all about. The chief and head leader gave us an insight of the few individuals that they identified, and those ones helped in identifying others in the community who were also in polygamous marriages. There were some interpreters for those who did not understand English. The researcher strived to be as informal as possible so as to allow a free spirited participation in the interview. The respondents were asked questions. Various techniques in the collection of data were used, namely tape recorders, observations, and interview. The researcher used recordings in the interview so as to listen to what the participants were saying over and over when she needed to go back to the data. In observing the researcher was picking up the behavior that the participants were having through the body expression, frowning, crying and giggles. Participants were interviewed individually as the questions asked were at times too sensitive for some people. All the participants were asked the same set of questions. Questions and answers arising from them helped the researcher make them feel comfortable and at ease.

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3.9 Data analysis

According to Grinnell (1993), data analysis is the categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research questions. Data analysis takes place in different forms depending upon the nature of the research questions, designs and nature of the study.

The data was analysed thematically using themes that emerged from the data. The researcher familiarized herself with the depth and breadth of the content. The researcher read through the entire data set at least once before beginning to code, as the ideas, and the identification of possible patterns was shaped in the process of reading through.

Transcription of verbal data informs the early stages of analysis, and the researcher developed a far more thorough understanding of the data through having transcribed it. Furthermore, the close attention needed to transcribe data may facilitate the close-reading and interpretative skills needed to analyse the data (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). All data was transcribed and then translated from Shona into English. The researcher verified reliability of transcriptions by reading them while listening to the recordings.

The data was initially coded and collated, and there was a long list of the different codes the researcher would have identified across the data set. This phase, which re-focuses the analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes, involved sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes.

The researcher devised a set of themes and refined them. During this phase, some themes collapsed into each other while other themes needed to be broken down into separate entities. The researcher had a satisfactory thematic map of data. The researcher then defined and further refined the themes that were analysed. It is important not to try and get a theme to do too much or to be too diverse and complex.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The research process creates tension between the aims of research to make generalizations for the good of others, and the rights of participants to maintain privacy. Angelica O, Laurel E, Dianne W (2000) Ethics pertains to doing well and avoiding harm. Harm can be prevented or

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reduced through the application of appropriate ethical principles. Thus, the protection of human subjects or participants in any research study is imperative.

The researcher obtained a proof of academic study and a consent form approved by the study supervisor in order to seek permission from the authorities to carry out the study. Identified people were asked to participate in the study and only those who volunteered participated.

The participants were assured that the information from the study would be used for academic purposes, and they were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. This was achieved by not asking for personal details such as names, ID numbers or passport numbers of the respondents..

3.11 Informed Consent

Informed consent implies that subjects are made adequately aware of the type of information the researcher wants from them, why the information is being sought, what purpose it will be put to, how they are expected to participate in the study and how it will directly or indirectly affect them (Kumar, 2005). The researcher should obtain the necessary permission from the respondents after they are thoroughly and truthfully informed about the purpose of the interview and the investigation (Welman and Mitchell, 2005).

Prior to the interview, the researcher first explained to the respondents various aspects. The researcher informed the respondents that participation is voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at whatsoever time they wanted. The respondents were also told about the purpose of the study, risks, benefits and that information shared would be kept confidential and that they would remain anonymous.

The researcher's aim of equipping the respondents with adequate information was to enable them to make an informed decision. Singleton, Straits and Straits (1993) acknowledge that participation should be voluntary and that respondents are free to withdraw from the study at any time, moreover they must be a clear description of the risk of harm involved and of personal rights that might be jeopardized by their participation. Working with people who were willing ensured. After thoroughly explaining to them what their participation encompassed they were each asked to sign informed consent papers.

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3.12 Confidentiality

According to Neuman (2001) confidentiality means that information may have names attached to it, but the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret from the public. Whilst Bless *etal*, (2006) says confidentiality means the information provided by participants, particularly sensitive and personal information should be protected and not made available to anyone other than the researcher.

The researcher maintained confidentiality by not divulging information shared by the participants unless they had agreed that the information be shared with someone else. The respondents kept asking whether the information shared will not be told to other people and the researcher assured them that it would be kept confidential. This enabled the participants to freely express themselves.

3.13 Anonymity

Neuman (2001) refers to anonymity as ethical protection that participants remain nameless; their identity is protected from disclosure and remains nameless; their identity is protected from disclosure and remains unknown. Singleton, Straits and Straits (1993) states that the researcher can maintain anonymity by removing names and other identifying information from the data as soon as possible, by not disclosing individual identities in any report of the study and by not divulging the information to persons or organizations requesting it without the research participants' permission.

The researcher used pseudonyms and the respondents were labelled as respondent A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and so on, so that people could not identify a given response with a given respondent. When participants became aware that their real names were not going to be used, it enabled them to express themselves freely without fear.

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3.14 No Harm

No harm refers to never injuring the people being studied regardless of whether they volunteer for the study or not (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). For the purpose of the study, the researcher ensured that the participants were not harmed physically, psychologically or emotionally. If harm was realized the participants would have been removed from the study and offered counseling if needed.

Neuman (2001) acknowledges that indeed social research can harm a research subject in several ways: physical harm, psychological harm, legal harm and harm to a person's career or income. In the study, the researcher avoided inflicting anxiety and psychological discomfort by asking questions in an appropriate manner as well as not judging the respondents. The researcher was also very patient with the respondents when they narrated their ordeal as some of the experiences were sensitive and painful.

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CHAPTER 4:DATA INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data obtained from the interviewed respondents about the women in polygamous marriages in Matizha village in Zimbabwe. The data was obtained using a guided interview for all the respondents ranging from all ages who are in polygamous marriages. The researcher starts by presenting the demographic information of the participants. Thereafter, the researcher presents other aspects of the data collection like social factors, economic factors and also religious affiliation.

4.2 THEME ONE: PERSONAL DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1: Personal details of participants

Codes	Ages	Wife position	Number of children	Sexes of children	Level of education
A	30	1st	4	3boys 1 girl	Grade 7
B	33	2nd	5	4 girls 1 boy	O'level
C	29	3rd	1	1 girl	Form 2
D	22	2nd	5	3 boys 2girls	Grade 7
E	21	4rd	1	1 girl	A'level
F	38	1st	3	2 girls 1boy	Form 2
G	25	2nd	4	4 girls	Grade 7
H	27	1st	1	1 girl	Degree holder
I	24	2nd	2	2 girls	O level
J	20	3rd	2	1boy 1 girl	Grade 7

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The personal details of women in polygamous marriages are presented in table 1 above. The names of respondents have not been mentioned for confidentiality reasons. The researcher labelled participants as A, B, C, D and so on. 10 women who are in the polygamous marriages were interviewed. The personal information has assisted in providing brief biographic information on the women in polygamous marriages. On the personal information, the researcher looked at the age, number of children, sex of children and also the level of education.

The age range of the respondents was from 20 to 38 years. All respondents had children. The number of children from the ten respondents ranged from one to five. The respondents who were having the highest number of children were respondent B and D who were having 5 children each. There were followed by respondents A and G who had 4 children each. There were also other wives who had 3, 2 and even 1 child. There is no uniformity in the distribution of the number of children these women have. There are different motivations for one to bear more children or fewer children within the marriages. There also natural causes that individuals do not have control over like choosing the sex of children one has to bear.

From the sexes of children, some women have a balance between the sexes. However, there are others who have children of the same sex only. The ones with only female children end up having more children in search of the male children as compared to those who are fortunate to get male children at first. All the women wanted to bear male children because they are said to be the preservers of the family name. For example G, the second wife said:

'Everyone looks down upon me because I have girls .So I have to keep on trying'

The need to harmonise the laws in Zimbabwe has been revealed by the media as crucial because current laws have an inclination towards discrimination on the basis of sex. The Zimbabwean Herald (Friday 19 May 2006) comments:

> *[O]ur marriage laws in Zimbabwe are not harmonized, for example Section 23 of the Constitution discriminates against women. Zimbabwe ratified various treaties and conventions to promote equality between men and women but in some cases those were not observed.*

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4.2.1 Gender biasness in family expansion and polygamy

The question of sex plays a negative impact in terms of inheriting property from the deceased and also on who will become heir when the father of the family is deceased. Discrimination continues to be dominant in Zimbabwe. There are some laws which observe the significance of women but when it comes to cultural backgrounds, little is done on the issue of women. In families where they are more girls than boys, when it comes to issues of inheritance, it is more likely that the girls will not get anything.

One such negative impact stems from the provisions of the Zimbabwean constitution. Coldham (1999) sees Section 23 of the constitution of Zimbabwe as being protective in terms of race, tribe, and place of origin, political opinions and colour whilst it does not outlaw discrimination against sex. It is so hard when people do not put the issue of gender into consideration because no one can protect the girl child. It is in such constitutions that men are in power, looking down upon the women since the constitution will not be able to protect the girl child from the unfair treatment within the communities.

Another aspect which was looked at in the study was the level of education. The majority (6 out of 10) of the respondents received a minimal education whilst a minority of (4 of 10) respondents received a higher education and also tertiary education. Most of the women who received a minimal education are the ones who have more children compared to the ones who did not receive education on an advanced level. There are two main reasons why those who attained minimal education could not go further with their schooling.

> *'I had to end up with my education in grade seven (primary school) because my parents had run out of funds' (Respondent D).*

> *'My father was saying that after all I will end up getting married so at least now I am matured to get married and start raising my own family'(Respondent C).*

There is an issue of coming from poor backgrounds where fathers are unable to support their children in education since there have a very big burden on their shoulders of also sending many other children to school. They see it as basic education if someone can read and write. The other

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things are not considered to be really necessary because some fathers claim that too much knowledge might make some children stubborn.

Some parents feel that it is a waste of money to let a girl child attain higher education because she will get married and move to another family after they have invested in her education. The problem is that such negative parental decisions adversely affect children throughout their lives. It is mainly in the marginalised rural areas that the cultural beliefs are cemented in many people but there are some people in urban areas that still hold to such beliefs. Steady (2006) argues that 'educational deficiencies are a reflection of the pattern of underdevelopment' which is prevalent in African countries. Steady sees the gender gap in education closing in most parts of the world except in sub-Saharan Africa where it is still widening.

They are wives who admitted that they were in polygamous marriages and that they were married customarily. In other cases marriages were organized by families.

> *'Yes I am in a polygamous marriage. I was in customary marriage. It was organized by my family members as we had financial issues'. (Respondent E)*
>
> *'Yes I am in the polygamous marriage. I got married in a customary marriage. I thought the husband was going to divorce the wife since they were having problems'. (Respondent G)*

It is with Respondent E that a financial issue plays a role. Financial problems made the family to give away their daughter into a polygamous marriage. She was given to a wealth man able to pay bride price or 'roora'. In this case daughters are used as a source of attaining wealth. However, the other organized marriage was not due to the financial constraints. This is one of the procedures that is done when a husband dies. They say the wife and the children should be taken care of even if the husband is no more.

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4.3 THEME TWO: EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGES

4.3.1 Sub-theme: Type of marriages

Respondents were asked about their experiences in the polygamous marriages. All participants were married customarily. Some participants knew what they were entering into and others thought that the husbands will leave their wives. Below are some quotations of what different wives said.

> *'Yes I am in a polygamous marriage. I was married customarily before, but I was the only wife to my husband', (Respondent A).*

> 'Yes I am in a polygamous marriage. I was customarily married. I knew what I was getting into a polygamous marriage and I didn't care', (Respondent C).

There are some respondents who got into the polygamous marriage after their husbands had died. It is common in some cultures like the one Respondent G is from, after the husband passes on, the wife becomes the property to the deceased's brothers and all his belongings will go to one of his brothers. The wife is not given the option to choose what she wants. This is what the culture imposes on the women. The Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA) estimates that 70% of people in Zimbabwe are living in unregistered customary law unions (The ZWLA Concept Paper on Marriage Law Reform, 2000).

4.3.2 Sub-theme: Decision making vs Deceit

It is through respondent B that the dominance of the men in society is evident. The decision of taking another wife was not an agreement from the wives. It was when the husband saw it suits him to have another wife that he made the decision to take another wife. Men are told that they are heads of their household after they get married and most men tend to abuse their headship by making decisions without consulting their wives.

> '*Yes I am in a polygamous marriage. I customarily married. However, my husband had only one wife and I thought it will end up like that, but he later decided to have a third wife'. (Respondent B)*

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There are some wives who were also married customarily, but they were deceived since they did not know that they were getting into polygamous marriages. Their husbands promised them that they would be marrying only them. I learnt this from two respondents.

> *'Yes I am in polygamous marriage. I customarily married. However, my husband had only one wife and I thought it will end up like that but later decided to have a second wife', (Respondent B)*

> *'Yes I am in the polygamous marriage. I was in customary marriage and was the only wife'. (Respondent F).*

From what Respondent B and F had to say, there was an issue of husbands abusing their authority which they had not anticipated. These two women never imagined that their husbands would end up getting second wives. However, during some face to face interviews with the interviewees the researcher realised that some respondents were really content with being in polygamous marriages. They did not see anything that was out of the way about it. This can be supported by what respondent I and J revealed:

> *Yes I am in a polygamous marriage. I love everything about the marriage. (Respondent I).*

> *Yes I am in a polygamous marriage. I am married customarily. I knew that I was getting into a polygamous marriage. (Respondent J)*

The 1st wife got in the marriage hoping that she would be the only one married to the husband. A woman can be married customarily and at the end of the day she will still remain the only wife. She did not see it coming.

> *'Yes I am in a polygamous marriage. I customarily married. However, my husband had only one wife and I thought it will end up like that but later he decided to have a third wife'. (Respondent B)*

From this response, the 2nd wife knew what she was getting into but her hope was that the husband would have just the two of them. However, the husband decided to take another wife.

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'Yes I am in a polygamous marriage. I was customarily married. I knew that I was getting in a polygamous marriage and I didn't care'. (Respondent C).

From the interview carried out with Respondent C she said she did not mind being the third wife. At the end of the day she said was getting what she wanted.

4.3.3 Sub-theme: The traditional functioning of the polygamy system

In Zimbabwe, it is through customary marriage that a husband can marry many wives. All the 10 women who were in the polygamous marriages were customarily married. Most of the customary marriages take place in traditional way. There is little documentation on the customary marriages that happen within the villages. By the virtue of paying bride price to the bride family, the custody of the children is automatically given to the father. Traditionally children belong to the father.

From the face to face interviews the researcher carried out with each co-wife at given time, they revealed their deepest feelings. This can be deduced from the responses that were varying from the 1st set of co-wives since they got in the marriage at different times.

'Yes I am in a polygamous marriage. I was married customarily before, but I was the only wife to my husband'. (Respondent A)

4.3.4 Sub-theme: Dealing with the tension in the household

The researcher obtained information how women cope with tension in polygamous households. All interviewed women said that endurance was the key for polygamous marriages to last. With all the co-wives interviewed, they were tension in the household but they had to adapt to all the changes that took place. Some of the wives were not dealing with the tension in a positive way.

It is because of such strained marriages that there are condemnations of polygamous marriages internationally. As it has been noted by organizations like the CEDAW. CEDAW noted in its general recommendation number 21 on Equality in Marriage and Family Relations that:

Polygamous marriage contravenes a woman's right to equality with men, and can have such serious emotional and financial consequences for her and her dependents that such marriages ought to be discouraged and prohibited. The Committee notes with concern that some States parties, whose constitution

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> *guarantee equal rights permit polygamous marriage in accordance with personal or customary law. The negative impact that the marriage have on the wife will also result to be on children. When the mother is not alright with whatever that might be happening in her life, it is something that will have an effect on the children. Lack of emotional support from parents will lead to the suffering of children as a result.*

The respondents gave their experiences of being in polygamous marriages. This is what they said:

> *There is no enjoyment at all. Everyone will be fighting to have the husband's attention. Kids are the ones who suffer a lot since they do not have a mutual bonding with the father. I even feel pity for my own since I am no longer the favorite wife. As for us ladies, it is better because he rotates on from one household to another, but he seems to like the new wife though. It's very tough. (Respondent A)*

Respondent A said the tension becomes excessive at times. Once the father is caught up in the disputes of the different wives, the dispute became very complicated.

However, even though there are some constraints when it comes to polygamous marriages there are some people who see it as a good thing.

> *I enjoy being in my marriage. I believe that being in polygamous marriage is just like any other marriage. One has to be strong. That's all. (Respondent B)*

> *I enjoy being in my marriage. I get all the things that I want especially the material stuff. However, there is one problem of not getting my husband's full attention. (Respondent C)*

These two comments suggest these women were socialized into the idea of polygamy and therefore they seem to enjoy their experience. They focus on the good things that come from polygamy. These individuals tend to believe that the polygamous lifestyle is the only way out and hence they become attached to a polygamous lifestyle.

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The respondents have different experiences in their polygamous marriages. Most of the women have had bad experiences in their marriages. The husbands are unable to satisfy everyone when it comes to emotional needs. The children also suffer in the polygamous marriage as the father sometimes finds it very difficult to support them in getting higher education. The children also lack the father's attention as they do not get adequate personal time with their fathers.

4.3.5 Sub-theme: Strategies used to resolve conflict and tension

Respondent D indicated that she deals with the tension in the house in a different way. Respondent D sees a polygamous marriage as any other marriage which will have its challenges that must be resolved. This is what Respondent D said:

> *What I am going through is not me alone. I have heard so many people experiencing such even the ones who have coupledom (Respondent D)*

Respondent E pointed out that there are many disputes that happen within polygamous households. However, she said that as in any other household these problems are best resolved through dialogue.

> *We do have many disputes. At the end of the day we have to unite because we report to our husband at the end of the day (Respondent E)*

There is an issue of giving up when things get really heated up. Respondent F sometimes thinks of the burden that she will give to her parents if she chooses to leave the family and went back to her parents. In some cases, leaving the family might mean that the children will be dishonored from their father's place.

> *Sometimes when the fights get heated and I think of going back to my parents' place, but at the end of the day I have to be strong for my kids. This is their home. (Respondent F)*

Clearly, there are many tensions that happen within polygamous households. The rivalries that happen between the co–wives and the lack of attention the children receive from their father. However, despite all the suffering that they endure, there are some women who enjoy their

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polygamous marriages. Although they encounter problems they view these as normal problems that even monogamous households have to deal with.

4.3.6 Sub-theme: Perseverance

This section discusses how the notion of perseverance was presented as very important to the functioning of polygamous marriages. Most of the women interviewed showed that perseverance made them endure their marital problems.

Respondent A and Respondent F specified something that really made them to be strong no matter the hardships that they were going through. The issue of kids plays a big role. Once women bear children they do not want to move with their children from one marriage to the other. Most of these women were uncomfortable with the idea of taking their children into another marriage. Below is what they said.

> *Where do I go from here? I have invested a lot in this marriage. I cannot just let it slip through my fingers like that. The one who cannot bear it any longer is the one who should leave. And where will I go with these children (Respondent A)*

> *My family would not let me live with them. We have financial constraints, so it will be a burden to my family since they cannot even support their family. And for me to bring my kid, it will be a big burden. (Respondent F)*

There are a lot of things that women choose to sacrifice so as to make their families stay together. Women endure a lot of suffering all in the name of protecting the family name and also in order to maintain the status that they are at least married. Under customary law of various African countries, women are not allowed to divorce their husbands. If a woman divorces, such an incident attracts implications not only on her but on her family as well, for in Africa marriage involves families of partners as it involves partners themselves. Her family is seen as having failed to groom a girl or woman of marriageable quality Obonye (2012).In the African culture, the marriage is not only limited to the husband and the children only. It includes everyone who is related to the married couple.

Some of these women indicated that they stayed on in difficult polygamous marriages for the sake of their children. This is what comes through in the two quotations below.

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The main reason I am staying in this marriage is because of my children. Where will I go from here with my children and who would want to marry me again with all my children so I have to be strong here. (Respondent H)

When I got into this marriage I knew that he was having a wife. I knew what I was getting into so I will stay in it. (Respondent B)

There is a sense of resigned acceptance in the above words by these women about the problems they encounter in their polygamous marriages. They believe that they have to be strong for their children's sake because there is nowhere else to go. Some of the respondents talked about the importance of accepting that there will be disputes in polygamous marriages because individuals have different personalities. Below is what one respondent said:

The fact that we have different characters means that we are different. Embracing each other's difference is the way out. (Respondent C)

Similarly Respondent E said:

Each marriage has its flaws and good things so I must just be strong and all will be fine. (Respondent E)

For the respondents to get into polygamous marriages is mainly by choice although in some circumstances there will be some external motivations that influence them in getting in such marriages. The main reason why the respondents were not getting out of their marriages was the presence of children and the difficulties involved in finding another home once one has children.

4.4 THEME THREE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

4.4.1 Sub-theme: Culture

This involved 10 women are in polygamous marriages. I inquired how culture has an impact on the polygamous marriages. Some of the women who are in polygamous marriages indicated that they were not in polygamous marriages before their husbands passed on, they were even married customarily and they were the only wives to their husbands. Things changed when their husbands died and they were made to marry their new husbands. According to the Centre for Reproductive Rights (2003) [online] report, customary marriages in Zimbabwe are more frequent

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among the citizens and constituted 82 per cent of the total number of marriages in the country in 1997.

About 2 of the 10 participants of the study had been married customarily and they were living as one husband and one wife at the time they were married, they never anticipated that their hubands would marry other wives. Walker, Mhambi & Izumi 2004 adds that even where marriage is formally registered, inheritance laws fail to protect the women's property rights. This implies that even where the laws are seeking to protect women from the patriarchal societies it is hard to put everything in practice. Written laws are not always implemented.

In Zimbabwe there is recognition of an organization called ZINATHA (Zimbabwe National African Traditional Healers). The recognition of such organization within the country's constitution makes some certain aspects of traditional culture such as customary marriages where polygamy forms part to be preserved.

Cultural explanations posit that the power of tradition and norms in African culture is the point of departure for explaining widespread violence in homes. Traditions such as the power given to the extended family over married couples and the universal institution of paying bride price are a root of the abuse of women (Randal 2003). This gives a light on why the relatives of the deceased have power to appropriate property in disregard of the widow. Below are observations of some of the respondents:

> *There is no equality when it comes to the work at home. Us ladies we always work an extra mile. (Respondent I).*
>
> *My husband had to stop me from going to work. There was now a rumor that I was the bread winner for the family and it was not serving him well. (Respondent F)*

From the interview, the wives in the polygamous marriages outlined their problems. There was an issue about the division of labor which came about. Women are the ones who do strenuous work. This was something that was happening to all the respondents. This is what Respondent B said:

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> *Our husband will be expecting to have all his proper meals despite that we will be working on our own in the fields. (Respondent B)*

Experiences show that women have suffered abuse in different forms such as emotional and physical abuse. Respondent B indicates that women have to cater for the needs of their husbands even after spending the whole day working hard in the fields.

It is also unfortunate that in such societies, it is never accepted that women can fall sick. No matter how much pain she might be in, at the end of the day, there are some things that a woman is expected to do. This is what responded J said:

> *As women, no one will get to understand you when you say that you are too sick to work. At the end of the day children want to eat and I don't expect my husband to do the cooking. (Respondent J)*

The above observation sums up the problems those women and especially those in polygamous marriages have to contend with.

4.4.2 Subtheme: Gender roles in polygamous

Cultural theories emphasize the power of tradition and norms within African culture as explaining the widespread incidence of violence against women in general and property stripping from widows in particular (Randall 2003). Cultural theorists see the connection between traditional norms and violence against women as being related, arguing that wife battering, for example is regarded as normal and being married to the deceased elder or younger brother is seen as culturally acceptable. Randall (2003) observes the 'uneven distribution of power within African marriages, the impact of polygamy, the power of the extended family over the married couple, and the universal institution of bride price as underlying the widespread of abuse of women'.

Women are mostly associated with the duties linked to housekeeping. It is hard for the equality in gender roles to be achieved as women are made to do more work than men.

Women are forever doing chores around the house. They give themselves to these chores no matter what it takes. They also go to the extent of compromising a lot on the work that there will be doing by also doing their husband's work. In this regard Respondent B said:

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> *There are some strenuous works that are done at home. Like cutting firewood or digging a pit at home. This is expected to be done by the husband but sometimes when men are not around the house I tend to compromise and do it but I have never seen my husband doing some dishes when I am away. (Respondent B)*

Whelman (2004) argues for strict equality between women and men. He points out that gender equality in the labor market will not be achieved without gender equality in the allocation of household chores. Respondent A said:

> *There are certain roles that we are expected to do. You can't expect the husband to do some of the things like sweeping the house. (Respondent A)*

There are some jobs that are expected to be done by man such as digging and cutting of firewood. However, there are times where women have to compromise because the man of the house is tired or unwilling to the work.

However, some respondents indicated that it is not always that there is unfair division of roles and duties. The duties are shared equally between the children. This is what responded E said:

> *In this house what a man can do a woman can also do. That's what I taught my children so that they can work together. (Respondent E)*

It is reflected by respondent D that a woman is not expected to be sitting around even in tough times. In some houses there is an issue of equity when it comes to the division of roles in the households.

> *After having my second child I was I almost paralyzed I can't do strenuous work like cutting firewood or anything that wants me to bend. I only do light work. (Respondent D)*

No matter how sick a woman can get within the family she is not expected to sit and do nothing. At least she has to do the least she can in her condition. Randall (2003) also points out that bride price have widely led to violence against women because of the perception that they have been paid for just like any property in the homestead.

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4.4.3 Subtheme: Source of income for women

The respondents gave their responses on what they were going through in getting money for survival. From the responses, most of them did not have qualifications that would enable them to get better jobs. Nine out of 10 women did not have certificates, diplomas and degrees that would enable them better opportunities when seeking for jobs.

The issue of polygamy is an aspect that has been seen to support both the production and also the reproductive part. Below is what respondent A and B said:

> *I have been taught how to farm. Ever since I was a kid, my parents were very strict about the farming issue. We would even go to water the garden in the early morning before going to school or do the ploughing. With this, it has been really my strength ever since. That's how I survive here. I do farming and sell the surplus on the market. (Respondent A)*

> *It has been really hard for me to get a job which would sustain my family (referring to the kids she has). I have been working in a store as a storekeeper. But the owner was not really paying me well so I have decided to leave the work and do the selling of fruits and vegetables on the market. (Respondent B)*

Respondent C shows the negative and positive things that result from being a woman. Women can easily accept their weaknesses in search of their strongest points in life. During the interview with respondent C there were lighter moments. The respondent was even able to laugh.

> *[Laughter]... I don't have any qualifications. I was very dull at school. That's why I ended up with form 2. Before I got married I used to work in people's homes as a housekeeper. But ever since I got married I resorted into doing work for other people in their pieces of land. I do work for other people and then I come back and do work at my home. I get paid in form of clothes that will no longer be fitting their children. But sometimes I get paid in form of money (Respondent C).*

Women who are not well educated find satisfaction in whatever job they can get. This is what respondent D said:

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I go and sell at the market. I do my orders in Harare and then sell my fresh fruits at my market. (Respondent D)

[Sobing] it is very hard for me. I have managed to pass my Ordinary and didn't do well on my Advanced level. My parents did not have money so they organized my marriage. As it is now, the way I get money its through some temporary teaching. That is how I manage to support my kids. However, these days it has really proven to be hard to have temporary teaching as the ministry of education now wants to take those with the qualifications. (Respondent E)

Defining income to include both cash and imputed value, Grossbard (1978) posits that married men are able to benefit from female income through family labor, but not from female income through wage labor. Hence, the benefit to men and women from marriage will depend upon the relative quantities of female income from family versus wage labor.

The basic premise underpinning this type of argument is that in traditional societies the family is the primary unit of production. The occurrence of polygamy generally is hypothesised to be positively related to the importance of the direct or indirect contribution of women to the subsistence base of their respective societies. Some theorists emphasise the importance of the productive services of women, others the reproductive services which contribute to the welfare of the kinship group.

Polygamy facilitates the birth of a larger number of children per family during a given period of time. The more hands they are, the easier the workload is. In contrast, most anthropological studies of polygamy have used the word economic in a more restricted sense. Murdock (1949), who stresses the basic importance of economic factors in explaining the incidence of polygyny in a society, includes in his concept of "economic" labor in agriculture, trades, and crafts, preparation of food, and political and religious functions. It is evident that in some families, children are being used as a source of labour. Children fill in the gap which would have been filled in by their parents. Goody's analysis of African rates of polygamy suggest that the economic function of polygamy lies in the labour potential of the children resulting from a multiple union rather than the agricultural labour contribution of the wives. This is suggested in what respondent F said:

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> *I am a farmer. Not everyone has been blessed with the gift of excelling academic wise. The thing that I really specialize in is poultry. It has really proved to be of great deal for me. I get the money enough for my family. My children really help me a lot. (Respondent F)*

However, there are some women who get in polygamous marriages not because they are looking for a means of economic backup. They get married because of being in love. This is evident in the following comment:

> *Its really hard in this family. I am the only wife with a degree. I work as a social worker in Masvingo. I get a relatively fair pay to be able to live well. When anyone in the family is in short of anything they always expect to get it from me. They believe that I have it all. (Respondent H)*

Hamid Toursunof (2007) spoke to many women in Kyrgyzstan who said they would marry a man who is already married if he is prepared to care for them and their children. It is much easier for some women to get in polygamous marriages even if they know that the man is already married. That is something that is common amongst the other women who prefer being dependent on men rather than being their own bosses. This can be evidenced from what respondent H said:

> *I do (mushandirapamwe). We work as a team with other women. And we sell the produce. My husband is stable when it comes to the monetary issues (Respondent G).*

The fulfillment of women being responsible within their households is very high even though they do not have qualifications which will enable them to get good jobs. Women also find satisfaction in doing work on their own even though the husbands might have steady jobs. This is seen in the following comment:

> *There are pieces jobs around. I work for those who do not want to work for themselves. At least my husband is a teacher around. (Respondent I)*

From the women who are practicing polygamy most of them do practice agriculture as a form of sustenance. A complex economic proposition is advanced by Osmond (1965). Osmond observes

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that polygamy tends to occur more often in economic systems which are based on simple agriculture and/or animal husbandry. Marital systems tend to become monogamous as societies become more complex. Polygamy is most common at the intermediate levels of societal complexity, while monogamy is greater at the low and very high extremities of the complexity continuum. Polygamy is the most efficient means of producing a large family in a given time period. A large family is an asset in the following instances: wives and children provide the chief labour force, children provide social security in old age and children represent the means of commanding extensive political power. People who are part and parcel of polygamous marriages benefit in almost all these aspects.

During the colonial times some measures were taken to control the issue of how people would handle the issue of polygamy. The continued existence of polygamy shows how hard it is to eradicate systems that are deeply rooted in African traditional systems. Men with more than one wife were obliged to pay a supplementary tax for each wife beyond the first, from the second up to the thirtieth. The assumption underlying this kind of punishment, symbolic taxation was that it was too risky to attempt simply to eradicate a deep-rooted customary practice. Rather polygamy should be discouraged, while their economic livelihoods were exploited. This was not taxation designed merely to make colonialism pay for itself. It was taxation bent on extracting a greater contribution to its costs from those who were assumed to have greater wealth, and wealth gained and expressed immorally in the colonial sign, polygamy/wealth (slavery/prostitution) Osmond (1965).

4.5 THE IMPACT OF RELIGION ON POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGES

4.5.1 Sub-theme: Polygamous marriages

My research evidence shows that religious affiliations of the respondent wives have an impact on their polygamous marriages. Most women who had an experience with polygamy testified that they or their mothers got into polygamous marriages against their will, some giving it some similarity to "lawful adultery" (Hassouneh-Phillips 2001).

Respondent C said:

> *I go to Johane Masowe, everyone in my family goes to that church. We go to the church and they really promote good marriages. (Respondent C).*

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In the church like this, Johane Masowe, there are some prophecies that the leaders make. In these prophecies, it will be about matching the unmarried women to the man who are already have wives.

> *Sometimes our preachers preach on how big families are productive in the up keeping of families. They urge the importance of having many children in a family. (Respondent E)*

> *They sometimes state how important it is for men to have kids who will carry their names when they are long gone. It is through such encouragements that in families where there are no boys the husbands see it as a thing to keep on trying their luck. (Respondent F)*

At times bible verses that support the issue of polygamous marriages are read at church. However, there are some bible verses that discourage poor men from taking many wives. The Bible verses below are examples of this:

> *Deutronomy 17 vs 17 - He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray...*

> *1 Kings 11:3 - And he had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.*

4.5.2 Sub-theme: Church leadership and marriages

The 10 respondents were asked to give an account of what they experience in church with their leaders. They stated that leaders contributed a lot to polygamous marriages that were experienced in their congregation. Respondent B said:

> *In the church that I attend, there are some prophecies that we get from our leaders about marriages. We are given husbands that they would have dreamt of. That's how I got to be with my husband. (Respondent B).*

Although this was not an official church doctrine, there was considerable pressure in Mormon communities to enter into polygamy. During one of the October conference meetings in 1875, Apostle Wilford Woodruff asserted:

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> *We have many bishops and elders who have but one wife. They are abundantly qualified to enter the higher law and take more, but their wives will not let them. Any man who will permit a woman to lead him and bind him down is but little account in the Church and Kingdom of God. The law of Patriarchal marriage and plurality of wives is a revelation and commandment of God to us, and we should obey it. . . .1X*

Similarly, respondent H stated the reason why they get in the polygamous marriages. What plays a role is the fact that their husbands want to gain statuses. They get respected around their fellow men and everyone when they have large families. It is also the bishops who are in the uppermost positions that they look at as their role models. However, there are no biblical verses that support that they are only going to be eligible for the rightful places in the kingdom of God when they take many wives. It is to in the man's own assertion. The feelings of women about plural marriages do not really count. What really counts is what men want.

There is an illustration of how church leaders make the congregants gullible to what they preach and what they recommend. A prominent example is the leader of RMG independent End Time Message Pentecostal Church. He was a polygamist with six young wives aged between 20 and 25 years of age, despite he fact that he was 57 years of age. His followers were so brainwashed that anything done by Gumbura, whether its rape, murder or any other thing it was as if it had been done by Jesus Christ himself. People were not expected to complain about what Jesus Christ incarnate has done to mankind. People were made to believe that rape and murder committed by Robert Gumbura was actually a spiritual blessing from God himself. The third weapon that Robert Gumbura used against his gullible church congregants was the fear factor. Since he was viewed as Jesus Christ incarnate, he had the power to cause death or ill-health to any of his congregants. As a result of this fear factor instilled into the gullible members of his church, the church congregants feared God.

However, not all respondents come from churches that promote polygamy. There are some wives who come from orthodox churches like the Roman Catholic which do not promote plural marriages. However, the wives who go to such churches end up in polygamous marriage because they may have not known that their husbands were already married. Below is what respondent C said:

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The church that I go to is Roman Catholic. In my church they do not encourage polygamy. They encourage one man and one wife till death do part. I didn't know that my husband was married before so that's why I am now here. (Respondent C)

4.6 HOW WOMEN AMPLIFY THEIR VOICES

4.6.1 Sub-theme: Stigma against women who speak out

The views of the women differed as a result of the different household they came from and the way they thought people around viewed them. There are some things which women are expected to say when they are around their husbands. As a woman if you do not have anything positive to say about your partner you are to say nothing. This is what responded H said:

I once went to my mother in law and I had some grievances about my marriage. She told me that once you get married you just have to be strong and that I was not supposed to discuss my concerns with other people because everyone was going to look down upon me if I badmouth my husband. (Respondent H)

In this case the mother in-law undermine her daughter in-law's confidence and self-esteem. When women are complicit in the oppression of fellow women it is even harder for suffering women to express themselves fully when they are talking their man.

Discrimination of women has been aided by legal duality. The contradictions of legal duality have allowed officials and individuals to manipulate situations to meet their ends with women being frequent losers. The Supreme Court as the highest court in the land and charged with the responsibility of interpreting laws has not been able to ensure the realization of women's rights at law in Zimbabwe (WIN News 2000).

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses conclusions that have been drawn from the study and the recommendations made. These conclusions and recommendations are made from the four main themes that came up from the discussions. The recommendations were made for the women, the policies and laws affecting women, and finally, recommendations for future research. It is believed that the overall objectives of the study have been met and research questions have been answered based on the findings of the study discussed in chapter 4.

5.1 Theme one: Personal details of the participants

5.1.1 Conclusions

There are very key findings that could improve this conclusion. Evidence from the study has shown that most women in polygamous marriages end up with many children because of the hope that if they keep on trying, they will eventually have a boy child.

From the study, about 2 of the 10 respondents had more boys compared to girls. However, 7 of 10 respondents had more girls than boys. These women kept on making more children in the a male child. There is, however, a couple with just a girl and a boy. It is in the search of having a male child that make the women to bear more children, even at the risk of their own health. It is believed that the male child in the family will bring security to the mother when the issue of inheritance.

The study also showed that women who have little education end up having a lot of children. Minimal education makes women to be less empowered with information concerning their rights in marriages and available legal protection. Steady (2006) argues that minimal education among women is a deficiency representing underdevelopment prevalent in African countries.

5.1.2 Recommendations

Educational campaigns on polygamous marriages and the legal rights of women, girls and children should be conducted by local organizations and non-governmental organizations.

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Information on such issues enables young women and girls to be equipped with information on the right to choose what they want. In schools, children need to be taught about their rights irrespective of their gender. These rights should be centered around educational and advocacy campaigns that should be ongoing.

Recommendation for women

- Women should unite and have discussions on issues affecting them in their households for them to make amicable decisions about their rights and needs.

Recommendation for policies affecting women in Zimbabwe

- Consistent with the findings of the current study, it is recommended that laws be updated and reformed to better protect women and girls' rights across all age groups.

Recommendation for social work

- Social workers need to target mostly young women in their educational roles so as to empower them with knowledge about possible marriage complications.
- Social workers need to teach communities to fight sexism since the study has shown that most of the people affected by children are girls.
- It is recommended that intervention mainly targets women with minimal education since they are the group at greater risk due to their inability to access information on their inheritance rights and giving birth.

Recommendation for future researchers

- Future researchers should explore women's perceptions about the seemingly entrenced desire to bear male children than girl children polygamous marriages. Such a study may reveal ways in which these women may be made to appreciate children of all sexes and possibly reduce the high number of births in poorer communities

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5.2 Theme two: Experiences of women in polygamous marriage

5.2.1 Conclusions

From the findings of the study, some conclusions can be drawn. The study has indicated that the marriages of all the respondents are customary. The Centre for Reproductive Rights (2003) [online] affirms these findings and posits that in Zimbabwe, about 82% of the total number of marriages is customary marriages. Even those in civil marriages are not protected from their husbands taking more wives.

Within the polygamous marriages, all the respondents agreed that they went through some challenging experiences. Some of them had to deal with the stress of competing with the young wives who are given more attention.

5.2.2 Recommendations

Recommendation for women

- Women should be informed of their rights and be helped to built the confidence to stand for what they believe.

Recommendations for policies affecting women in Zimbabwe

- Existing legislation for protecting the rights of Zimbabwean women married under customary law needs to be revised.
- Traditional leaders should also be allowed to certify marriages. This will help deal with accessibility of legal procedures in marriages at a more local level and enable the majority of women to have registered marriages as these enable them to access their husbands' assets should they die.
- There should be a restriction of how many wives a husband can marry as it was illustrated that polygamy may contribute towards poverty in many polygamous families.

Recommendation for future researchers

- This study did not delve much on the impact of customary marriages on polygamous marriages. Such a study will contribute a lot to the body of knowledge regarding the subject.

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5.3 Theme three: Culture

5.3.1 Conclusions

Culture has played a major role in the perpetuation of polygamous marriages. Radical feminists have long argued that oppressive patriarchal cultures are responsible for perpetuating violence against women and the findings of this study augment and strengthen this classical argument (Roberts 2006).

Women are expected to do most of the work at home because of predominant patriarchal culture. It is very unusual to see men engaging in household chores because they believe that it is demeaning to do so.

5.3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation for women

- Women should also educate their children about the shortcomings of patriarchal relations.
- Constitutional changes must be done to protect women from being considered as items for men's use. Cultural explanations posit that many issues regarding family law are reserved under African constitutions, Zimbabwe included, and thus reforming laws at constitutional level will provide an effective solution to the problem. Rights theorists argue that such changes in constitutions need to be monitored by international and regional conventions.

5.4 Theme four: The impact of religion on polygamous marriages

5.4.1 Conclusions

Religion plays an important role in the proliferation polygamous marriages. Most polygamous marriages are influenced by religious sects. Kunfaa et al (2002) writes that chiefs are highly respected in Ghana for settling household disputes while Steady (2006) maintains that in Sierra Leone, the Krio women believe in the power of prayer by their church leaders.

Most of the women in the polygamous marriages go to some churches where people are encouraged to get into polygamous marriages. However, there are some respondents who come

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from orthodox churches which do not promote polygamous marriages. It is mostly within the less orthodox religious sects that men are encouraged to be polygamous.

5.4.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for policies affecting women in Zimbabwe

- The should be campaigns educating the public about the customary marriage laws. These campaigns need to be done jointly with the community leaders to inform women in polygamous marriages about sources of help in case of problems in their marriages.
- Media such as radio and television and newspaper should be utilized to ensure that the information get to women about their rights. Efforts should also be made to reach women in remote areas.

Recommendation for social work

- Social workers need to concentrate on their educational roles, educating the public together with the leaders about the laws of marriages and the available interventions at local level. This can be done in public gatherings where the leaders have access to the people or through public workshops.

Recommendation for future researchers

- Future researchers should investigate on the impact of religion and church leaders on polygamy.

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APPENDICE A

University of Venda

P Bag X5050

Thohoyandou

10 November 2014

Chief Bandwe

Matizha Primary School

P Bag 902

Gutu

I humbly request access to your village to interview women in polygamous marriages. This is part of my studies for a degree in Masters in Gender Studies at University of Venda. I need to conduct face to face interviews with polygamists women in your village.

Participation is completely voluntary and the women are not compelled to participate.

I would appreciate your positive response.

Takayindisa Flora Maruva

078 0533 138

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APPENDICE B

CONSENT FORM

My name is Flora Maruva Takayindisa a student at the University of Venda, Institute for Gender and Youth Studies. I am conducting a research on the experiences of women in polygamous marriages in Matizha village in Zimbabwe.

I would like you to participate in this study. Any information obtained from you will be treated as confidential and your names will remain anonymous. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may discontinue participation in this project at any time. Your decision to participate in this study will have no negative impact on your life or health.

Researcher signature_____ Date_____

Participant

I_____ have read through the content of this form and hereby voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

Participant signature_____ Date_____

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APPENDICE C

Interview schedule for women in polygamous marriages

I am a student at the University of Venda, South Africa (UNIVEN) doing a Masters Degree in Gender Studies (MGS). I am carrying out a research for my dissertation towards the fulfillment of the requirements for MGS. My Research explores women's experiences in polygamous marriages.

I am kindly asking for your assistance by responding to the interview questions as honestly as possible. The information obtained will be used with the utmost confidentiality it deserves and will be used only for academic purposes.

Thank you in advance for your time, effort and cooperation.

Biography

When and where you born?

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

How many children do you have?

What is your highest educational qualification?

Are you getting any salary?

Experiences in polygamous marriages

What are your experiences of being in a polygamous marriage?

Do you find the experiences that you have had interesting to share with other people?

From what you experience in your marriage, can you advise others to get in polygamous marriages?

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Describe your experiences of being in a polygamous marriage?

Socio cultural Issues

Was it the socio or cultural practices that influenced your decision of getting into a polygamous marriage?

Can you comment on the impact of the socio-cultural on the polygamous marriages?

Describe the role your socio-cultural practices had in your choosing to be in a polygamous marriage.

Religion

Which religion do you belong to?

Does your religion have influence on the issue of polygamy?

Can you comment the impact of your religion on your marriage?

Economic Factors

Describe the economic status of the family you come from?

Do you think that the economic status of your family had an impact on your marriage choice?

Do you feel like you were treated as mere commodity by your biological family?

Amplifying of voices

Do you feel that you are able to raise your concerns in your marriage?

o you feel that you have grievances that you are not bringing up?

Thank you for your time!!!!

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APPENDICE D

Questionnaire translation in Shona

Ndiri kubva ku University yeku Venda (Univen) uko kwandiri kuita fundo yapamusoro, Masters ye Gender Studies (MGS). Ndiri kuita tsvangurudzo pafundo iyo yandiri kuita iri pamusoro pe kuongorora zvinhu zvinosanganiwa nazvo nevakadzi mubarika.

Ndiri kukumbira rubatsiro rwenyu nekuti mupindurewo mibvunzo ye nhaurirano yatichaita muchitaura chokwadi chenyu chose. Tsvakurudzo iyi ichaitwa ichange ichishandiswa zvisina kushambadzwa zvakare zvichashandiswa chete panyaya yezvefundo.

Ndinotenda nenguva yamuchazvipira, nekubatana neni mukuita basa iri pamwechete.

Biography

Mungatangawo nekutiudza zita renyu?

Makazvarwa riini uye kupi?

Mune vana vangani?

Chidzidzo chamunacho chepamusoro chamunacho ndechipi?

Muri kuwana muhoro here?

Muhoro uyu unokwanirana nemhuri yenyu here?

Experencies in polygamous marriages

Makaita muchato upi?

Munozviona sei zvekuve mubarika?

Ndokumbirawo mutaure kuti zvamunosangana nazvo mubarika munoona zvichifadza kuti mutaurirewo vamwe.

Pane zvamunosangana nazvo munokwanisa kukurudzira vamwe venyuwo kupinda mubarika?

Mungatsanangurawo zvamunosangana nazvo mubarika?

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Socio-cultural factors

Yanga iri nyaya ye mugariro wenyu kana kuti tsika dzechinyakare zvakaitisa kuti mupinde mu barika kana kuti zvose zvakaitisa?

Mungakwanisa kutaura basa retsika nemagariro panyaya yebarika?

Tsanangurai basa retsika nemagariro pakukwanisa kusarudza zvebarika?

Religious affiliation

Munopinda kereke ipi?

Kereke yamunopinda ine chokuita nenyaya yekupinda mubarika?

Mungataurawo kuti nyaya dzekereke dzinoitisa kuti muchato wenyu udii?

Economic factors

Tsanangurai mamiriro oupfumi ekumhuri yamunobva?

Mamiriro oupfumi wekwamuri kubva ane chokuita here nemuroorerwe wamakaitwa?

Kana muchitenga zvinhu zvemumba menyu munoita sei?

Amplifying of voices

Munoona muchikwanisa kutaura zvinokunetsai mubarika?

Munoona mune zvinhu zvinonetsa zvamusingakwanise kutaura?

Ndinotenda nenguva yenyu!!!!

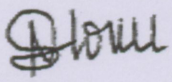
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Editing and Proofreading Report

This letter serves to confirm that I, Dr I. Ndlovu of the English Department, University of Venda, have proofread and edited a Masters proposal titled "An Exploration of the Experiences of Women in Polygamous Marriages: A Case Study of Matizha Village, Masvingo, Zimbabwe" by Takayindisa F.M (Student no.: 11595730), to be submitted to the Institute for Youth and Gender Studies in the School of Human and Social Sciences at the University of Venda.

I carefully read through the proposal, focusing on proofreading and minor editorial issues. The recommended suggestions are clearly highlighted and can either be accepted or rejected using the Microsoft Track Changes Function.

Yours Sincerely



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