



# Factors affecting polyandry: A study among polyandrous family of Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh

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## Abstract

Polyandry, a marital system where a woman has multiple male partners, remains a complex and culturally nuanced relationship structure. This study explores the various factors influencing individuals' perspectives on polyandry, including cultural or religious beliefs, economic considerations, and personal emotional fulfilment. Through the analysis of survey data, the study identifies both the potential benefits and challenges associated with polyandrous relationships. The findings suggest that individuals' participation in polyandry is deeply influenced by societal and familial norms, with some respondents open to it for its emotional and practical benefits, while others reject it due to traditional beliefs or a lack of understanding.

The analysis reveals that polyandry could offer advantages, such as enhanced emotional support and shared responsibilities, particularly in societies where communal living is valued. However, respondents also highlight significant challenges, including the management of jealousy, time distribution, and societal stigma. Power dynamics within polyandrous relationships vary, with many respondents believing in the potential for equal power and agency, while others express concerns about power imbalances. Gender roles, both traditional and flexible, play a critical role in shaping these relationships, and satisfaction with one's role in society or the family can influence acceptance of polyandry.

Further, the study underscores the importance of cultural and educational shifts in transforming the polyandrous system. Factors such as education and employment contribute to changing attitudes, with a growing recognition of polyandry's potential benefits in more progressive societies. However, the societal stigma surrounding non-traditional family structures remains a significant barrier. The findings suggest that while polyandry faces obstacles in terms of widespread acceptance, it offers potential for greater emotional fulfilment and relationship equality if cultural and social norms evolve to accommodate it.

This research contributes to a broader understanding of polyandry, emphasizing the need for further exploration into how societal shifts and individual experiences may influence its practice.

**Keywords:** Polyandry; Cultural beliefs; Economic considerations; Emotional fulfilment; Power dynamics, Gender roles; Societal stigma

## Introduction

The institution of marriage has existed since the dawn of civilization, addressing innate human urges like hunger, thirst, and sexual desire while promoting social cooperation (Fortunato, 2018). H.T. Mazumdar defines marriage as a socially sanctioned union for establishing a household, sexual relations, and raising offspring (Mazumdar, 1966). Marriage takes various forms, including monogamy (one spouse), polygamy (multiple spouses), and group marriage (Fortunato, 2018). Polygamy can be further categorized into polygyny (one man with multiple wives) and polyandry (one woman with multiple husbands) (Low, 1988; Levine & Sangree, 1980). In Hindu society, marriage, or *Vivaha*, holds cultural and religious importance. Hindu scriptures describe eight forms of marriage, reflecting ancient customs and beliefs (Chauhan & Chauhan, 2015). Among India's diverse marital practices is polyandry, a practice where a woman marries multiple husbands, historically rooted in regions like Jaunsar-Bawar, Uttarakhand, and referenced in ancient texts like the *Mahabharata*.

Polyandry includes fraternal polyandry, where husbands are brothers, and non-fraternal polyandry, where husbands are unrelated (K.E. Starkweather & Hames, 2012). Evidence of polyandry dates back to ancient Sumer and is prominently featured in Hindu epics like the *Rig Veda* and the *Mahabharata*. For instance, Draupadi, in the *Mahabharata*, is married to the five Pandava brothers, symbolizing unique familial and social dynamics (S. Sharma, 2023). While polyandry's prevalence has diminished over time, its historical and cultural significance remains evident through ancient texts and anthropological studies. This practice reflects the adaptive social structures and norms of early societies.

The *Ramayana*, one of India's epic texts, primarily emphasizes monogamy but includes a subtle reference to polyandry. Kaikeyi, one of King Dasharatha's wives, briefly contemplates the possibility of a second husband. While this does not explicitly advocate polyandry, it reflects an awareness of the concept even in societies where monogamy was the dominant marital norm. Tibetan texts, like Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara*, present polyandry as a prevalent practice among Tibetan nomads. The text discusses the economic advantages of



polyandrous marriages, particularly in resource-scarce environments, and offers ethical principles for addressing its social intricacies (Beall & Goldstein, 1981; Childs, 2003). Similarly, the Central Asian *Geser Khan Epic* narrates instances of polyandry. In one episode, the hero Geser Khan engages in a temporary polyandrous arrangement with three sisters during his exile, showcasing the cultural acceptance of such practices under specific circumstances.

Greek and Celtic societies also provide insights into polyandry through historical accounts like Plutarch's *Lives*. In Sparta, polyandry was practiced to preserve family lineage and manage population sizes in a militaristic society. Among Celtic tribes, it was associated with communal living and shared responsibilities, emphasizing collective familial and societal bonds. Plutarch highlights the practical motivations for polyandry in these cultures, such as inheritance, resource allocation, and social cohesion. These accounts illustrate the diverse ways in which polyandry was understood and integrated into different cultural frameworks, shedding light on the interplay between social norms, economic considerations, and marital structures.

Through vibrant discussions and interactive exchanges within the group, researchers obtain valuable insights that aid in anticipating the opinions and reactions of a broader population. These discussions take place in an open, conversational setting, fostering free expression and active engagement with diverse perspectives. Through focus group interviews and personal interviews using an interview guide 10 factors were identified which are considered to affecting the tradition and practice of polyandry in Himachal Pradesh.

### Methodology

Quantitative approach is adopted to explore the lives of individuals and families practicing polyandry, providing rich, detailed insights. The study employs ethnographic methods, facilitating in-depth observation and thorough documentation of cultural traditions and familial interactions. The research was conducted in Shillai Tehsil, situated in the Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh, India. Himachal Pradesh, located in the northern region of India, is one of the country's constituent states. Shillai Tehsil covers an area of 127 square kilometres and, as per the 2011 Census, has a population of 36,905. During the initial phase, polyandrous families in Shillai Tehsil were identified as the target group. Preliminary interactions provided insights into their perspectives on the evolving practices of polyandry. Subsequently, the researcher conducted 16 in-depth interviews with members of these families. A final sample size of 36 respondents from polyandrous families was selected for detailed analysis. The data collected was thematically analysed to uncover recurring patterns and themes regarding the tradition of polyandry and its transformation. Responses were systematically categorized using coding techniques. Cross-tabulation was performed on 10 identified factors, and the chi-square test of independence was applied to interpret the responses effectively.

### Statement of problem

This study aims to explore the factors influencing the practice of polyandry among families in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, addressing the research gap in understanding its socio-cultural and economic dynamics amidst modernization, and seeks to answer how these factors sustain or transform this tradition in a changing society.

### Research Objective

To explore and analyze the factors influencing the practice of polyandry among families in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, with a focus on cultural, economic, social, and gender-related aspects shaping the tradition.

### Research Gap

While polyandry has been a historically significant marital practice in certain regions of India, there is limited contemporary research addressing its socio-cultural dynamics, economic implications, and the impact of modernization on its prevalence and perception. Specifically, the study of polyandry in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, remains underexplored, leaving a gap in understanding how local factors influence this tradition in a rapidly changing society.

### Research Question

What are the key factors affecting the practice of polyandry among families in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, and how do these factors interact to sustain or alter this tradition in the context of modern socio-economic changes?

### Factors identified:

- Religious and cultural beliefs significantly influence the acceptance of polyandry.
- The potential benefits of polyandry can play a crucial role in its adoption and practice.
- Participation in a polyandrous relationship may depend on individual values and societal norms.



- Considering the dynamics of a polyandrous relationship requires an open mind set and adaptability.
- Polyandry challenges traditional gender roles and societal expectations, prompting revaluation of norms.
- The perception of power dynamics in a polyandrous relationship can vary based on individual experiences and cultural contexts.
- Gender roles within polyandry may be clearly defined or flexible, depending on the individuals involved and their agreement.
- Satisfaction with societal and familial roles may influence one's acceptance or rejection of polyandry.
- Potential challenges in polyandrous relationships could include managing jealousy, ensuring fairness, and addressing societal stigma.
- Various factors, such as cultural shifts and changing social values, might contribute to transformations in the polyandrous system.

## Findings

### Religious and cultural beliefs significantly influence the acceptance of polyandry

Religion and cultural beliefs influence the acceptance of Polyandry		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfillment	All above mentioned	
They strongly oppose polyandry	Count	3	1	0	1	5
		60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	42.9%	16.7%	0.0%	5.3%	13.9%
They are neutral and can vary depending on the specific religion/culture	Count	3	1	0	7	11
		27.3%	9.1%	0.0%	63.6%	100.0%
	% within Factor	42.9%	16.7%	0.0%	36.8%	30.6%
They accept and support polyandry	Count	1	1	2	3	7
		14.3%	14.3%	28.6%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	16.7%	50.0%	15.8%	19.4%
All above mentioned	Count	0	3	2	2	7
		0.0%	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	100.0%
	% within Factor	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	10.5%	19.4%
Not sure	Count	0	0	0	4	4
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	21.1%	11.1%
Other (please specify)	Count	0	0	0	2	2
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.5%	5.6%
Total	Count	7	6	4	19	36
		19.4%	16.7%	11.1%	52.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The table illustrates the distribution of respondents' views on the acceptance of polyandry based on factors such as cultural or religious beliefs, economic considerations, personal and emotional fulfillment, and a combination of all these aspects. Among those who strongly oppose polyandry, 60% cite cultural or religious beliefs as the primary reason, while 20% attribute their opposition to economic considerations or a combination of factors. In contrast, respondents who are neutral highlight that 63.6% believe acceptance depends on specific religious or cultural contexts, and 27.3% point to cultural or religious beliefs alone. Those who accept polyandry often consider a mix of personal and emotional fulfillment (28.6%) and all factors combined (42.9%)



as influential. The majority of respondents identifying "all mentioned factors" indicate economic and emotional reasons equally at 50%, while 21.1% of uncertain respondents attribute their stance to undefined factors. The diversity in views underscores the complexity of religious, cultural, and personal influences on polyandry.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.509 <sup>a</sup>	15	.095
Likelihood Ratio	24.884	15	.052
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.735	1	.017
N of Valid Cases	36		

a. 23 cells (95.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

The Chi-Square test evaluates the association between the acceptance of polyandry and the identified influencing factors. The Pearson Chi-Square value (22.509) with 15 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level of 0.095 indicates no statistically significant relationship between the variables at the 5% level, though the p-value approaches marginal significance. The likelihood ratio (24.884) further supports these findings with a significance of 0.052. Additionally, the linear-by-linear association suggests a potential trend ( $p = 0.017$ ), highlighting some interaction between the variables. Overall, the results suggest complex but not strongly definitive relationships between acceptance of polyandry and influencing factors.

#### The potential benefits of polyandry can play a crucial role in its adoption and practice.

Potential advantages of polyandry		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfillment	All above mentioned	
Increased emotional support	Count	2	0	0	1	3
		66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Factor	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	8.3%
Shared responsibilities and workload	Count	3	1	0	1	5
		60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	42.9%	16.7%	0.0%	5.3%	13.9%
Variety in intimate relationships	Count	1	1	0	1	3
		33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	16.7%	0.0%	5.3%	8.3%
All above mentioned	Count	1	4	4	14	23
		4.3%	17.4%	17.4%	60.9%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	66.7%	100.0%	73.7%	63.9%
5	Count	0	0	0	2	2
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.5%	5.6%
Total	Count	7	6	4	19	36
		19.4%	16.7%	11.1%	52.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The table highlights the perceived advantages of polyandry as reported by respondents, categorized by factors



such as cultural or religious beliefs, economic considerations, personal and emotional fulfilment, and a combination of all these factors. Among those identifying **increased emotional support**, 66.7% attribute it to cultural or religious beliefs, while 33.3% consider all factors. For **shared responsibilities and workload**, the majority (60%) also highlight cultural or religious beliefs, with 20% pointing to economic considerations. Regarding **variety in intimate relationships**, responses are evenly distributed across cultural, economic, and combined factors (33.3% each). Respondents citing **all mentioned factors** as advantages overwhelmingly recognize this combination (60.9%) as crucial, with a significant emphasis on economic and personal fulfilment (17.4% each). Overall, the majority of respondents (63.9%) acknowledge that multiple intertwined factors contribute to the potential benefits of polyandry, suggesting its complex appeal and practicality.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.265 <sup>a</sup>	12	.140
Likelihood Ratio	18.219	12	.109
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.656	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	36		

a. 19 cells (95.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

The Chi-Square analysis assesses the association between the perceived benefits of polyandry and the influencing factors. The Pearson Chi-Square value (17.265) with 12 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.140 indicates no statistically significant relationship at the 5% level. Similarly, the likelihood ratio (18.219) supports this result with a p-value of 0.109. However, the linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.002$ ) indicates a significant trend, suggesting that some benefits of polyandry are more strongly aligned with specific factors. This implies that while no strong statistical association exists overall, certain trends in responses warrant further exploration.

#### Participation in a polyandrous relationship may depend on individual values and societal norms

Involvement in a polyandrous relationship		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfilment	All above mentioned	
Personal choice	Count	0	1	0	1	2
		0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	5.3%	5.6%
Cultural or religious reasons	Count	5	2	0	10	17
		29.4%	11.8%	0.0%	58.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	71.4%	33.3%	0.0%	52.6%	47.2%
Open communication with partners	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%
All above mentioned	Count	1	3	4	8	16
		6.3%	18.8%	25.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	50.0%	100.0%	42.1%	44.4%
Total	Count	7	6	4	19	36
		19.4%	16.7%	11.1%	52.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



The table explores the factors influencing participation in polyandrous relationships, categorized by cultural or religious beliefs, economic considerations, personal and emotional fulfilment, and a combination of these factors. Among those who cite **personal choice**, responses are split equally between economic considerations and a mix of all factors (50% each). For **cultural or religious reasons**, a significant majority (71.4%) attribute their involvement to cultural or religious beliefs, with 58.8% identifying a combination of factors as influential. Only one respondent emphasized **open communication with partners**, citing cultural or religious beliefs. Among those who selected **all mentioned factors**, the distribution is diverse, with personal and emotional fulfilment (25%) and economic considerations (18.8%) playing a notable role. Overall, 52.8% of respondents view a combination of factors as central to their participation in polyandry, indicating that societal norms and individual values interact in shaping such decisions.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.486 <sup>a</sup>	9	.142
Likelihood Ratio	14.338	9	.111
Linear-by-Linear Association	.387	1	.534
N of Valid Cases	36		

a. 14 cells (87.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

The Chi-Square test evaluates the association between participation in polyandrous relationships and the influencing factors. The Pearson Chi-Square value (13.486) with 9 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.142 suggests no statistically significant relationship at the 5% threshold. The likelihood ratio (14.338) further supports this result with a p-value of 0.111. Additionally, the linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.534$ ) indicates no significant trend. These results imply that while individual values and societal norms impact participation, the relationship between these factors and specific choices is not strongly statistically defined.

Consider being in a polyandrous relationship		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfillment	All above mentioned	
Yes, I would be open to it	Count	2	3	2	2	9
		22.2%	33.3%	22.2%	22.2%	100.0%
	% within Factor	28.6%	50.0%	50.0%	10.5%	25.0%
No, I'm not interested	Count	5	1	2	9	17
		29.4%	5.9%	11.8%	52.9%	100.0%
	% within Factor	71.4%	16.7%	50.0%	47.4%	47.2%
Maybe, it depends on the circumstances	Count	0	1	0	2	3
		0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
	% within Factor	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	10.5%	8.3%
Not sure	Count	0	1	0	6	7
		0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	85.7%	100.0%
	% within Factor	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	31.6%	19.4%
Total	Count	7	6	4	19	36
		19.4%	16.7%	11.1%	52.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Considering the dynamics of a polyandrous relationship requires an open mind set and adaptability.**





The table examines respondents' willingness to consider a polyandrous relationship based on factors such as cultural or religious beliefs, economic considerations, personal and emotional fulfilment, and a combination of all factors. Among those who responded **"Yes, I would be open to it,"** 33.3% cited economic considerations, while 22.2% pointed to cultural or religious beliefs, personal and emotional fulfilment, or a mix of all factors. Respondents who chose **"No, I'm not interested"** largely attributed their decision to cultural or religious beliefs (71.4%) or a combination of all factors (52.9%). For those selecting **"Maybe, it depends on the circumstances,"** 33.3% cited economic considerations, and 66.7% referenced a mix of all factors. Interestingly, the majority of respondents who were **"Not sure"** (85.7%) identified a combination of factors as influential. The overall distribution highlights the importance of adaptability and personal values, with 52.8% of respondents acknowledging multiple factors in their decision-making process.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.317 <sup>a</sup>	9	.255
Likelihood Ratio	14.177	9	.116
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.549	1	.033
N of Valid Cases	36		

a. 15 cells (93.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .33.

The Chi-Square test assesses the relationship between openness to polyandrous relationships and influencing factors. The Pearson Chi-Square value (11.317) with 9 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.255 suggests no statistically significant association at the 5% threshold. The likelihood ratio (14.177) supports this result with a p-value of 0.116. However, the linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.033$ ) indicates a significant trend, suggesting that as influencing factors vary, respondents' willingness to consider polyandry shifts accordingly. This reflects a nuanced interplay between personal values, societal norms, and circumstances in shaping attitudes toward polyandrous relationships.

### Polyandry challenges traditional gender roles and societal expectations, prompting revaluation of norms.

Polyandry challenges traditional gender roles and expectations		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfillment	All above mentioned	
Yes, it promotes gender equality	Count	1	2	1	2	6
		16.7%	33.3%	16.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	33.3%	25.0%	10.5%	16.7%
No, it reinforces traditional gender roles	Count	1	0	1	5	7
		14.3%	0.0%	14.3%	71.4%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	0.0%	25.0%	26.3%	19.4%
It depends on the specific dynamics of the relationship	Count	4	2	2	9	17
		23.5%	11.8%	11.8%	52.9%	100.0%
	% within Factor	57.1%	33.3%	50.0%	47.4%	47.2%
I don't know	Count	1	2	0	3	6
		16.7%	33.3%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	33.3%	0.0%	15.8%	16.7%
Total	Count	7	6	4	19	36



		19.4%	16.7%	11.1%	52.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The table explores how respondents perceive the impact of polyandry on traditional gender roles and societal expectations, based on factors like cultural or religious beliefs, economic considerations, personal and emotional fulfillment, and a combination of these factors. For those who agree **"Yes, it promotes gender equality,"** 33.3% cite economic considerations and an equal percentage attribute it to all mentioned factors. Respondents who believe **"No, it reinforces traditional gender roles"** predominantly highlight all mentioned factors (71.4%). A significant portion (47.2%) believes **"It depends on the specific dynamics of the relationship,"** with 52.9% emphasizing a combination of factors. Among those who chose **"I don't know,"** 50% associate their uncertainty with all mentioned factors. Overall, responses suggest that the perception of polyandry's impact on gender roles is shaped by various individual and societal influences, with 52.8% recognizing the interplay of multiple factors.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.504 <sup>a</sup>	9	.788
Likelihood Ratio	6.906	9	.647
Linear-by-Linear Association	.003	1	.959
N of Valid Cases	36		

a. 15 cells (93.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .67.

The Chi-Square analysis evaluates the relationship between perceptions of polyandry's impact on gender roles and the influencing factors. The Pearson Chi-Square value (5.504) with 9 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.788 indicates no statistically significant association. The likelihood ratio (6.906) and linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.959$ ) further support this result. These findings suggest that while respondents' views on polyandry's effect on gender roles vary, there is no strong statistical relationship between these perceptions and the specific factors considered in this study. This indicates that attitudes toward gender roles in polyandry are likely shaped by complex and nuanced dynamics beyond the measured factors. **The perception of power dynamics in a polyandrous relationship can vary based on individual experiences and cultural contexts.**

Perceive the power dynamics in a polyandrous relationship		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfillment	All above mentioned	
Equal - All partners have equal power and agency.	Count	3	4	2	10	19
		15.8%	21.1%	10.5%	52.6%	100.0%
	% within Factor	42.9%	66.7%	50.0%	52.6%	52.8%
Unequal - There is likely to be a power imbalance.	Count	2	0	0	1	3
		66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Factor	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	8.3%
I'm not sure about the power dynamics in polyandry.	Count	1	0	1	5	7
		14.3%	0.0%	14.3%	71.4%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	0.0%	25.0%	26.3%	19.4%
I'm not sure about the power dynamics in polyandry.	Count	1	2	1	3	7
		14.3%	28.6%	14.3%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	33.3%	25.0%	15.8%	19.4%





Total	Count	7	6	4	19	36
		19.4%	16.7%	11.1%	52.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The table explores how individuals perceive power dynamics in polyandrous relationships based on cultural or religious beliefs, economic considerations, personal and emotional fulfilment, and a combination of these factors. Among respondents, 52.8% believe that **"All partners have equal power and agency,"** with a significant portion attributing this perception to all mentioned factors (52.6%) and economic considerations (66.7%). For those who perceive the dynamics as **"Unequal – There is likely to be a power imbalance,"** the majority (66.7%) attribute it to cultural or religious beliefs. A notable 19.4% are unsure, with 71.4% of these responses tied to all mentioned factors. The results suggest that perceptions of equality or imbalance in polyandrous relationships are influenced by a mix of individual and cultural contexts, with economic and cultural factors playing prominent roles.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.517 <sup>a</sup>	9	.583
Likelihood Ratio	8.062	9	.528
Linear-by-Linear Association	.076	1	.783
N of Valid Cases	36		

a. 15 cells (93.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .33.

The Chi-Square analysis examines the association between perceptions of power dynamics and influencing factors. The Pearson Chi-Square value (7.517) with 9 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.583 indicates no statistically significant relationship. The likelihood ratio (8.062) and linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.783$ ) corroborate this finding. These results suggest that while perceptions of power dynamics in polyandrous relationships vary, they are not strongly linked to the specific factors measured in this study. Instead, the perception of power dynamics may depend on other unmeasured variables, such as individual experiences or societal norms.

**Gender roles within polyandry may be clearly defined or flexible, depending on the individuals involved and their agreement.**

Gender roles of men and women clearly outlined or flexible		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfillment	All above mentioned	
Yes	Count	3	2	2	8	15
		20.0%	13.3%	13.3%	53.3%	100.0%
	% within Factor	42.9%	33.3%	50.0%	42.1%	41.7%
No	Count	4	4	2	11	21
		19.0%	19.0%	9.5%	52.4%	100.0%
	% within Factor	57.1%	66.7%	50.0%	57.9%	58.3%
Total	Count	7	6	4	19	36
		19.4%	16.7%	11.1%	52.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

This table examines whether gender roles in polyandrous relationships are clearly defined or flexible, based



on cultural or religious beliefs, economic considerations, personal and emotional fulfilment, or a combination of these factors. A slight majority of respondents (58.3%) believe that gender roles are **not clearly defined**, with a substantial portion attributing this perception to a mix of all factors (57.9%) and economic considerations (66.7%). On the other hand, 41.7% feel that gender roles are **clearly outlined**, with significant attribution to all factors (42.1%) and personal and emotional fulfilment (50%). The results indicate diverse perspectives on gender roles in polyandry, with flexibility or ambiguity being the more commonly observed dynamic.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.291 <sup>a</sup>	3	.962
Likelihood Ratio	.294	3	.961
Linear-by-Linear Association	.013	1	.909
N of Valid Cases	36		

a. 6 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.67.

The Chi-Square analysis evaluates the relationship between perceptions of gender roles and influencing factors. The Pearson Chi-Square value (0.291) with 3 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.962 indicates no statistically significant association. Similarly, the likelihood ratio (0.294) and linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.909$ ) confirm this lack of significance. These findings suggest that the perception of gender roles—whether rigid or flexible—is not strongly influenced by the measured factors, highlighting the possibility of additional variables like individual preferences or interpersonal dynamics shaping these roles.

#### Satisfaction with societal and familial roles may influence one's acceptance or rejection of polyandry

Satisfied with role allocated by society family		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfillment	All above mentioned	
Yes	Count	3	1	1	6	11
		27.3%	9.1%	9.1%	54.5%	100.0%
	% within Factor	75.0%	50.0%	100.0%	66.7%	68.8%
No	Count	1	1	0	3	5
		20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	33.3%	31.3%
Total	Count	4	2	1	9	16
		25.0%	12.5%	6.3%	56.3%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The table explores how satisfaction with societal and familial roles influences an individual's acceptance or rejection of polyandry, based on various factors like cultural/religious beliefs, economic considerations, personal and emotional fulfilment, or all of these combined. A majority (68.8%) of respondents reported being **satisfied** with their allocated roles, with most attributing this to "all above mentioned" factors (66.7%) and cultural/religious beliefs (75%). However, 31.3% expressed **dissatisfaction**, predominantly influenced by the same comprehensive set of factors (33.3%). These findings suggest that satisfaction with societal and familial roles is positively associated with the acceptance of polyandry, particularly when multiple factors collectively contribute to their perceived contentment.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.873 <sup>a</sup>	3	.832



Likelihood Ratio	1.146	3	.766
Linear-by-Linear Association	.016	1	.900
N of Valid Cases	16		

a. 7 cells (87.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .31.

The Chi-Square test examines the association between satisfaction with societal roles and the influencing factors. The Pearson Chi-Square value (0.873) with 3 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.832 indicates no statistically significant association. The likelihood ratio (1.146) and linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.900$ ) further confirm this insignificance. This suggests that while satisfaction or dissatisfaction with societal and familial roles may influence individual attitudes toward polyandry, the measured factors do not show a strong direct correlation in this dataset. Other unmeasured factors may play a role in shaping these perceptions.

**Potential challenges in polyandrous relationships could include managing jealousy, ensuring fairness, and addressing societal stigma.**

Challenges do you foresee in polyandrous relationships		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfillment	All above mentioned	
Balancing time and attention among multiple partners	Count	4	3	2	11	20
		20.0%	15.0%	10.0%	55.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	57.1%	50.0%	50.0%	57.9%	55.6%
Managing potential conflicts and jealousy	Count	1	2	1	5	9
		11.1%	22.2%	11.1%	55.6%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	33.3%	25.0%	26.3%	25.0%
Navigating societal stigma and judgments	Count	2	1	1	3	7
		28.6%	14.3%	14.3%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within Factor	28.6%	16.7%	25.0%	15.8%	19.4%
Total	Count	7	6	4	19	36
		19.4%	16.7%	11.1%	52.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

This table presents the challenges perceived in polyandrous relationships, considering cultural/religious beliefs, economic considerations, personal/emotional fulfilment, and the combination of all these factors. **Balancing time and attention among multiple partners** were identified as the most prominent challenge (55.6%), particularly influenced by cultural/religious beliefs (57.1%) and economic considerations (50%). **Managing conflicts and jealousy** was also a notable concern (25%), with a strong link to economic considerations (33.3%). The third challenge, **navigating societal stigma and judgments**, was significant (19.4%), particularly influenced by cultural/religious beliefs (28.6%) and personal/emotional fulfilment (25%). These results highlight that the primary challenges in polyandrous relationships revolve around time management, interpersonal conflicts, and external societal pressures.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.096 <sup>a</sup>	6	.982
Likelihood Ratio	1.108	6	.981



Linear-by-Linear Association	.165	1	.684
N of Valid Cases	36		

a. 11 cells (91.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .78.

The Chi-Square test (Pearson value of 1.096, with 6 degrees of freedom and an asymptotic significance of 0.982) indicates no statistically significant relationship between the perceived challenges and the influencing factors. The likelihood ratio (1.108) and linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.684$ ) further support the lack of significant correlation. This suggests that while respondents foresee various challenges in polyandrous relationships, the specific factors analyzed (cultural/religious beliefs, economic considerations, and personal/emotional fulfillment) do not exhibit a strong association with these challenges. It implies that other factors not covered in this study might also influence the perceived challenges in polyandry.

**Various factors, such as cultural shifts and changing social values, might contribute to transformations in the polyandrous system.**

Factors that might influence changes in the polyandrous system		Factor				Total
		Cultural or religious beliefs	Economic considerations	Personal and emotional fulfillment	All above mentioned	
Education	Count	1	1	0	3	5
		20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	% within Factor	14.3%	16.7%	0.0%	15.8%	13.9%
Employment	Count	2	0	0	1	3
		66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Factor	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	8.3%
All above mentioned	Count	4	5	4	15	28
		14.3%	17.9%	14.3%	53.6%	100.0%
	% within Factor	57.1%	83.3%	100.0%	78.9%	77.8%
Total	Count	7	6	4	19	36
		19.4%	16.7%	11.1%	52.8%	100.0%
	% within Factor	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

This table explores various factors that could influence changes in the polyandrous system, focusing on education, employment, and a combination of both. The "**All above mentioned**" category was the most cited factor (77.8%), indicating that respondents believe multiple factors contribute to transformations in polyandry. Education played a role (13.9%), with **cultural/religious beliefs** and **economic considerations** being the most influential factors in this context. Employment was also cited but to a lesser extent (8.3%), particularly influenced by cultural/religious beliefs (66.7%) and economic considerations (33.3%).

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.792 <sup>a</sup>	6	.447
Likelihood Ratio	5.882	6	.437
Linear-by-Linear Association	.031	1	.861
N of Valid Cases	36		

a. 10 cells (83.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .33.



The Chi-Square test (Pearson value = 5.792, degrees of freedom = 6, asymptotic significance = 0.447) indicates no statistically significant relationship between the factors influencing changes in the polyandrous system and the contributing factors (cultural/religious beliefs, economic considerations, and personal/emotional fulfilment). Similarly, the likelihood ratio (5.882) and linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.861$ ) further suggest that the factors mentioned do not have a strong correlation with the potential changes in polyandry. This implies that other elements not covered in this analysis could be more influential in driving change in polyandrous relationships.

## Summary

Polyandry, a marriage system involving multiple male partners for one woman, is shaped by numerous social, cultural, and economic factors. One of the primary motivations for adopting polyandry lies in its potential benefits, including increased emotional support, shared responsibilities, and the satisfaction of emotional and personal needs. The perception of polyandry varies significantly across different societal groups, depending on factors like cultural or religious beliefs, economic considerations, and personal experiences. These factors influence the practice of polyandry in diverse ways, as individuals weigh the benefits and challenges that come with such a relationship structure.

In exploring the potential benefits of polyandry, it is evident that cultural or religious beliefs play a dominant role, followed by economic considerations and personal fulfilment. Emotional support and shared responsibilities are the most frequently cited advantages. Individuals involved in polyandrous relationships may experience a sense of greater emotional stability, as multiple partners can provide different forms of support. Furthermore, the workload within the family structure can be more evenly distributed, improving efficiency and reducing individual stress. However, the practice of polyandry remains relatively rare, as societal and familial norms often influence its acceptance or rejection.

The survey data highlights that societal norms and familial expectations greatly shape one's willingness to engage in polyandry. Respondents' perspectives on polyandry often reflect personal values, such as a desire for cultural or religious compliance or the need for financial or emotional security. Some individuals may be open to polyandry as a means to fulfil these needs, while others are not interested due to the traditional values and gender roles prevalent in their society. Many individuals noted that their participation would depend on specific circumstances, such as the dynamics between the partners involved and the broader social context.

The data also suggests that the perception of power dynamics in polyandrous relationships is highly variable. Many respondents believe that polyandry can promote equal power among partners, although some express concern that power imbalances could arise. The key to successful polyandrous relationships seems to lie in the specific dynamics between the individuals involved. Open communication, mutual respect, and adaptability may help mitigate issues such as jealousy or unequal treatment, which are often associated with non-traditional relationship structures.

Gender roles within polyandry are another point of contention. Some respondents believe that gender roles should be clearly outlined, while others advocate for more flexible arrangements. The flexibility or rigidity of these roles is dependent on individual agreements within the relationship. In some cases, polyandry may challenge traditional gender expectations, creating an environment in which individuals can explore new roles and identities. However, societal pressures and existing gender norms often lead to the reinforcement of traditional roles in polyandrous families.

Satisfaction with one's role within society or the family unit plays a significant role in determining one's stance on polyandry. Those who are satisfied with their societal roles are less likely to entertain polyandry, as they may view it as an unnecessary deviation from established norms. Conversely, those who feel constrained by traditional roles may be more open to polyandry as a means of greater freedom and fulfilment. This highlights the intersection of individual desires and social expectations in shaping relationship structures.

Potential challenges in polyandrous relationships include managing time, attention, and resources among multiple partners. Respondents frequently cited balancing responsibilities and managing jealousy as significant hurdles. Additionally, societal stigma remains a persistent issue, as polyandry is often viewed as unconventional or undesirable in many cultures. Despite these challenges, individuals who are open to polyandry see its potential benefits as outweighing the drawbacks. However, the stigma surrounding polyandry can create significant barriers for its wider acceptance.

In terms of factors influencing the future evolution of polyandry, education, employment, and other societal shifts are key contributors. Education, in particular, plays an important role in changing perceptions of polyandry, as more people become aware of alternative relationship structures and their potential benefits. Employment, while also a factor, is less impactful in driving changes in polyandrous systems, though economic



considerations can influence one's decision to engage in such relationships. Overall, societal changes, including shifts in gender roles and social expectations, could significantly impact the future of polyandry.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, polyandry is influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural, religious, economic, and personal considerations. The practice offers significant potential benefits, such as increased emotional support and shared responsibilities. However, its widespread adoption faces challenges, including societal stigma, gender norms, and the complexities of managing multiple relationships. The data suggests that polyandry could become more accepted if these factors are addressed through greater awareness, education, and societal shifts.

The flexibility of gender roles and the potential for power equality in polyandrous relationships are both seen as positive aspects by some individuals, while others remain concerned about the reinforcement of traditional roles. The key to overcoming these challenges lies in open communication, mutual respect, and adaptability between partners. Additionally, the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with societal roles plays a significant role in determining whether individuals are open to polyandry.

The Chi-Square tests reveal that while factors such as education and employment have some influence, they are not strongly correlated with significant changes in polyandry. This suggests that broader cultural shifts, rather than specific factors, will be more influential in determining how polyandry evolves over time. However, societal and familial expectations continue to be major factors that shape individuals' decisions to engage in or reject polyandry.

Ultimately, polyandry remains a controversial but potentially transformative relationship system. As societies continue to evolve and redefine gender roles and expectations, polyandry could become more accepted. However, its acceptance will largely depend on the willingness of individuals and societies to challenge traditional norms and explore alternative forms of family and relationship structures.

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