

POLYGAMY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT-A CASE OF JOHANNE MARANGE APOSTOLIC SECT

CHIKWATURE, W.

Mutare Polytechnic
Research Department
P.O. Box 640, Mutare

&

OYEDELE, V.

Africa University
P.O. Box 1320, Mutare

ABSTRACT

The study investigates the link between polygamy and academic performance in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect in Marange, Mutare District. The target population consisted of 89 polygamous families of Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect. The study followed a mixed method research design. The interview was complemented by observation in the collection of data. The study revealed that the learners in polygamous families lack parental material and motivational support to continue in school, the main focus of adolescent girls and boys is to get married and start a family, parents encourage and even arrange marriage of their girl children in school even without their consent, learners in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect have very little option to extricate themselves from the ills of polygamy even in their future life. The study recommended that the schools curriculum should include discouragement of polygamy- e.g. AIDS education- otherwise without involving school in the discouragement of polygamy, this would remain an ideological framework and the generation to be reformed may never appreciate the goodness of monogamy. Teachers of learners from polygamous families should be supportive of such children through guidance and counselling as their home backgrounds may be militating against educational advancement. The Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect should periodically revisit their church policies on education of their followers and polygamy so as to align their operations with the current global Christian trends. Issues to do with HIV/AIDS testing should be introduced in church to reduce rapid spread of the disease in polygamous families and also to sensitise the congregates on the ills of polygamy.

Keywords: Polygamy, learner, academic achievement.

INTRODUCTION

The marriage practice known as polygamy is viewed many different ways in different societies. In some societies, according to Sachiti (2011) polygamy is seen as a taboo that is not widely understood or accepted e.g. in the Roman Catholic Church but in the Apostolic churches and some upcoming Pentecostal churches, polygamy is accepted and widely practiced. One of these societies is the Johanne Marange Apostolic Church, where polygamous marriages are common. The Johanne Marange sect encourages men to have two or more wives if they can sufficiently support those wives. The Johanne Marange sect is a diverse group, but they share the values of “authoritarianism, collectivism, and patriarchy. In polygamous families, the husband is the head of the households. One of the advantages of having a large polygamous family is the financial benefits that come from having multiple wives and children. However, according to Sachiti (2011) having many wives and children can create a great deal of conflict, particularly on issues to do with the payment of fees.

Belonging to a polygamous family can also create confusion for children and mothers because they belong to multiple family systems including: sub-family, main family, extended family, and the tribe. Polygamy in Zimbabwe has both positive and negative impacts on the education of the children.

Culturally, polygamy is viewed as a reproductive strategy by which men maximize the number of their offspring but minimize investment in each child. Since Johanne Marange is a highly patriarchal religion, males have control over women and children and believe that a good wife will produce many children, especially male children. For polygamous men, the more wives they have, the more power and success they are believed to have. Polygamy can also be an indicator of high social power. Polygamy is believed to be beneficial in Johanne Marange sect, which is marred by high levels of infant mortality due to their belief that does not allow their congregants to receive medical care in hospitals. A main benefit to polygamous men is the birth of multiple sons. These sons can generate extra income by helping their father with “domestic labour”. Men marry more wives in order to create these large families. According to Sachiti (2011) the large families are not egalitarian or focused on individualism; instead they are highly group oriented, focusing on the family as a whole unit. When individuals or families do not conform to traditional norms of the religion or culture, they may be reprimanded or rejected. For this reason, women attempt to keep their families together despite the problems they typically face. Thus the women suffer the burden of child upkeep including school expectation costs.

Children in polygamous marriages may face abuse, psychological distress, low self-esteem, and marital discord. According to Elbedour et al., (2012) the frequent marital conflict and distress can cause emotional harm to these learners through conflict, tension, unequal treatment by the polygamous father and jealousy. These children frequently feel discontented with their families. They are often unable to receive the necessary emotional support from their father in particular. Discontent with the family often increases with the addition of wives by the father. Senior wives whose husbands marry subsequent wives often perceive themselves as having failed to meet the standards set by their husband and the community and these wives also often have a poorer self-concept when their husbands perceive them as old. According to Elbedour et al., (2012) many women see the addition of another wife or wives as an inconvenience and view them as a competitor or “one who makes trouble”. This clearly shows that learners typically do not like being one of multiple wives children. Learners in polygamous marriages often have lower levels of education than women in monogamous marriages and it is also common for learners in a polygamous marriage to be dependent upon their mothers only for their educational support. However, some educated and employed women in urban areas decide to join the monogamous family as “small houses” for different reasons.

Children of polygamous marriages are often faced with a confusing family structure and competition for their father’s attention and that changes in the family structure that occur when a new wife is added may create problems in a developing child. These problems could challenge a developing child’s sense of trust, security, and confidence. As families are interconnected, these stressful changes are imposed on children. Children of polygamous marriages are influenced by the conflict and/or stress experienced by their mother. Mothers may be less affectionate and involved with their children if they are experiencing problems with their marriage or with co-wives. Research has also indicated that children of polygamous marriages are exposed to increased levels of violence and conflict between their parents (Elbedour et al., 2012). Children of polygamous families tend to have fewer

opportunities to interact with their parents and may not receive as much support. These children may also experience jealousy and rivalry with their half siblings. A study conducted by Elbedour, Bart, and Hektner (2010) indicated that children of polygamous families have slightly lower levels of cohesion than children of monogamous families. According to the same study, these children were also more likely to display psychopathological symptoms and socialization problems.

Although there are many negative impacts of polygamy academically, some positive impacts can be noted as well. Some of the influences of marital satisfaction include: age and employment of the husband, and whether or not the husband is supportive. Husbands often prefer younger wives over older wives, which provide the younger wives with more satisfaction. According to Elbedour et al., (2012) the benefits of getting along in a polygamous marriage include: “sharing household workload, site companionship and socializing with other women and greater autonomy because other wives will take care of the children and other responsibilities. Relationships between wives and husband, father and his children, and relationships among siblings improves when the relationships between wives is harmonious, which is mostly never possible. Sometimes, first wives convince their husband to marry a second wife, perhaps because they have reproduction problems. Marriage to a second or third wife is usually out of choice or love rather than necessity or force. Sachiti (2011) has the view that an additional benefit to women is the feeling that they are fulfilling “God’s wish or destiny” by marrying into a polygamous family. Children also gain self-esteem from their tribe, which happens when families follow the traditions of the culture and society around them, thereby mainly being entwined in academic entanglement and later in vicious cycle of poverty.

The psychological influences that polygamous life might exert on learners have been considered by several researchers. According to Al-Krenawi (2011) learners in polygamous family more commonly face family stress and mental health issues than those in monogamous families. The risk of psychiatric illness is particularly acute for first or senior wives in a plural marriage and the children are undoubtedly educationally affected in such scenarios. In their study of polygamous wives living in Gaza City, Al-Krenawi et al. (2011) noted that senior wives and their children expressed great psychological distress and a sense of mourning or loss when their husbands took second or subsequent wives. More specifically, they experienced feelings of failure and low self-esteem, feelings that were often reinforced by family and community perceptions. Senior wives also experienced other mental health difficulties, such as anxiety and depression, more frequently than junior wives and children take these feelings unconsciously into school and affects their academic performance seriously.

This sense of devastation and loss experienced by a woman when her husband takes a subsequent wife is not restricted to the Palestinian context; it has been reported by women living in other socio-cultural settings as well. A husband’s marriage to a subsequent wife is often perceived as traumatic and unsettling by preceding wives and their children. This development results in a major change in the family structure and a likely decline in the financial resources and attention that a man can provide his wives and children in school. Some learners might also perceive polygamy as bearing the potential to strip them of their autonomy. If a woman feels compelled both to enter a polygamous marriage and to engage in sexual relations once married (Cohen 2013), this clearly will affect her sense of dignity and self-worth. It might also detract from her self-awareness and personal identity. Yet, it must be noted that some women seem to enjoy a high standard of psychological and emotional health,

because of the lifestyle polygamy affords. In particular, learners may benefit from the potential for collaboration and friendship among co-wives, as discussed above. It has also been argued that polygamy might benefit women psychologically since it diminishes the possibility of divorce by offering dissatisfied husbands the opportunity to remarry without having to divorce the first wife. Arguably, this serves the interests of women in cultures where divorce might cause greater social humiliation and isolation for women than would life in a polygamous marriage.

In view of the fact that polygamy is typically characterized by the union of a single man with two or more women, competition and jealousy among co-wives is commonly observed within plural marriage communities. Thus academic success of a co-wife received with great grin. Thus frantic efforts to kill the spirit of success of a co-wife's child becomes the order of the day and unfortunately this is done through different academically detractive tactics. This seems predictable, as co-wives likely have very limited private time with the lone husband they share, and thus might vie for his attention and favour. In some polygamous communities, women's self-worth is linked to the number of children they bear and, therefore, having time with their husband is also critical to their status within the family and community (Committee on Polygamous Issues 2003).

In certain contexts, jealousy between co-wives can escalate to intolerable levels, resulting in physical injuries sustained by women. As a result, a polygamous family often lives together in cramped and overcrowded conditions, creating an environment that aggravates stress and conflict between co-wives and their children. Indeed, there have been reports of women treated in Paris hospitals for physical injuries resulting from confrontations among family members, often co-wives. Other women have tried committing suicide as a result of this domestic tension (Simons 2008).

The negative consequences of co-wife rivalry might be particularly difficult for first or "senior" wives in certain cultures. For example, Al-Krenawi et al.'s empirical research involving Palestinian plural wives revealed that senior wives within polygamous families are often less favoured by their husbands. They tend to have fewer economic resources, and receive less conjugal support and attention than junior wives. This differential treatment by husbands is attributed to the fact that Palestinian senior wives are typically married to men through arranged marriages based on exchange, while subsequent, junior wives are chosen by husbands, and their marriages are based on love matches (Al-Krenawi et al. 2009). Yet, a different view of the dynamic between senior and junior wives is offered by other commentators. In some cultures, becoming a senior wife implies a promotion within the family hierarchy that entails respect and obedience from junior wives, particularly in the husband's absence. Senior wives may exercise considerable authority and control over junior wives, and can be instrumental in helping husbands select an additional wife to assist with child care and domestic responsibilities. At the same time, a husband's independent choosing of a wife on the basis of "romantic love" is likely to cause strife among wives (Gage-Brandon 2010).

Wing's (2009) discussion in relation to the rivalry between first and subsequent wives is also telling, in that it reveals that the status of each wife largely depends on the legal and social culture in which the marriage is situated. In her discussion of Muslim polygamous women living in England, she noted that first wives received the most favoured status. Since domestic polygamy is illegal in the United Kingdom, a subsequent wife is not considered a legal wife, and thus cannot be openly held out as a spouse in all social circles. Often,

subsequent wives lived in inferior housing and saw their husbands less frequently than first wives. While women resented these circumstances, they felt that they remained “true wives” even though their marriages were not recognized under civil law (Wing 2009). This situation could arise in any country that prohibits and rejects polygamy. In these contexts, the first wife might be in a preferred position, since she alone is recognized as a spouse by law. Subsequent spouses married under religious law would be deprived of spousal recognition and spousal benefits, and might have to conceal their conjugal relationships out of fear of criminal prosecution and thus the learners in such families lack expected father figure who should constantly fine tune the educational path of the family through being available for the children in times of educational support.

The potential for unequal treatment of co-wives by their husbands is a factor that women in polygamy would be keenly aware of, regardless of their cultural background. Among the women who participated in Simons 2008’s survey of South African Muslim women, only a small minority looked favourably on polygamy. An even smaller proportion indicated that they would agree to enter a polygamous marriage if given the option. These opinions were frequently rationalized by feelings that polygamy creates inequality among co-wives, since the husband cannot care for and cater to the needs of more than one wife, and polygamy gives men “boundless power and authority” (Simons 2008).

The discussion as to how polygamy might affect a child’s intellectual and scholastic development can by no means be overstressed. Some factors will affect academic achievement regardless of whether the child is raised in a polygamous or monogamous family (Cherian 2004). But Elbedour 2003’s work on adolescents within Israeli Bedouin-Arab communities was premised on the hypothesis that polygamous family structures would engender lower levels of intelligence and scholastic achievement among youth from polygamous families. This hypothesis was based on polygamy’s association with higher risks of psychological maladjustment in children, and with families having lower socio-economic status. Both of these factors impact academic achievement.

Yet, despite the social and economic factors underlying Elbedour’s hypothesis that polygamy would adversely affect academic achievements among youth, the researchers actually found that an adolescent’s family structure bore no significant impact on academic development (Elbedour 2003). This outcome was attributed to various factors unique to the Bedouin-Arab cultural group that was studied. In particular, because polygamy was not viewed as a “taboo” practice in this community as is the case with Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect, adolescents were less likely to feel “different” or ashamed about their family structure. This, in turn, promoted their learning and literacy skills. There was also extensive interaction between children and youth from polygamous and monogamous families within the community, giving them the sense of sharing the same community as their peers, regardless of family structure. Also, due to the level of intermingling within the whole community, fathers were less likely to be absent from their children for extended periods, even when they had several wives and many children. Fathers within this community often live with all of their children and multiple wives within the same home just like in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect. These factors were all viewed as promoting the psychological health and self-esteem of youth from polygamous families (Elbedour et al 2012).

Various studies confirm that children from polygamous families are at an enhanced risk of psychological and physical abuse. While not entirely conclusive, research indicates that children can be adversely affected by rivalry between co-wives, and by the fact that more

children in the family may mean less time with, and attention and supervision from parents, especially their fathers. Moreover, a polygamous family structure might diminish the economic resources available to children and adolescents, which in turn might limit their access to books and activities that would foster learning skills (Elbedour et al 2012).

Elbedour et al.(2012)'s research on adolescents is inconsistent with another of their studies examining developmental impacts of polygamy on younger, elementary school-aged children within the same community (Elbedour et al. 2012). This latter study found that younger children tend to experience higher levels of attention deficit and behavioural problems than children from monogamous families. The researchers posit that these younger children might be more affected by polygamous life than adolescents since they are likely to be more attached to their parents and their immediate home environments, and probably have not yet developed the necessary social networks and mental ability to cope with a stressful home environment (Elbedour et al. 2012). While the results of Elbedour et al.'s work in relation to older children and adolescents might suggest that children have the ability to outgrow any harmful impacts of polygamy, the particular cultural context of their research must be kept in mind. According to Bell (2013), the widespread support and acceptance of polygamy within Bedouin-Arab culture, the pervasive intermingling of youth from monogamous and polygamous families, and the shared residence of fathers with all wives and children are not traits typical of all polygamous communities. Where these factors are absent, we might expect polygamy to exert some deleterious effects on children and adolescents. Many researches on African wives of polygamous men living in France seems to support this. They noted that because mainstream French society was both unwelcoming of immigrants and disapproving of polygamy, women and their children were ostracized and isolated. In schools, children feared mockery by classmates and delinquency rates among them were reported to be relatively high.

In October 2010, Phyllis Kachere, wrote an article on how religion has destroyed the future of young girls in Zimbabwe. While other girls were preparing to go to school, a 14 year old girl of Marange district in Manicaland, had to stay behind to prepare breakfast for her 67 year old husband. The husband had 4 senior wives. Although her marriage was not legally registered, it was customarily recognised, and the teenager was expected to live as a housewife and soon bear children. "I can't go against [the will of] my elders and leave my husband in order to attend school. Besides, where would I go if I leave? My parents will not welcome me," said the 14 year old girl. Her case is not unique. In fact, the majority of school-going girls in Marange, some as young as ten, have been married to older men from their church, the Johanne Marange Apostolic sect, which is infamous for believing in polygamy. Most marriages are arranged between adult men and under-age girls. Although it is criminal under the recently enacted Domestic Violence Act to marry off an under-age girl - the age of sexual consent in Zimbabwe is 16 years - it is difficult to stop these marriages, as members of the sect are complicit and secretive. Recently released research by Harare-based non-governmental organisation Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA) has shown that young girls in early marriages are likely to suffer birth complications, some of them resulting in death.

The WLSA study also revealed that those girls are prone to cervical cancer, suffer psychological trauma and encounter a host of problems, such as failing to deal with the social pressures that come with being a wife in a polygamous union. The findings have forced Zimbabwean authorities to step up efforts to stop the practice that has forced thousands of girls in the Marange, Odzi and Buhera districts of Manicaland to drop out of school.

Although current data is not available, statistics from the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture district office reveal that out of the 10,000 girls who enrolled in Form One in the Marange district in 2010, only about a third completed Form Four in 2013. 'Those who dropped out became wives, with a small number dropping out because they could not afford the fees,' said a senior district education officer. Most girls stop schooling in July when the sect celebrates Passover, a religious festivity during which marriage ceremonies take place.

In the same study, Gideon Mombeshora, a sect member, told IPS that most men in the church prefer to marry under-age girls because it is easier to control them. "Most men want to get married to docile women. The younger the bride the more chances for dominance for the man," he said. He further explained that the sect strongly believes in the practice of under-age brides: Although it is not in their church's statutes that old men should marry under-age girls, the practice is deeply entrenched in their belief system though early marriages threaten national economic development, as bright and intelligent girls are forced out of school to become cheap labour and child bearers in their homesteads. Most of the girls become farm labourers on their husbands' farms. This scenario has significantly contributed to pregnancy complications in teenage mothers because of immature uterine muscles and mucous membranes that pose serious danger and a high risk of a ruptured uterus in cases of prolonged labour.

Some research suggests that because polygamous families usually have many children, there cannot be enough academic supervision and attention for all of them (Committee on Polygamous Issues 2009). It has been argued that this causes children's health and development to suffer. In her study of polygamous families in Mali, Strassmann (2009) found a marked increase in infant mortality rates of children in polygamous families when compared to rates for children of monogamous parents. This difference could be due to various factors. Strassmann noted in particular, the risk that children may fall victim to co-wife animosity. This is so intense in the Malian community Strassmann studied that reports existed of co-wives abusing and even poisoning each other's children. An alternate theory Strassmann (2009) postulated for the differential rates of child mortality between monogamous and polygamous families is that the latter might invest less in their children, at least in the Malian context. Since polygamous fathers produce a greater number of offspring overall, each child becomes less important to his lifetime reproductive success. Moreover, polygamous families may be less inclined or able to pay for treatments and school fees for learners. This research wishes to answer the following questions:

1. What motivates polygamous marriage?
2. Which problems are faced by polygamous families and in which way are learners affected?
3. How can academic problems of learners from polygamous families be reduced?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

Oyedele (2011) defines research design as the generalized procedures of a study. A mixed method research approach was used since it allowed for the development of the detailed and intensive knowledge about a case with a view to establish generalizations about a small section of a wider population. Bell (2013) states that a case study design --- gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale. This case study was conducted in Mutare District in one selected village. The village

chosen was easily accessible to the researchers as they work in the same district as lecturers/researchers. Mixed method research paradigm was adopted. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are to be also employed to improve the quality of findings from this research. The main reason for employing more than one approach is to make the findings as close to being accurate as possible by way of handling extraneous variables well, and enhances the validity of findings.

Population and Study Sample

According to Stake (1995) population and study sample is that group about which the researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions. Bailey (2010) describes a sample as a representative group from the population to serve as respondents. On selection of subjects in Mutare district (Manicaland Province), snowball, purposive and random sampling were used. Mafararikwa village was involved because it is the most easily accessible village. The target population of this study is to be the polygamous households of Johanne Marange. According to field data (documentary analysis) Mafararikwa village has 189 households and 150 of the households are of the Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect. our population therefore shall be the 150 Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect households whose household leadership is male dominated.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

According to Bell (2013), sampling techniques are used when a part of the population is to be surveyed. The selection of a sample instead of taking the whole sample frame is advantageous because there is a greater chance for accuracy, the research is cheaper and less time is consumed during the data collecting process. The time and resources saved collecting the data are then used during the presenting and analyzing phase. Despite the stated advantages, there is a disadvantage in using a sample, in that there is no guarantee that there will be no bias in the selection of the sample and the chosen sample might not be precisely representative of the entire population. Learners are to be sampled using the snowball and purposive sampling methods. Purposive sampling would enable identification of samples that would satisfy the researcher's needs in the research project (Stake, 1995). The researcher sampled 30 households chosen through non probability technic of purposive and snowball sampling. It is important to note that the gender bias sample is indicative of the Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect hegemony that keeps their children very submissive and never allowed to comment on household issues at whatever time or place.

Research Instruments

A research instrument is a device or procedure used for the systematic collection of data from the study sample (Oyedele 2011). Research instruments to be used in the collection of data are the questionnaires, interview schedules, observations (naturalistic observation) – particularly to see how the learners live at home-and the desktop analysis.

Questionnaires and interviews are used by researchers to convert into data the information directly given by a person (subject). Bell (2013) pointed out that questionnaires are a good way of collecting certain types of information quickly and relatively cheaply as long as subjects are sufficiently literate and as long as the researcher is sufficiently disciplined to abandon questions that are superfluous to the main task. Random sampling is to be further used to select 30 households.

Questionnaires were used in this study because all subjects are deemed literate but with the parents' concern. This method is used because it is fast and cheap, and it also covers a large number of subjects in a short period of time. A well structured questionnaire containing two sections was used as an instrument for data collection. Questionnaires tend to ensure uniformity of questions asked to a wider audience (Stake, 1995). Both closed and open ended questions provide chances for certain responses to be explained in order to clarify specific issues (Kothar 2003).

The researchers also used interviews to collect information. A few subjects were interviewed, and these are first and last wives of the polygamous households, students and school administration. This method has the advantage cited by (Bailey 2010) as that of offering flexibility in that the interviewer had the opportunity to observe the subjects and the total situation. During the interview sessions, questions were occasionally restructured and meanings explained where they were not understood. According to Oyedele (2011) questionnaires and interviews make it possible to measure values and attitudes as respondents express their likes and thoughts. Bell (2013), describes a structured interview as one that can take the form of a questionnaire or checklist that is completed by the interviewer rather than the respondent. Bell further asserts that a structured interview saves a great deal of time at the analysis stage and the researcher can be sure all topics are covered. The researchers used the documentary analysis as an instrument of data collection. References are to be made to the religious affiliation records kept by Mafarikwa village head.

Another instrument used in the collection of data was observation. Observation is a method of recording condition, events, and activities through looking not asking. Bell (2013) views observation as the systematic viewing, coupled with consideration of seen phenomenon. Observation is thus seeing things either from a distant or going near to the object of study and record what one will have observed. Information obtained during observation may be used to control certain variables when analyzing data. The researchers had to the aspects that reflect the learner's parental educational support, like uniforms, books, and others

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data presentation used was determined by emerging themes from the data collected. Data collected through interviews and questionnaires was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data analysis involved written presentation of information. Quantitative data analysis involves the use of figures and tables in analyzing information (Bell, 2013).

Causes of polygamy in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect

Figure: 1 Causes of polygamy in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect, N -30

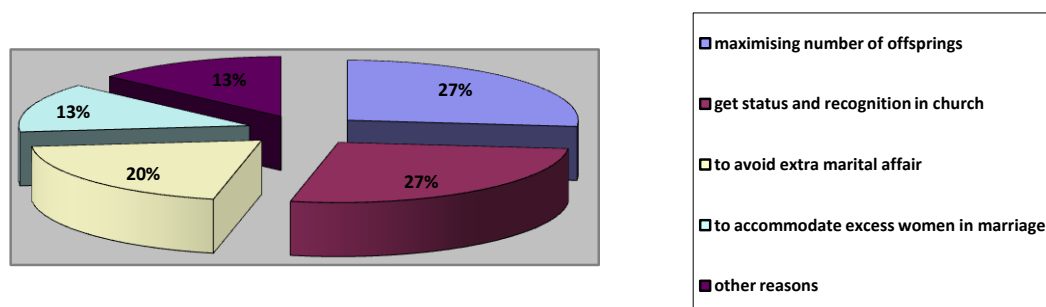


Figure 1 above on the causes of polygamy in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect, respondents showed various opinions on causes of polygamy in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect. 8 respondents making 27% showed that they want to maximize number of offsprings cheap labour. Another 8 respondents (27%) indicated that the issue of polygamy is deeply entrenched in the church dogma. They get into polygamy so as to get status in church and get social recognition. 6 respondents representing 20% indicated that polygamy is a way of avoiding extra marital affairs by men in church. 4 respondents (13.3%) have indicated that polygamy is the only way to accommodate excess women into marriage. The last 4 respondents (13.3%) had other reasons like keep men sexually satisfied always as women tire with age faster than men, crave for new and different sexual partner, following tradition of their fathers and so on.

Interview follow up we did reveal that when a child is born he/she is encouraged to adjust to the polygamous expectations of the parents thus many husbands do not want their wives to be spotlight duties for fear of deeper Christian scrutiny by the church members. The problem of submission to their husbands remains a permanent problem. Submission means the husband has the final say on whatever action the woman want to take even in deciding to get several other wives. This notion is taken into school and impedes free thinking and free expression of ideas as the education system encourages as one of several learners interviewed had to say:

"... my brothers beat me up when we are going to school and they say that my mother is monopolising the father and at times I don't go to school for fear of the beating. When I told my mother she only asked me to keep quiet and also ask them for help in homework, how can this be possible?"

This completely reveals that many children in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect see polygamy as of biblical basis and going against the dictates of the bible would defeat the whole process of the learner going to church. Also socio-economic status was cited as a cause of polygamy in church. Well to do men/families do not fear to have many wives unlike the poor men who may struggle to provide the basics. Some cited the pull him down syndrome in most polygamy that when a man is economically progressing well he becomes the target of gossip by other church members or spreading falsehoods about that man and can be coerced into polygamy so as to reverse his progress due to inescapable polygamous problems.

Various reasons for polygamy suggest that polygamy is viewed by different lances among the Johanne Marange Apostolic sect member. This therefore suggests that effects of polygamous family life-style differ from one family to another. There are no prescribed solutions to the challenges hence each case should be treated differently.

Problems faced by polygamous families in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect

There are several problems indicated by the respondents faced in the polygamous households which cannot be escaped. As shown table 2 below.

Table 2: Problems faced in Polygamous families. N =30

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Reproductive and Sexual Health.	15	10	4	1	0
Rivalry among co wives	22	7	1	0	0
Collaboration and support among co wives	20	6	3	1	0
Limited ability to make autonomous life choices	19	7	2	1	1
Potential for abuse	16	10	2	2	0
Strained relationships among the children in family	24	5	1	0	0
Restricted intellectual development	10	8	5	4	3
Support burden by household head	28	1	1	0	0

As shown in the table 2 above on sexual and reproductive health that indicated that women in plural marriages generally have lower fertility rates than women within monogamy. It is found that each time a polygamous husband took a new wife, his prior wives all experienced decreased fertility. In addition, the highest ranking wife (usually the newest wife) was most likely to have a child first, given that she was probably most favoured by the husband. And if he gets back to the other wives mainly it may fail to link with the ovulation of the rarely visited wives meaning even the frequency of giving children by then becomes reduced as compared to the newest wife who normally enjoys company of the husband always. This is what is regarded as decrease in fertility, which may not be the case as such. On Reproductive and Sexual Health 15(50%) of the respondents indicated that they strongly agree with the view that sexual and reproductive health is a problem in polygamy. 10 (33.3%) of the respondents agree and 4(13.3%) respondents indicated neutrality 1 (3.3%). No one disagreed with the notion. Interview follow ups have revealed that polygamy has contributed to the spread of HIV and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) among women, especially in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect. Since Johanne Marange followers don't receive medication from hospitals, they suffer quietly and struggle to death the reproductive health problems. The women are deprived of family planning services that would enable them to fully care for their children before falling pregnant again. On Rivalry among co wives, 22(73.3%) of the respondents strongly agree with the fact that there is inherent rivalry among co wives who always want to out class each other to please the husband, 7(23.3%) agree with the same notion while 1(3.3%) indicated neutrality. Interviews revealed that reveals in certain contexts, jealousy between co-wives can escalate to intolerable levels, resulting in physical injuries sustained by women. On Collaboration and support among co wives 20(66.7%) strongly agreed with the notion of rivalry among co wives 6 (20%) respondents agree with the dispensation, 3(10%) of the respondents indicated neutrality while 1(3.3%) disagree with the notion. Women married to the same man commonly view one another with jealousy and perhaps even animosity. Interviews got it that if co-wives need each other's support and assistance, they are likely to collaborate. But if such interdependence does not exist and there is little incentive for co-wives to ally with one another, competition is more likely to characterize the relationship among them. On Limited ability to make autonomous life choices 19(63.3%) respondents strongly agreed with the notion, 7(23.3%) agreed, 2(6.7%) indicated neutrality, 1(3.3%) indicated disagreement and 1(3.3%) showed strong

disagreement. Interviews proved that the issue of choice in relation to marriage in a polygamous society is also linked quite closely to male hierarchies that commonly form in such communities, evidencing economic inequalities and injustices among men. A nearly universal feature of polygamous communities is that only the most affluent and high-ranking men take wives. In many cases in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect, both the potential wife and her family will prefer marriage to a polygamist than marriage to an unmarried man of little means. This then means the focus of many of the school going age is to get a potential suitor and start a family when she gets married. The lack of role models in the church makes the girl child from a polygamous family focus much on the issue of being married young than to go on with school work. One girl learner who was in form two expressed that she was constantly being ridiculed by her church members as to why she can't be appreciated like other girls who got married younger than her. She further said:

"My father warned that if I can not get married this year then it means he is going to marry me off to whoever he wishes as a way of doing away with the shame of having a child who can not be married. How do you expect me to put my education as a priority in such a situation. At times I think of running away from home but where to...(the girl sobbed)".

It is from this background that young girls end up getting married to very old men as they are able to support and provide their means and obviously causing them to drop out of school. On Potential for abuse as shown in table 2 above, 16(53.3%) respondents strongly agreed, 10(33.3%) indicated that they agree with the fact that there is abuse potential in polygamy, 2(6.7%) indicated neutrality while only 2(6.7%) disagreed with the abuse notion. Interviews however showed that Polygamous Issues indicated that abuse within the community of Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect is taking place on a widespread scale, particularly against women and children. Nevertheless, this has been subject to minimal public oversight and reaction. The system linked this directly to the insularity of the community. Allegations of sexual, physical and psychological abuse were also made known with nothing done to redress the anomaly. On Strained relationships among the children in family as shown in table 4.1 above 24(80%) indicated that they strongly agree with widespread and inescapable strained relationships among the children in the polygamy setup. 5(16.7%) indicated that they agree and 1(3.3%) indicated their neutrality. Women in polygamy also sheds light on the circumstances of children growing up in plural marriage families Boys and girls are treated differently. One disgruntled girl says:

"I have already been told that the father is no longer going to pay for my fees because he saw a certain boy coming to borrow my notebook and he said that i am now misbehaving. I am not even allowed to go anywhere to ask for assistance on my school work but my brothers can go even out of the village to seek academic assistance from their friends. I had no choice but to drop out of school last week. I am not even allowed to leave this village alone otherwise my mother will be 'eaten'"

In particular, while young girls are urged to remain within their communities to become wives during their adolescence and not to continue with school, community leaders drive out many teen aged boys, to reduce the "competition" for young wives. On Restricted intellectual development as shown in table 2 above 10(33.3%) indicated that they strongly agree with the notion that polygamy affect intellectual development, 8(26.7%) showed they agree, 5(16.7%) indicated that they are neutral while 4(13.3%) disagree and 3(10%) strongly

disagreeing with the dispensation that polygamy affects intellectual development. Interviews revealed that polygamous family structures would engender lower levels of intelligence and scholastic achievement among youth from polygamous families. This notion is based on polygamy's association with higher risks of psychological maladjustment in children, and with families having lower socio-economic status. Both of these factors impact academic achievement. Interviews confirmed that children from polygamous families are at an enhanced risk of psychological and physical abuse. While not entirely conclusive, research indicates that children can be adversely affected by rivalry between co-wives, and by the fact that more children in the family may mean less time with, and attention supervision from parents, especially their fathers. On Support burden by household head as shown table 4.1 above 28(93.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the fact that polygamy have obvious support burden of both children and wives, 1(3.3%) of the respondents agree while 1(3.3%) respondents indicated neutrality. Interview follow up revealed that the vast majority of polygamous households in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect consist of families headed by one husband having multiple wives, one might question what consequences this social structure has for gender equality. In particular, one might ask whether a union in which two or more women must "share" a husband who in turn enjoys plural sexual and domestic partners, is inherently discriminatory.. This question might be met with the claim that women are actually the primary beneficiaries of polygamy.

One shabbily dressed learner from the sect also had this to say:

"We are all in all 23 children and all my brothers never finished form four neither did none of my sisters did, so the chances of me continuing with school is zero. I am in grade seven and when I finish the exams I will go to my uncle as a head boy and I will raise money to get married. My father has 5 wives and too many children and cannot cope with the school fees. I am happy I am now able to read and write now".

Given the structure of plural marriage families, men bear the singular responsibility of providing for their multiple wives and many children; whereas women might benefit from this economic support. This notion makes the household heads live mainly on manual labour-weeding in other peoples fields, cutting firewood for payment, digging contour ridges for payment, etc. , blue collar jobs-building brigades, carpentry, plumping, agriculture, being a barber, driving and very few join the white collar employments.

Other problems faced in polygamy are that it relates to its potential ability to undermine women's reproductive autonomy. Given the frequent competition among co-wives and because women's worth in polygamous societies is often linked to the number of children they have, women lose the ability to control decisions related to reproduction. Moreover, polygamous cultures are characterized by patriarchal family structures, within which women have a marginalized ability to question a husband's authority and express individual wishes, even in regard to private issues like childbearing

CONCLUSIONS

It has been noted that the bulky of the church members are generally young school going age girls who are within their active ages of between 06 and 14 years. It was also noted that the learners do not generally fully participate in the Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect business due to a myriad of factors. Chiefly among them is their church dogma that does not aspire the children to continue with school but to pride more in being married and start a family. Almost

50% of the members have little knowledge about the church's stance on polygamy in church. On the participation in church it was noted that women are mainly expected to teach other women, to adorn themselves with good works, to be active learners and not to be too inquisitive, and are prohibited from exercising authoritative leadership.

On the main problems faced by families in polygamy in Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect, it was noted that traditional hegemony of supporting the status quo of male leadership dominates. Also the submission of the women to husbands and being household head also is an impediment as the women first looks or seeks permission from the husband before she goes to participate in church otherwise she risks her family social unity. There were a myriad of polygamy problems that include: reproductive and sexual health, rivalry among co wives, collaboration and support among co wives, limited ability to make autonomous life choices, potential for abuse, strained relationships among the children in family, restricted intellectual development and support burden by household head. Also marriage, children and parenting makes many women have problems in polygamy Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect. Marriage means a woman adjust more to the demands of her husband meaning if the husband does not approve of active participation of the wife then she remains passive to save her marriage.

There was nothing more intricate than the religion's influence on views of learners on education. This means that the complexity of the polygamy as far as its effects on academic performance need not only to be left to the concerned members as the negativity of the effects affects all community members regardless of their religious affiliations. Learners in Johanne Marange apostolic Sect have accepted the hegemony of their church doctrine and stance on academic education of their congregates and remain in it knowingly but with no other better choice to extricate themselves from the pangs of academic quagmire. This then means that the learners from the Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect and within polygamous families should be well understood by the educators in as far as their interest in school is concerned and need to be given a lot of encouragement to do well in school and be exposed to role models with better life culminating from the educational progression of the members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools curriculum should include discouragement of polygamy- e g AIDS education- otherwise without involving school in the discouragement of polygamy this would remain an ideological framework and the generation to be reformed may never appreciate the goodness of monogamy.
2. The Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect should periodically revisit their church policies on education of their followers and polygamy so as to align their operations with the current global Christian trends.
3. Issues to do with HIV/AIDS testing should be introduced in church to reduce rapid spread of the disease in polygamous families and also to sensitise the congregates of the ills of polygamy.
4. Teachers of learners from polygamous families should be supportive of such children as their home backgrounds may militate against educational advancement.

REFERENCES

- AI-Krenawi, A., Elbedour, S. and Parson, J.E. (2009). Family therapy with a multi-parental/multi-spousal family. *Family process*. 37, 65-81.
- AI-Krenawi, A., Bart, W.M. and Parson, J. E. (2011). *Psychosocial impact of political*

- violence: The Israel:- Palestinians case*. New York: Nova Press.
- Bailey, K.D. (2010). *Method of social research*, 2nd Edition. London : Collier Macmillan Publishers.
- Bell, J. (2013). *Doing your research methods*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Cherian, V.I. (2004). Academic achievement of Children from monogamous and polygamous Families. *Journal of social Psychology*, 130: 117-119.
- Chikwature W. and Oyedele V. (2016). School Heads and Teachers Perceptions on the Factors Influencing Pass Rate at Ordinary Level in Mutasa District of Manicaland. *Greener Journal of Educational Research*, 6(1):005-019.
- Cohen, L. (2013). *Critical Issues in Modern Education*. Durban: Butterworth Publishers Limited.
- Wing Chan, K. (2009). Measuring the urban Millions. *China Economic Quarterly*, 3:21-26.
- Elberdour, S, Onwuegbuzie, A.J, and Jiao, Q.G. (2012) The effects of Polygamous marital structure on Behavioural, Emotional and Academic Adjustment in Children : A comprehensive Review of the Literature
- Kother, C. (2003). *Research Methods*. New Delhi : Wishasa Prakashon.
- Oyedele, V. (2011). *Research Methods for Education Students*. Windhoek: Zebra Publishing (Pvt) Ltd.
- Sachiti, R. (2011). The tragedy of Johanne Marange's child brides,
<http://www.zimpapers.co.zw/index.php?option=comcontent&view=article&id=1509:the-tragedy-of-Johanne-marange-child-brides&catid=42features&Itemid=34>.
Accessed online, 31 January 2011.
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, C.A : Sage
- Strassman, B. (2009). Polygamy as a risk factor for child mortality among the dogon. *Current Anthropology*, 38 : 688 – 695.
- <http://www.bradley.edu/academics/as/psy/pdfs/schmit%5BI%SD.etal.2013.jpssp.pdf>