

POLYGAMY IN MALAYSIA

WHY LAWS AND THEIR
ENFORCEMENT NEED
TO BE STRENGTHENED



Sisters in Islam

ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF POLYGAMY



To protect orphan girls
and widows whose
fathers and husbands
died during the many
wars of that period.

SURAH AN-NISA' 4:3

PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE



... that He created for
you mates from among
yourselves, that ye may dwell
in tranquillity with them,
and He has put love and
mercy between your hearts.

SURAH AR-RUUM 30:21

IN REALITY



70%

of husbands admitted that they had entered into polygamy because of sexual attraction



60%

of wives and children no longer respected their husbands and fathers after these men had become polygamous



Majority of husbands failed to ensure the welfare and well-being of their first/existing wives and their children

61%

of first wives said that they were extremely unhappy with in their current polygamous situations

69%

of first wives said that their husbands always treated them unfairly

92%

of children (of first and second wives) did not recommend polygamy based on their actual life experiences

64%

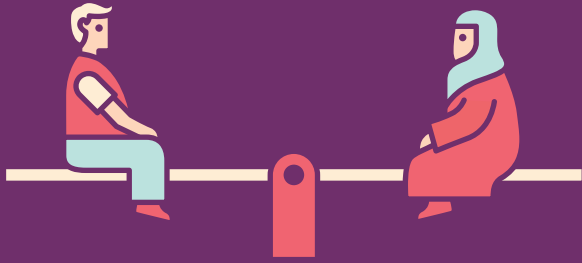
of children of first wives said that their fathers were always unfair

"I didn't even know he had married another woman..."



He just came one day and said he had married another as though he was telling me he had been given a payrise."

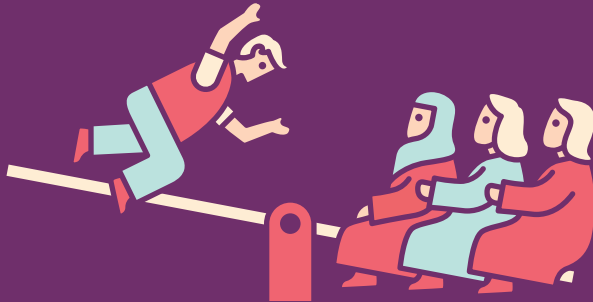
1.



2.



3.



Can polygamous husbands fulfill the financial and sexual demands of their wives?



Most polygamous husbands could NOT fulfill financial and sexual demands – the foundations of a firm marriage

40%

of husbands intentionally reduced monetary contributions to their children, wives, and towards the household expenditure after engaging in polygamy

44%

of first wives started working longer hours to supplement the family income

64%

of first wives said their husbands had not complied to the 'turn-taking' agreements

77%

of children of first wives were unhappy with their fathers' time allocation

The Shariah Courts rarely investigate whether a husband is capable of material provision. Husbands were not required to show proof of their financial stability.



45%

of husbands did not submit applications to become polygamous to the courts

50%

of husbands said that no financial or health documents were asked by the court



The first wives were not given the opportunity to provide testimonies in court stating that their husbands could not fulfill their financial obligations to the existing wives and children

40%

of first wives said their husbands did not submit polygamy applications to the courts (as confirmed by husbands above)

60%

of first wives were not called by the courts and asked for their views - prior to these courts providing the permission to their husbands to take on another wife

87%

of children said their experience of polygamy had left negative emotional/psychological impact on them.

Their life situations had also negatively affected their belief in the institution of marriage.



Increased emotional instability of wives and children

Decreased well-being of Muslim families

60% of children were involved in problematic activities such as excessive drug abuse, truancy and alcohol consumption

Cultural and religious assimilation had been affected owing to family instability

SUGGESTIONS



Monitor/tighten the practice of polygamy

Refine further the existing laws

Improve the enforcement of these laws



DATA COLLECTION:

Sisters in Islam had interviewed 1224 respondents and they are 214 of Husbands, 259 of First Wives, 228 of Second Wives, 331 of Children of First Wives and 192 of Children of Second Wives. This study was conducted in all states in Peninsular Malaysia.

REFERENCE

National Survey on "The Impact of Polygamy on Muslim Families in Peninsular Malaysia", a collaborative research between Sisters in Islam and researchers from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Universiti Malaya (2007 - 2012).

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