

SOCIO-ANTHROPOLOGIC AND GENETIC INFLUENCES ON HUMAN POLYGYNY

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Muslims are often portrayed in the print and electronic media as the source of polygyny (one man having two or more wives simultaneously). Available data, however, show that the practice of polygyny had been common among majority of the human societies and cultures since ancient times. For the first time in recorded human history (in early 8th century), Islam introduced a control on unlimited marital practices for all mankind. Islamic scholars have interpreted the relevant Qur'anic verses that suggest that the practice of monogamy is the only preferred life style in Islam. However, strict monogamy was falsely believed to be introduced by the Catholic priests in 11th century although the practice was introduced and followed only by them; subsequently, the priests banned marriages altogether. The Christians, Jews, and non-Muslim populations, thus, practiced unlimited marriages until modern times.

The earliest official ban on the practice of polygyny among the non-Muslims was imposed in 1890 in USA, in 1953 in China, and in 1971 in Hong Kong. Despite the imposed ban, polygyny has survived in 80% of societies today. Moreover, in non-Muslim societies where polygynous marriage was banned, the practice of polygyny continued in the name of extra-marital relationships, mistresses, heterosexuality, serial polygamy, and concubines. Current data show that an American man, on average, wishes to have 6 females partners in the next year while some of them (23%) have had two or more partners in the past year. On average, an American man continues to maintain sexual relationships with five females whereas an American woman averages 3.5 male partners. These modern versions of polygyny appear to have created widespread new types of social problems including teen-age pregnancy and abortion. Biologists have studied human sexual behavior using a systematic approach. Some of these researches show that the polygynous male behavior may have strong socio-biological (anthropological) and

genetic influences. Recent data using the variable DNA sequences of human Y-chromosome show that the human trend for polygyny may be imprinted in the genes. The present analysis, therefore, compiled data from socio-anthropologic, demographic, and genetic sources to obtain a detailed understanding on the age-old practice of human polygyny using a secular approach. These data were then compared with Islamic revealed knowledge on marital practices that suggest that 1) the practice of polygyny, in one form or the other, had been an on-going process ever since the dawn of human civilizations 2) for the first time in the history of mankind, Islam imposed restrictions on the practice of unlimited polygyny in the eighth century 3) Islam also made illegal for all forms of extra-marital sexual practices, and 4) it took about twelve hundred more years for the non-Muslims to understand the problem of practicing unlimited polygyny and impose restrictions in their societies. This greatly delayed understanding appeared to be responsible for the subsequent population boom across the globe that, in turn, caused major ecosystem alteration and put human sustainability at stake (described later). Quite paradoxically, then, misleading information has continually been transmitted by the popular media portraying the Muslims as the "inventor" of polygyny.

Polygyny-Polygamy Relationship:

In science, polygamy does not necessarily mean a sexual relationship with one male and many females simultaneously. It could also be otherwise. Scientifically, the practice of polygamy can be distinguished as polygyny (one man having two or more wives simultaneously), polyandry (one woman having multiple husbands), or polyamory (sexual relationships involving multiple males and females). As such, polygyny is one form of polygamy. The traditional term polygamy is widely used to indicate many marriages. Marriage, however, is a social term. This term does not exist in biology. Biologists use the term polygyny to refer to a mating practice that involves a male with more than one female sexual partner simultaneously. As such, throughout this article, the term polygyny will be used to avoid confusion. The