

**TRANSITION IN POLYANDROUS MARRIAGE TRADITION:
(A STUDY IN SHILLAI TEHSIL IN HIMACHAL PRADESH)**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**in
Sociology**

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2025**

Annexure-I

Undertaking from Supervisor for Recommendations

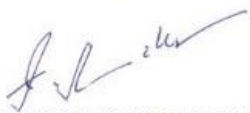
1. This is to certify that all the recommendation received from panel of readers for the evaluation of the thesis entitled "Transition in Polyandrous Marriage Tradition: (A Study in Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh)" submitted by the Ph.D. Scholar Mr. SHIV KUMAR Reg. No. 42000464 in the discipline/domain of Sociology are fully incorporated in the revised thesis.


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DECLARATION

I, hereby declared that the presented work in the thesis entitled “**Transition in Polyandrous Marriage Tradition: A Study in Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh**” in fulfilment of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)** is outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr. Thakur Prem Kumar, (27287)** working as Assistant Professor, in the Department of Sociology of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever work described here has been based on findings of other investigator. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled “Transition in Polyandrous Marriage Tradition: A Study in Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh” submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the reward of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the Department of Sociology, is a research work carried out by Shiv Kumar, Registration No: 42000464, is a bonafide record of his/her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.



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ABSTRACT

Polyandry, the marital practice where one woman has multiple husbands, holds a multifaceted history in India, reflecting the nation's diverse cultural, environmental, and social complexities. Rooted in ancient texts such as the Mahabharata and the Rig Veda, polyandry has been practiced since at least the Vedic period (1600–2000 BCE). The Mahabharata portrayal of Draupadi's marriage to the five Pandavas exemplifies its narrative and symbolic importance. The practice has also been documented in various communities across India, such as the Jaunsar-Bawar region in Uttarakhand, the Toda and Kota of the Nilgiri Hills, and groups in Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh. Despite its decline in modern times, polyandry offers critical insights into the adaptive strategies of societies facing resource scarcity, demographic challenges, and unique inheritance customs.

Polyandry's origins and prevalence are linked to environmental and economic imperatives. In resource-constrained regions, such as the Himalayan Plateau, it provided a means of pooling labour, sharing resources, and maintaining undivided family landholdings. Fraternal polyandry, where brothers shared a wife, ensured lineage continuity and economic stability, avoiding land fragmentation. Demographic factors, including skewed sex ratios and the high mortality rates of men in warfare or hazardous occupations, further contributed to its adoption, providing security for women and children. Cultural and religious beliefs also supported polyandry, with some communities viewing it as spiritually significant or as a means of fostering social harmony.

The role of women within polyandrous families was complex and varied across regions. Women often held significant authority, managing households, contributing to agricultural work, and navigating relationships with multiple husbands. These roles sometimes granted women greater autonomy compared to monogamous societies. However, polyandry also presented challenges, including jealousy and power imbalances among husbands, which communities managed through social norms and conflict-resolution mechanisms.

Legal and societal changes significantly influenced the decline of polyandry in India. British colonial laws, such as the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, outlawed the practice for most Hindus, accelerating its reduction. Modernization, economic development, and shifts in gender norms further marginalized polyandry, promoting nuclear family structures and monogamy. Nonetheless, remnants of the practice persist in select regions, maintaining cultural significance and reflecting deep-seated traditions.

Anthropological studies underscore the importance of polyandry in understanding human social organization and adaptation. By enabling communities to navigate harsh environments, maintain wealth and lineage, and foster social cohesion, polyandry highlights the ingenuity of human responses to challenging conditions. Its decline poses questions about cultural preservation and the balance between respecting traditional practices and ensuring individual rights. Emerging modern perspectives, such as consensual non-monogamy, echo elements of polyandry, signalling a reevaluation of relationship structures in contemporary societies.

Polyandry's legacy endures as a testament to the diversity of human marital arrangements and the intricate interplay of cultural, environmental, and economic factors shaping societal practices. Its study offers valuable insights into the resilience and adaptability of communities throughout history.

This research explores the polyandrous marriage tradition in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, focusing on its historical, cultural, and socio-economic dimensions. The study employs a qualitative methodology, integrating ethnographic techniques, case studies, and thematic analysis to understand the evolution, motivations, and transformations of polyandry in the region. Key objectives include investigating the tradition's origins, assessing the roles and status of men and women, and examining contemporary changes influenced by globalization, legal reforms, and education.

Data collection involved primary and secondary sources, with semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observational methods providing comprehensive insights. Sixteen in-depth interviews with members of polyandrous families formed the study's core, capturing diverse perspectives. Historical records and prior academic studies supplemented the primary findings, enriching the contextual understanding.

The research design exploratory approach to provide a detailed account of polyandry's past and present. Findings suggest that polyandry, rooted in limited

resources and geographical isolation, historically ensured economic stability and familial cooperation. However, evolving societal norms and increased exposure to external influences have prompted shifts in the practice, reflecting tensions between tradition and modernization.

Ethical considerations were prioritized, with informed consent and cultural sensitivity guiding interactions. Narrative analysis and thematic content analysis identified recurring patterns, revealing the nuanced interplay of gender dynamics, economic roles, and community values within polyandrous marriages.

This study addresses significant research gaps, including the lack of detailed investigations into localized motivations for polyandry and the impact of modern influences on its persistence. It contributes to understanding polyandry as a complex socio-cultural phenomenon, offering insights relevant for policymakers, sociologists, and cultural anthropologists. The findings underscore the importance of preserving cultural heritage while navigating societal change, providing a foundation for future research on familial structures and gender dynamics in traditional communities.

Interviewee Profiling and Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Polyandrous Families in Shillai Tehsil

This study explores the socio-economic, cultural, and familial structures of polyandrous households in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh. It highlights the nuanced dynamics of six diverse families engaged in polyandrous practices. Each family's profile underscores the integration of traditional values with modern aspirations, reflecting a delicate balance between economic sustainability and cultural heritage.

Participant households' range in income from ₹2 to ₹7.5 lakh annually, driven by diverse livelihoods including farming, government jobs, and tailoring, labour, and small businesses. Wives frequently manage household duties while contributing economically as farmers, shopkeepers, and service workers. Husbands' roles span farming, tailoring, and private or government employment. The younger generation emphasizes education, with children pursuing higher studies and skill development, indicative of a gradual shift toward progressive values.

The findings reveal that polyandry, deeply rooted in cultural traditions, is shaped by resource limitations, economic collaboration, and familial stability. Families cited emotional support, shared responsibilities, and labour redistribution as key

advantages, enabling them to adapt to agrarian and resource-scarce settings. However, challenges include managing interpersonal dynamics, societal stigma, and economic vulnerabilities due to limited education or reliance on basic income sources.

Polyandry's impact on gender roles is complex; some participants noted its potential to foster equality, while others felt it reinforced traditional norms. Despite challenges, many families demonstrated resilience through diversified income streams and a strong focus on education as a pathway to upward mobility.

Modernization, employment opportunities, and access to education are pivotal in reshaping perceptions and practices. While some families transition toward nuclear structures, others retain polyandry as a viable familial model. This study highlights the evolving socio-cultural fabric of polyandrous households, blending tradition with aspirations for a better future, and offers insights into how economic and societal changes influence this unique practice.

This study delves into the intricate socio-cultural and economic dimensions of polyandry through an in-depth analysis of interviews with participants from regions where this tradition historically flourished. Polyandry, once rooted in pragmatic responses to resource scarcity and challenging geographies, played a vital role in preserving family unity, preventing land fragmentation, and fostering economic stability. Motivated by cultural, economic, and spiritual factors, it provided a collaborative framework that emphasized familial harmony and collective well-being.

Distinct rituals and ceremonies historically imbued polyandrous marriages with dignity, reinforcing values of unity and cooperation. Economic imperatives often

drove the practice, with shared responsibilities among husbands preventing resource depletion and inheritance disputes. Women emerged as central figures, balancing domestic management, child-rearing, and emotional mediation, while men contributed primarily through labour and financial support. This complementary dynamic ensured mutual respect and cooperation, with both genders playing indispensable roles in maintaining household stability.

However, the perception and practice of polyandry are undergoing significant transformations. Younger generations, influenced by education, urbanization, and exposure to modern values, increasingly view polyandry as outdated. Economic diversification and the rise of individual autonomy have reduced reliance on

traditional systems, shifting societal norms towards monogamous relationships. Women, in particular, are advocating for personal choice and gender equality, challenging the constraints of polyandry and sparking generational tensions.

Despite its decline, the tradition remains a testament to the resilience and adaptability of cultural practices in addressing historical challenges. While some participants acknowledge its socio-economic benefits, most view its relevance as diminishing in contemporary contexts. This study highlights the evolving dynamics of polyandry, illustrating a broader societal transition from communal traditions to modern, individual-centric values, signalling its gradual transformation or obsolescence in the face of changing societal expectations.

Focus Group Discussion Analysis on Polyandry Tradition

This analysis explores the motivations, cultural roots, rituals, family dynamics, and evolving perceptions of polyandry through a comprehensive examination of four focus group discussions. Polyandry, once a pragmatic tradition aimed at resource preservation and economic stability, is now undergoing significant transformations influenced by modernization, education, and changing societal norms.

Historical and Cultural Context

Polyandry originated as a survival mechanism in resource-scarce areas, ensuring family land remained undivided and fostering economic stability. The tradition minimized inheritance disputes and encouraged cooperation among brothers. Rituals and ceremonies symbolized family unity, emphasizing the wife's pivotal role in household harmony and resource management. However, modern education, employment opportunities, and exposure to alternative lifestyles are challenging the relevance of these practices.

Family Dynamics and Gender Roles

Polyandry created unique family structures characterized by shared responsibilities and collective child-rearing. Men traditionally managed external economic activities, while women-maintained household harmony and managed complex familial relationships. Women held significant authority within the household but often bore a heavier emotional burden. As societal attitudes evolve, gender roles in polyandrous households are shifting, with women increasingly contributing to family incomes and asserting autonomy.

Motivations and Economic Considerations

Economic necessity was a primary driver of polyandry, particularly in communities where dividing land would lead to unsustainable living conditions. This tradition preserved family property, pooled income, and ensured financial security. However, as alternative livelihoods and modern development offer new ways to achieve economic stability, younger generations increasingly question the practicality of polyandry.

Shifting Perceptions and Challenges

Modernization has significantly influenced perceptions of polyandry, especially among younger generations. Education, urban migration, and exposure to diverse cultural norms have led to a decline in its practice. Younger individuals prioritize personal freedom, equality, and independence, moving away from traditional family structures. Women, empowered by education and economic independence, resist polyandry, advocating for monogamy and egalitarian relationships.

Legal and Societal Implications

Polyandry faces challenges within legal frameworks designed around monogamous unions. Issues of inheritance, property rights, and gender equality often conflict with traditional practices. Growing awareness of individual rights, particularly among women, further questions the practice's alignment with contemporary legal and social principles. Community leaders and women's groups advocate for reforms to address these disparities.

Case Study Insights

The study includes narratives illustrating polyandry's complexities and transitions. Women like P1 navigate empowerment within traditional structures, while others, such as P2 challenge gender roles by becoming primary earners in polyandrous households. Urban migration and generational divides expose the fragility of these traditions in modern contexts.

The study highlights polyandry's historical significance as a socio-economic strategy and its transformation amidst evolving societal values. The tradition's decline reflects broader shifts toward individual rights, gender equality, and alternative family models. Despite its waning practice, polyandry remains a testament to the adaptability

of communities to historical challenges, offering valuable insights into balancing tradition and change in contemporary societies.

This study delves into the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of polyandrous families in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, uncovering a complex interplay between tradition and modernity. Polyandry, a marital practice historically rooted in resource management, family unity, and cultural beliefs, continues to persist in certain communities while undergoing significant transformation due to modernization, education, and evolving societal norms.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Dynamics

Polyandrous households exhibit a blend of traditional and modern roles. Women contribute actively as farmers, shopkeepers, MNREGA workers, and private employees, while men engage in government jobs, tailoring, labor, and farming. Annual incomes range from ₹2 to ₹10 lakhs, demonstrating varied economic stability. Elderly family members contribute to household maintenance, highlighting intergenerational cooperation. Education has emerged as a key priority, with families emphasizing schooling, vocational training, and higher studies for their children, including daughters. This focus on education reflects aspirations for upward mobility and progressive values despite the traditional setting.

Household Structures and Gender Roles

The study reveals a spectrum of family arrangements, ranging from traditional polyandrous setups to modern nuclear families. Economic contributions are shared across genders, with women taking pivotal roles in farming and entrepreneurship, while men engage in diverse occupations to sustain the household. This dynamic underscores resilience, as families adapt traditional livelihoods to incorporate modern employment opportunities. Gender roles within these families are often more flexible compared to monogamous households, promoting collaboration and shared responsibilities.

Tradition Meets Modernity

A delicate balance exists between preserving cultural heritage and embracing modern aspirations. While younger generations drive change by pursuing education and skilled occupations, older generations uphold traditional practices. Families strive to integrate government welfare programs and new employment avenues, illustrating

resilience amid socio-economic challenges. However, financial constraints remain for families with limited education and reliance on low-income occupations.

Case Studies

Focus group discussions and case studies provide deeper insights into polyandrous households' diversity and dynamics:

1. **Financially Stable Families:** Examples include a family earning ₹10 lakhs annually through government jobs and farming, emphasizing education and progressive values.
2. **Struggling Families:** Households with incomes as low as ₹2 lakhs face challenges such as low literacy, health issues, and limited economic opportunities.
3. **Collaborative Models:** A rare three-husband family exemplifies shared responsibilities in farming and skilled labour, earning ₹4.5 lakhs annually.
4. **Economic Adaptation:** Families diversify income sources, blending MNREGA work, farming, and private employment to ensure stability.

Across all cases, education emerges as a cornerstone, with families striving for better futures for their children despite socio-economic constraints.

Motivations and Challenges

Polyandry historically served as a strategy to prevent land fragmentation, ensure economic stability, and foster family unity in resource-limited regions. Cultural and religious beliefs reinforced its practice, while shared responsibilities in child-rearing and labour distribution emphasized collaboration. However, modernization and societal changes have shifted perceptions, with younger generation's increasingly viewing polyandry as outdated. Challenges include balancing relationships among multiple partners, societal stigma, and evolving gender roles.

Transformation and Decline

Modern influences such as education, urban migration, and exposure to alternative lifestyles are reshaping polyandry. Younger generations prioritize individual autonomy and gender equality, rejecting traditional practices tied to resource preservation. Economic independence, particularly for women, has redefined family

roles, challenged patriarchal norms and fostered empowerment. Legal barriers and societal shifts further diminish the relevance of polyandry, signalling its transition from necessity to cultural relic.

Conclusion

Polyandry, once a pragmatic solution to socio-economic challenges, now faces decline amid changing societal values. While its legacy of collaboration and resilience remains respected, the tradition is increasingly viewed as incompatible with modern aspirations for equality, personal freedom, and economic mobility. Families in Shillai Tehsil exemplify the complexities of navigating this transition, blending tradition and modernity in pursuit of stability and progress. The evolving dynamics of polyandry reflect broader societal transformations, underscoring the interplay between cultural heritage and modernization in shaping contemporary family structures

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The history of the institution of marriage can be traced back to the dawn of human civilization. Human beings possess certain innate urges, such as hunger, thirst, and sexual desire. These urges must be satisfied in order to avoid rivalry and frustration. To address these needs, society has developed specific rules and regulations. These rules not only help satisfy basic human urges but also promote cooperation among individuals. The institution of marriage specifically deals with regulating the sexual behavior of human beings (Fortunato, 2018).

Mazumdar defines marriage as "a socially sanctioned union of male and female or as a secondary device by society to sanction the union and mating of male and female for the purpose of establishing a household, entering into sexual relations, and procreating and providing care for offspring" (Mazumdar, 1966). The expression "forms of marriage" typically refers to three major types: monogamy, polygamy, and group marriage. Monogamy involves being married to one person at a time (Kanazawa & Still, 1999). Polygamy refers to having more than one marital partner simultaneously and is further divided into polygyny, where one man has two or more wives (Low, 1988), and polyandry, where one woman has two or more husbands (Levine & Sangree, 1980). Group marriage, on the other hand, involves several husbands and wives in a common marital arrangement (Fortunato, 2018).

In Hindu society, marriage, or *Vivaha*, carries a distinct cultural and religious significance. The term "*Vivaha*" refers to the methods of consecrating a marital union (Chauhan & Chauhan, 2015). Hindu scriptures, particularly those attributed to Manu (Doniger, 1991), describe eight forms of marriage: Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa, and Paisacha. These classifications reflect the diverse cultural and religious practices surrounding marriage in ancient Hindu society.

India, with its rich diversity of people and traditions, showcases numerous marital practices, one of which is polyandry. This practice, historically prevalent in various regions of the Indian subcontinent, has unique cultural roots.

1.2 Etymological Meaning of Polyandry. The term "polyandry" is derived from the Greek words "poly" (meaning "many") and "*andros*" (meaning "man"), signifying "many men." K.M. Kapadia defines polyandry as "a form of union in which a woman has more than one husband at a time or in which brothers share a wife or wives in common" (Kapadia, 1966).

The recognized typology of polyandry includes fraternal and non-fraternal forms. Fraternal polyandry, regarded as the most cohesive, involves husbands who are either real brothers or part of the same kin group. In contrast, non-fraternal polyandry involves unrelated husbands (K.E. Starkweather & Hames, 2012). These forms reflect the social structures and cultural norms that shaped polyandrous practices in different societies.

1.2 Historical perspective of polyandry

Polyandry, a practice in which one woman marries multiple husbands, has a rich and complex history in India. While the origins of polyandry in India remain somewhat obscure, evidence suggests its longstanding presence. Ancient Hindu scriptures, such as the *Mahabharata*, reference polyandry, where the Pandavas are described as sharing Draupadi as a wife during their exile. Anthropological studies indicate its prevalence in regions like Jaunsar-Bawar in Uttarakhand as early as the 5th century BCE.

- Although its prevalence has diminished over time, polyandry continues to hold historical significance. References in ancient texts and scriptures provide glimpses into past societies and their unique customs. Research scholars, including Kapadia (1966) and Singh (1988), have explored this institution as practiced in ancient India. The earliest evidence of polyandry is found in Sumer, where relics suggest its existence up to the time of Urukagina (1900 BCE). During this period, women were reportedly owned by two men (Singh, 1988).

- **Hindu Epics:** In India, polyandry as a marital institution has existed since the Vedic period (1600–2000 BCE). The *Rig Veda* provides examples, such as the twin Ashvins and their wife, Surya, the daughter of Savita. Similarly, the Maruts had a common wife, Rodasi, described as young, radiant, and beloved. The Vishvadevas are also noted to have shared a common wife.
- **In the *Mahabharata*,** one of India's most revered epics, the most well-known example of polyandry is the marriage of Draupadi, the princess of Panchala, to the five Pandava brothers following a contest (S. Sharma, 2023). Interpretations of this story vary, with some focusing on the challenges faced by Draupadi and others emphasizing the unique social structures and familial dynamics represented by her marriage.



Fig. 1.1: Draupadi and the Pandavas from Mahabharata

- **Tibetan Texts:** There is no Buddhist or Tibetan religious scripture that explicitly discusses polyandry. It is not a doctrinal or religiously sanctioned institution. Rather, polyandry in Tibetan society is a cultural and social practice, shaped by ecological, economic, and familial needs. Our understanding of Tibetan polyandry comes primarily from

ethnographic studies, historical records, and legal documents, not from sacred or philosophical texts.

- Anthropologists such as Melvyn Goldstein, Nancy Levine, and Prince Peter have conducted extensive research on polyandry in Tibet and Himalayan regions. They have described it as a part of the social and economic structure, particularly aimed at preserving land and maintaining family unity.
- **Plutarch's Lives:** The renowned Greek biographer Plutarch provides mentions of polyandry in different cultural contexts, notably among the Spartans and certain Celtic tribes. In Spartan society, polyandry was occasionally practiced to ensure the continuation of family lineage and to manage population size within a militaristic framework.
- Among Celtic tribes, it was tied to communal living and shared responsibilities, reflecting a broader sense of familial and societal bonds. Plutarch's accounts shed light on the diverse motivations behind polyandry, including practical considerations like inheritance, resource distribution, and social cohesion, as well as the perceptions and acceptance of the practice within these communities.

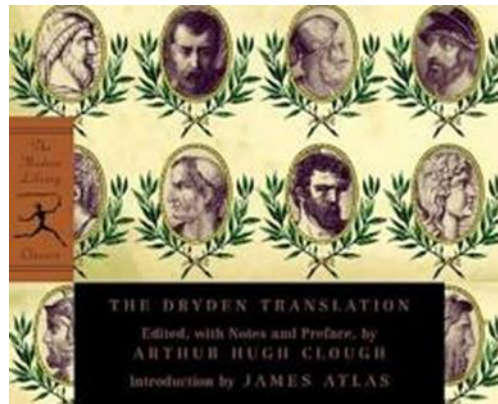


Fig. 1.2: Plutarch's Lives

- **Strabo's Geographer (c.7 BCE-23 CE):** The ancient Greek geographer Strabo provides an account of polyandry as a customary practice among certain Indian communities. His descriptions, though shaped by the

biases of his cultural lens and the indirect nature of his sources, remain an important historical record. Strabo's observations not only highlight the existence of polyandry but also suggest its acceptance within specific social frameworks, potentially linked to regional traditions, resource management, or familial structures. His work offers a rare glimpse into how such practices were perceived and recorded by external observers, underscoring the diversity of marital customs in ancient India.

- **Indigenous texts:** The Navajo Creation Myth tells the story of Changing Woman, a central figure in Navajo cosmology, which is united with two deities: the Sun and the First Man. Although not strictly an example of polyandry, this narrative highlights the cultural acceptance of non-monogamous marital arrangements within certain indigenous belief systems. The myth reflects the Navajo's broader spiritual and symbolic understanding of relationships and their connection to the natural and divine realms. *Reichard, G. A. (1974). Navajo Religion: A Study of Symbolism. Princeton University Press.*



Fig. 1.3: Changing Woman from Navajo mythology

- **Trobriand Islanders:** While the Trobriand Islanders of Papua New Guinea practiced matrilineal kinship rather than true polyandry, their social structure allowed women to have multiple sexual partners. This highlights the nuanced spectrum of marital and familial arrangements observed across different cultures, challenging conventional definitions

of marriage and partnership. *Malinowski, B. (1929). The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia. London: Routledge.*

- **Polyandry around the World:** Polyandry has been reported among various communities across different parts of the world, including Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and indigenous communities in the Americas. The Guanches of the Canary Islands practiced polyandry until their eventual disappearance. It has also been documented in regions such as the Canadian Arctic, Mongolia, China, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tibet, and India.
- According to data from Murdock's *Ethnographic Atlas*, which records the marital composition of 1,231 societies between 1960 and 1980, 186 societies were monogamous, 453 practiced occasional polygyny, 588 exhibited more frequent polygyny, and only 4 were recorded as polyandrous. However, polyandry is less rare than these figures suggest, as the study considered only 28 societies in the Himalayan Mountains. More recent studies have identified over 50 other societies worldwide practicing polyandry.
- **Polyandry in Ancient and Contemporary India:** Alberuni, the Muslim scholar-traveler, believed that polyandry existed in India during the 11th century A.D. Ethnic groups practicing polyandry in India included the Jat Sikhs and Gujjars of Punjab, the Bodh and Mag of Ladakh, the Map of Kashmir (Jammu & Kashmir), the Pangwala of Pangi Valley, the Siraj and Kanet of Kullu, the Kinnaura of Kinnaur, the Lahuals of Lahul-Spiti in Spiti, and the people of Sirmour (regions such as Pangi Valley, Kullu, Kinnaur, Lahul, Spiti, and Sirmour in Himachal Pradesh). It was also practiced by the Khasas of Jaunsar-Bawar in Dehradun district, Uttarakhand.
- In the Northeastern states, polyandry was reported among the Bhotia and Lepchas of Sikkim and the Gallong, Dafla, Ramo, and Khampa of Arunachal Pradesh. In South India, it was found among the Toda and Kota of the Nilgiri Hills and the Nayar, Iravas, Mannan, Panans, Vilkurpas, Kaniyans, Panikkams, and Thandans of Kerala (Raha & Coomar, 1987).

- “Polyandry was in former days directly encouraged by the state through penalties imposed on partition. When a set of brothers divided movable property, half of the entire share was appropriated by the state, and the division of immovable property was not officially recognized,” reported the Punjab States Gazetteer, Simla Hill States, 1910 (Company, 1998).
- After British colonization, legal frameworks began to shape the future of polyandry. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 outlawed the practice for Hindus, with exceptions for certain communities like those in the Jaunsar-Bawar region. This legal intervention, along with changing social norms and economic prosperity, further accelerated the decline of polyandry in India.
- **Initial Adoption of Polyandry:** There are several theories explaining the initial adoption of polyandry. One key factor is resource scarcity. In harsh environments, such as the Himalayas, where arable land is limited and winters are severe, pooling resources and labor through a shared family unit helped ensure survival and economic stability. Another important factor is inheritance practices.
- Polyandry helped keep wealth and land undivided within one family, preventing fragmentation and ensuring the continuity of lineage and property. Additionally, social structure played a role in its adoption. In some communities, particularly those without a complex caste system, polyandry provided a means to maintain social harmony and prevent rivalry among men over limited resources.

1.4 Motivations behind Polyandry

Polyandry, the practice of a woman marrying multiple husbands simultaneously, has fascinating roots and intricate motivations, shaped by various historical and cultural contexts. Below are some potential reasons behind its existence:

- **Resource scarcity and land inheritance:** In resource-scarce environments, particularly those reliant on agriculture, fraternal polyandry offered a practical strategy for pooling labor, sharing resources, and preventing the fragmentation of landholdings (Szala & Shackelford, 2022). This reduced

competition for limited resources and ensured greater economic stability for all family members. By maintaining property within strong patrilineal inheritance systems, polyandry allowed brothers to share one wife and keep all offspring within the same lineage, preventing the division of family land and wealth—an essential factor for maintaining social status and power (Jahan, 2014).

- **Demographic factors:** Skewed sex ratios, with more women than men due to factors like warfare or female infanticide, could incentivize polyandry as a way to ensure all women found partners and reproduced, contributing to the continuity of the community (Childs, 2003). In societies with high risks of warfare or dangerous occupations, polyandry also provided a social safety net for widows and children. With multiple husbands, the family was less likely to be left destitute if one husband died or became incapacitated.
- **Cultural and religious beliefs:** In some cultures, polyandry held spiritual significance, believed to enhance fertility, ensure lineage continuity, or appease deities. For example, certain Tibetan Buddhist communities practiced polyandry to avoid disrupting the spiritual development of monks who married. In other societies, polyandry fostered strong bonds between brothers, reinforcing brotherhood and cooperation within the family unit (K.E. Starkweather & Hames, 2012). This also helped strengthen social cohesion, as children of the same mother shared multiple fathers, creating a broader network of familial connections.
- **Gender roles and agency:** While narratives often focus on female subjugation within polyandry, some communities offered women unique forms of agency and control. In certain contexts, wives exercised veto rights over husbands, held influence over household decisions, and enjoyed greater flexibility in marital arrangements compared to monogamous societies. The presence of multiple husbands could alter power dynamics within the family, allowing wives to exercise greater bargaining power and autonomy in specific situations. However, it is crucial to critically assess and

acknowledge the possible power imbalances and vulnerabilities women might face within polyandrous structures.

1.5 Adaptations and Variations

Historically, polyandry has taken two primary forms: fraternal, where brothers share a wife, and non-fraternal, where a woman marries unrelated men either simultaneously or sequentially. The motivations and social dynamics behind these forms differ, with fraternal polyandry often tied to resource management and the preservation of family land through inheritance. Over time, practicing communities have adapted polyandrous traditions to align with modern legal frameworks. For instance, some couples register monogamous marriages for legal benefits while continuing polyandrous practices informally within their cultural norms.

- The specific form of polyandry practiced in India was shaped by several factors. Environmental conditions played a significant role; in resource-scarce regions like the Himalayas, fraternal polyandry provided economic stability, while in areas with more abundant resources, non-fraternal forms were influenced by cultural beliefs and social structures (Pizzari & Wedell, 2013). Inheritance practices were equally crucial, with agrarian communities favoring fraternal polyandry to keep landholdings intact within families. Cultural and religious influences, such as references in the *Mahabharata* and local customs, further shaped the acceptance and variations of polyandry in specific communities.
- Polyandrous Variations in India: Polyandry, the marital practice where a woman marries multiple husbands simultaneously, has manifested in diverse forms across India's culturally rich and varied landscapes (Rahimzadeh, 2020). While the underlying objectives—such as ensuring economic stability, preserving inheritance, or promoting social harmony—remained consistent, the specific practices differed significantly between regions. Fraternal polyandry, predominantly found in the Himalayan regions of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and parts of Jammu and Kashmir, was one of the most prevalent forms. In this arrangement, all brothers in a family

shared one wife, ensuring undivided landholdings and collaborative labor in challenging agricultural and pastoral environments.

- Social roles were often hierarchically structured, with the eldest brother acting as the household head while younger brothers contributed primarily to labor. Women in such households could exercise considerable influence, managing domestic responsibilities and playing a role in family decisions. Cultural influences, such as references in the *Mahabharata*, provided a degree of legitimacy to these practices, with traditions like ‘Devara’ in Uttarakhand emphasizing equality among husbands.
- Beyond fraternal arrangements, variations such as adelphic polyandry and non-fraternal polyandry also existed, though less commonly. Adelphic polyandry extended beyond biological brothers to include stepbrothers or adopted siblings, as seen in regions like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam (Peters & Hunt, 1975). This form emerged in contexts where land preservation was less critical, such as pastoral or complex family structures, but often led to inheritance and paternity disputes, causing potential discord. Non-fraternal polyandry practiced among tribes like the Toda of Tamil Nadu, involved women marrying unrelated men, either simultaneously or in succession (K. E. Starkweather & Hames, 2012). This rare form was rooted in specific cultural beliefs and often exposed women to vulnerabilities and exploitation. While fraternal polyandry remains the most common globally, other forms of polyandry are relatively rare and culturally specific.

1.6 Significance and Uniqueness of Polyandrous Traditions

Polyandry, a marital arrangement where a woman marries multiple husbands simultaneously, has intrigued anthropologists and historians for centuries. Although rare in the Western world, this tradition has persisted across diverse cultures and time periods, serving as an adaptive strategy to unique environmental, social, and cultural conditions. Its significance lies in how it enabled communities to navigate harsh environments, maintain social harmony, and ensure economic stability. In regions like the Himalayas and Tibetan Plateau, where resources were scarce and weather unpredictable, polyandry emerged as a survival mechanism. By pooling resources and labor, families managed

larger landholdings without fragmentation, optimizing agricultural output and ensuring food security (Taylor et al., 2014). Multiple husbands sharing labor responsibilities bolstered resilience against economic hardships, enabling families to cope with erratic harvests and harsh winters (Neff & Svensson, 2013).

Beyond economic advantages, polyandry also held deep cultural and social significance. It preserved wealth and land within family units, ensuring lineage continuity, which was vital in societies where ancestral traditions and property held high cultural value (Smith, 1998). Polyandry also minimized conflict among men over women and resources, promoting social cohesion in resource-limited or conflict-prone settings. Despite varying power dynamics, women in polyandrous families often had significant agency, participating in decision-making, managing households, and maintaining control over marital relations, challenging the patriarchal norms of the time.

1.7 Roles within Polyandrous Marriages and Modern Transformations

- The unique dynamics of polyandrous families highlighted distinct roles for husbands and wives, fostering cooperation but also occasionally leading to tension. Husbands often divided labor and responsibilities, with seniority or specific skills influencing their roles within the household. Women, as central figures in these arrangements, navigated a complex interplay of authority and collaboration, often balancing the expectations of multiple spouses. However, modernization, legal reforms, and changing gender norms have led to a sharp decline in polyandrous practices in many regions (Levine & Silk, 1997). Increased economic opportunities, better access to education, and evolving social structures have shifted preferences toward monogamy.
- Nevertheless, remnants of polyandry persist in certain communities, offering valuable insights into human adaptation and social organization. Exploring the roles of individuals within these arrangements and the transformation of polyandrous traditions underscores the diversity of human societal structures and their responses to environmental and cultural challenges. Understanding

these practices not only enriches our knowledge of human history but also broadens our perspective on the ways societies adapt to their unique circumstances.

- **The Wife's Sphere:** In polyandrous marriages, the wife often held the central role in managing domestic responsibilities, including cooking, cleaning, and raising children. In instances where co-wives were present, these duties were shared, requiring significant coordination and collaboration. Navigating relationships with multiple husbands demanded emotional intelligence and social adeptness, as the wife often acted as a mediator to maintain harmony and prevent conflicts among her husband's (Haddix, 2001). Sexual relationships varied across communities—some adhered to rotational schedules, while others allowed equal relations with all husbands. In addition to domestic roles, many wives contributed to agricultural labor or other income-generating activities, thereby enhancing the family's economic stability.
- **The Husbands' Responsibilities:** Husbands in polyandrous families pooled their resources and labor to support farming, animal husbandry, or other economic ventures, ensuring survival in challenging environments. Sharing a wife often reduced competition over land and resources, promoting family continuity within established lineage structures (Leach, 1955). Child-rearing responsibilities were typically shared among the husbands, creating a collaborative upbringing environment. Power dynamics within these families varied; in some instances, the eldest brother held more authority, while others emphasized cooperative decision-making. Despite societal norms prescribing roles, women in polyandrous arrangements could exercise considerable agency, influencing family decisions and managing finances. However, these marriages were not without challenges—jealousy, favoritism, and power imbalances sometimes led to conflict and emotional strain. While women occasionally faced exploitation or marginalization, community traditions and customs often played a vital role in regulating behavior, resolving disputes, and maintaining social cohesion within polyandrous families.

1.8 Regional Variations in Polyandry

- **The Himalayan Stronghold:** In the Jaunsar-Bawar region of Uttarakhand, fraternal polyandry has long been a cornerstone of cultural traditions. This practice minimizes land division, ensuring economic stability for families living in the demanding Himalayan terrain (Jahan, 2014; Patel & Upadhyay, 2011). Similarly, the Kinnaur Valley in Himachal Pradesh embraced fraternal polyandry to safeguard ancestral landholdings and foster familial economic solidarity. These practices underscore the adaptive strategies employed in high-altitude regions where resources are scarce, and survival hinges on collective effort (Gautam & Kshatriya, 2011; Rahimzadeh, 2020).
- **Beyond the Himalayas:** Polyandry's reach extended beyond the Himalayan region, with notable examples such as the Toda tribe in Tamil Nadu. Nestled in the Nilgiri Hills, the Toda practiced a distinctive non-fraternal polyandry, allowing women to marry multiple unrelated men, often sequentially, rooted in unique cultural and social frameworks (Govindaraj, 2021; Peter, 1953). In Kerala, the matrilineal Nayar community historically exhibited a form of non-fraternal polyandry, where women held significant autonomy and inherited property. While this practice has largely faded, it reflected the community's unconventional gender norms and social structures (Gough, 1965; Wijesekera, 1967).
- **Scattered Traces:** Outside these prominent examples, traces of polyandry persist in various forms. The Gaddi shepherds of Himachal Pradesh practiced a flexible version of polyandry driven by economic necessity and the collective management of livestock (Bhasin, 2013). Similarly, some Rajput clans in Rajasthan historically engaged in fraternal polyandry, although its prevalence has diminished due to land reforms and evolving societal norms (Berreman, 1962).

1.9 Gender Dynamics in Polyandrous Families

Polyandry offers a fascinating lens to examine the intricate gender dynamics within families. Far from being a monolithic practice, it reveals a spectrum of possibilities shaped by cultural norms, economic necessities, and individual personalities (Luintel, 2004). In these arrangements, women often navigated complex roles, balancing authority, agency, and mediation among their husbands. Meanwhile, men negotiated their positions within shared familial structures, striving for harmony and continuity. These dynamics challenge simplistic assumptions about gender power relations, showcasing a unique interplay of cooperation and conflict influenced by the broader socio-cultural and economic contexts.

- **Shifting Sands of Power:** In communities, such as the Toda tribe of Tamil Nadu, women enjoyed a notable position in choosing partners, negotiating marital terms, and initiating separations. These rights granted them significant influence within their family units (Reddy & Reddy, 2000). However, patriarchal norms often restricted women's autonomy, especially in regions practicing fraternal polyandry, where the eldest brother typically held authority. Women in such settings frequently occupied subordinate roles, sometimes facing marginalization. Power dynamics within polyandrous families were far from static, often shifting due to factors like age, personality, economic contributions, and children's kinship ties. These shifts fostered intricate negotiations and alliances, reflecting the fluid nature of authority in polyandrous households.
- **Cooperation, Conflict, and Cultural Intersections:** Polyandrous families often thrived on shared responsibilities, with members collectively contributing to domestic duties, childcare, and economic activities. Despite the benefits of cooperation, these arrangements were not without challenges. Jealousy, resentment, and power struggles occasionally disrupted family harmony, necessitating strong communication and conflict resolution skills. Cultural norms heavily influenced gender roles within these families, often resulting in imbalances—women frequently bore domestic burdens while men retained greater control over economic resources and decisions.

Variations in customs and traditions shaped sexual relations, inheritance rights, and parenting practices, directly impacting power dynamics. Strong personalities and individual strategies could redefine traditional roles, allowing some family members to challenge or consolidate power.

- **Beyond Generalizations: Reflections and Lessons:** Gender dynamics in polyandry resist broad generalizations, as individual experiences within such families were shaped by community norms and personal circumstances. Women and men alike navigated a spectrum of challenges and opportunities, balancing cooperation and autonomy with the risks of marginalization and conflict. The legacy of polyandry underscores the importance of respecting diverse family structures and reevaluating assumptions about marriage. This marital arrangement highlights the value of cooperation, shared responsibilities, and the renegotiation of traditional gender roles. Whether in monogamous or polyandrous families, fostering equitable relationships demands open communication, recognition of individual agency, and efforts to address power imbalances for sustainable harmony. Polyandry, though rare today, thrived in the past due to robust social structures that facilitated its existence.
- Outside its functional role in resource management and lineage preservation, this marital arrangement was deeply embedded in cultural practices, legal systems, and community networks. In certain communities, polyandrous marriages were officially recognized and documented, ensuring clarity and stability within family units. Legal recognition addressed concerns such as paternity, inheritance, and power dynamics, preventing disputes and maintaining order. In regions like the Himalayas, fraternal polyandry prevented the division of land, keeping family holdings intact, while in matrilineal societies like the Nayar community, property passed through the female line irrespective of marital arrangements. Customary legal systems played a vital role in resolving disputes within polyandrous families, establishing protocols for inheritance and marital obligations to ensure fairness and continuity.

1.10 Social Structures Accommodated and Supported Polyandry

Polyandry, though less common today, remains a fascinating marital arrangement supported by diverse social structures throughout history. Beyond its practical role in resource management and lineage continuity, polyandry thrived within robust cultural practices, legal frameworks, and community support systems. In some communities, polyandrous marriages were legally recognized, providing stability and clarity for all parties involved. These legal structures are often intertwined with specific inheritance regulations. For instance, fraternal polyandry in the Himalayas ensured that landholdings remained intact within families, while matrilineal systems among the Nayar community allowed property and lineage to pass through female lines regardless of marital structures. Additionally, legal frameworks addressed critical issues such as paternity, inheritance rights, and power dynamics, maintaining social order and resolving conflicts.

Cultural norms also played a significant role in supporting polyandry. Marriages were legitimized through rituals and ceremonies that incorporated blessings, symbolic gestures, or communal celebrations, embedding these unions within the social fabric. Clearly defined roles within polyandrous families ensured smooth functioning, with husbands and wives contributing to domestic duties, childcare, and economic activities. Community networks further reinforced these family structures, with elders serving as advisors and mediators, and communal resources providing support during times of need.

Despite its decline, polyandry continues to be practiced in some parts of the world. However, it faces significant challenges. Social stigma rooted in patriarchal norms, religious beliefs, and concerns about inheritance often marginalizes polyandrous families. Managing relationships with multiple partners can lead to jealousy and conflict, requiring effective communication and emotional intelligence to maintain harmony. The lack of legal recognition in most countries complicates issues such as inheritance, child custody, and access to benefits, while economic changes in many regions make polyandry less viable compared to monogamy.

1.11 Challenges and Continuities for Polyandry

Polyandry, the practice of a woman having multiple husbands, has existed across various societies throughout history but is now relatively rare. Despite its decline, it continues to

be practiced in certain communities and has sparked growing interest due to its unique complexities and potential benefits. However, polyandry faces significant challenges. Social stigma, rooted in religious beliefs, patriarchal norms, and concerns about paternity and inheritance, often leads to disapproval both within and outside the cultures where it is practiced. Managing relationships with multiple partners can also create complexities, with jealousy and conflict being common issues. Navigating these dynamics requires effective communication, well-defined boundaries, and emotional intelligence. Moreover, polyandry's lack of legal recognition in most countries presents additional difficulties, particularly in areas such as inheritance, child custody, and access to social benefits. Economic viability is another concern, as polyandry may be less sustainable in resource-scarce settings or where land ownership is restricted. Despite these challenges, polyandry persists in some communities, largely due to its deep cultural roots and traditions. In these settings, polyandry often strengthens social bonds, promotes cooperation, and ensures the well-being of children.

1.12 Factors behind the Decline of Polyandry

Polyandry, the practice of a woman marrying multiple husbands simultaneously, was once prevalent in various cultures worldwide. However, it has witnessed a significant decline in recent times. Understanding the reasons behind this transition requires a detailed exploration of external pressures and internal changes within the communities that once practiced this unique marital arrangement.

External Forces:

- **Modernization and Economic Changes:** Modernization and economic reforms have played a significant role in reducing the reliance on polyandry. Increased availability of land, reduced dependence on agriculture, and broader economic opportunities outside the family unit diminished the necessity of fraternal polyandry as a survival strategy and resource-pooling mechanism.

- **State Regulation and Legal Frameworks:** The introduction of legal systems favoring monogamy and individual property rights in many regions undermined the legitimacy and practicality of polyandrous marriages. These changes often created legal complexities and disadvantages for families practicing this tradition.
- **Societal Stigma and Changing Values:** The rise of individualism and the growing preference for nuclear family structures in many societies have contributed to increased social stigma and disapproval of polyandry. Cultural shifts, often influenced by religious and moral arguments, further eroded acceptance and practice of this marital tradition.

Internal Shifts

- **Evolving Gender Roles and Women's Empowerment:** With improved access to education and opportunities, women have increasingly sought individual autonomy and control over their marital choices. This shift has sometimes resulted in resistance to the limitations and potential inequalities inherent in polyandrous marriages.
- **Demographic Changes and Population Growth:** Demographic shifts and population growth in some regions have lessened the pressures that once necessitated resource pooling and inheritance strategies like fraternal polyandry. As a result, alternative family structures became more viable and sustainable.
- **Cultural Adaptation and Internal Reassessment:** Communities practicing polyandry have not been passive in the face of external changes. Many engaged in internal debates and adaptations, choosing to modify or abandon aspects of the tradition while preserving others to align with evolving social realities and internal dynamics.
- **Cultural Preservation and Legal Frameworks:** The decline of polyandry raises important questions about cultural preservation and the need for legal

frameworks that respect cultural diversity while ensuring individual rights and equality. Balancing these considerations remains a complex challenge in many societies.

1.13 Theoretical frameworks

"Transition in Polyandrous Marriage Tradition: A Study in Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh," the appropriate theoretical framework should combine functionalism, cultural adaptation theories, and local resource-based ecological perspectives to contextualize the specific changes in Shillai Tehsil.

- **Functionalism**

Malinowski's theory of functionalism can be applied to understand how polyandry historically functioned to meet the needs of the community in Shillai Tehsil. The practice likely arose to address challenges unique to the region, such as limited cultivable land, harsh climatic conditions, and resource scarcity. This theory helps explain how the practice maintained social stability by preventing land fragmentation and promoting economic cooperation among family members. As socio-economic and infrastructural advancements—such as improved transportation, education, and modern healthcare—reduced the dependency on these traditional structures, the functional relevance of polyandry has diminished, leading to its gradual decline.

- **Cultural Adaptation and Modernization Theories**

Cultural adaptation theories (Peters & Hunt, 1975; Singh, 1988) highlight how polyandry evolved in response to specific environmental, social, and economic pressures in high-altitude Himalayan regions like Shillai. However, with modernization, these pressures have lessened. The spread of modern education shifts in gender roles, and enhanced economic opportunities are causing the community to adapt and transition away from traditional polyandrous practices. This theory helps link local changes to broader global

influences, showing how external forces such as state policies and legal frameworks promoting monogamy further contribute to this transition.

- **Ecological and Resource-Based Perspectives**

Theories like those of Westermarck (1926) and Cassidy & Lee (1989) emphasize the ecological basis of polyandry, rooted in resource management strategies. In Shillai, where the availability of land and agricultural productivity may historically have been constrained, fraternal polyandry helped keep family resources intact. As economic reforms, population growth, and diversification of income sources—such as migration and government employment—alter the reliance on agriculture, this ecological necessity diminishes, prompting transitions in marital traditions.

Integration for Shillai Tehsil

In the case of Shillai, where specific geographic, socio-cultural, and economic conditions have shaped the persistence of polyandry, this framework effectively combines:

- **Functionalism** to analyze its past relevance,
- **Cultural adaptation theories** to explain shifts due to modernization, and
- **Ecological perspectives** to understand the resource-based rationale for polyandry's emergence and decline.

Together, these theories provide a robust lens to examine the historical prevalence and ongoing transformation of polyandrous marriage traditions in Shillai Tehsil.

1.14 Conceptual Framework

The study explores the transition in polyandrous marriage traditions in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, focusing on the socio-cultural, economic, and legal factors influencing this change. Polyandry, traditionally practiced as a means of preserving family resources and maintaining social stability, has deep roots in the region. However, modernizations, shifts in economic structures, and changing societal norms have

disrupted the traditional rationale for such practices. This research seeks to understand how these factors interplay to reshape the dynamics of polyandrous unions, examining the perspectives of individuals and communities involved. The study also considers how external influences, such as education, migration, and exposure to mainstream cultural values, contribute to the evolving attitudes towards this tradition.

Grounded in the theoretical frameworks of cultural change and social adaptation, the study will analyze the role of intergenerational differences and the influence of state policies on family structures. It will investigate how younger generations perceive polyandry, the implications for gender roles and familial authority, and the broader impact on community identity. By combining qualitative methods, such as interviews and case studies, with historical and contextual analysis, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the transition in polyandrous practices in Shillai Tehsil, highlighting the intersections of tradition, modernity, and cultural survival.

1.15 Statement of the Problem

This study aims to delve into the complexities of polyandrous marriage by examining its origins, motivations, and the socio-cultural factors that sustain it. It seeks to understand the roles, responsibilities, and status of both women and men within polyandrous marriages. Furthermore, the study explores the evolving dynamics of this marital tradition in contemporary times, highlighting the changes it undergoes in response to shifting societal, economic, and cultural influences. By addressing these aspects, the study intends to provide a holistic understanding of polyandry and its transformation over time.

1.16 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on examining the reasons and circumstances that contribute to the existence of the polyandrous system. It also aims to analyze the changes occurring within societies practicing polyandry. Given the vastness of the subject, the research is geographically limited to Shillai Tehsil in the Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh.

1.17 Significance of the Study

This research is significant as it represents the first detailed and systematic study of polyandry in Shillai Tehsil. The findings and conclusions will hold substantial archival value and provide a foundational framework for academics, sociologists, policymakers, and other experts. It will also offer insights into the evolutionary dynamics of this socio-cultural practice, facilitating further studies on the subject.

CHAPTER – II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter offers literature insights on the past and contemporary research carried out in the area of polyandry, in India and elsewhere, offering a critical glimpse of the topic. The literature review serves the purpose of addressing the general purpose for using literature in determining the methods and design for the research. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that a literature review assists in strengthening the context if a certain topic is worth researching. Polyandry is one such complex research claim that is either on the verge of extinction or is exceedingly criticized. On the other hand, a literature review helps comprehend ways in which a researcher could border the scope of inquiry and compare results with findings of past and ongoing similar research.

In qualitative research, Creswell and Creswell (2018) observe that a literature review assists a researcher to learn from participants, rather than just answering questions for the research. Cooper (2010), in his discussion, cites that literature reviews, therefore, integrate what has been done previously and create possibilities for previous research. This chapter serves the purpose of organizing the relevant past and contemporary studies that discuss polyandry in the changing global socio-economic and highly integrated cultural scenarios.

Polyandry, a marital system where one woman has multiple husbands, has been a subject of scholarly interest due to its rarity and cultural specificity. Across different societies and historical periods, polyandry has been shaped by ecological, economic, and socio-cultural factors. While the practice is most prominently associated with regions like the Indian Himalayas, Tibet, and Ladakh, its manifestations and significance vary widely. Recent studies provide a comprehensive understanding of polyandry's persistence, decline, and implications within diverse communities. This review synthesizes insights from various scholars to explore polyandry's multifaceted dimensions and its trajectory in a rapidly modernizing world.

2.1 Thematic Analysis of Literature Review

➤ **Historical and Cultural Underpinnings**

Singh (1988) and Ghosh (1987) explore the historical and cultural roots of polyandry, connecting its practice to ethno-cultural heritage and societal norms of the Vedic Aryans and Lahaul regions. Chauhan and Chauhan (2015) provide a comparative analysis of traditional marriage systems, reflecting continuity and transformation within cultural contexts. Jahan (2014) and Grent (2002) emphasize the mythological and identity-based significance of polyandry in certain communities, linking it to cultural continuity and collective memory.

➤ **Ecological and Economic Adaptations**

Raha and Coomar (1987), Samal et al. (1996), and Gautam and Kshatriya (2011) focus on polyandry as an adaptation to ecological and economic conditions, particularly in high-altitude regions like Kinnaur and Jaunsar-Bawar. These studies reveal how resource constraints, adverse sex ratios, and collective labor requirements have shaped this practice as a mechanism for survival and economic sustainability. Gurung (2012) and Pokharel (2020) extend this perspective by examining the evolution of polyandry in response to modern economic and ecological pressures.

➤ **Gender Dynamics and Legal Frameworks**

Agarwal (1994), Arun (1999), and Das and Kamthan (2023) highlight the intersection of polyandry with gender inequities, particularly in the context of property rights and legal systems. These studies reveal how gendered power dynamics influence women's roles in polyandrous unions, often perpetuating social inequalities. Machoko (2017) and Mukherjee and Das (2014) argue for recognizing polyandry's potential to challenge patriarchal norms, advocating for legal reforms to address gender imbalances.

➤ **Biological and Evolutionary Perspectives**

Starkweather and Hames (2012), Childs (2003), and Arnqvist and Nilsson (2000) analyze polyandry through evolutionary and reproductive lenses, identifying its impact on fertility, genetic diversity, and population fitness. Fedorka and Mousseau (2002) and Beall and Goldstein (1981) provide evidence of polyandry's bio-cultural adaptations, particularly in managing reproductive trade-offs in harsh environments.

This compilation of scholarly perspectives provides a multi-faceted understanding of polyandry and its implications across various cultures, ecological contexts, and sociological frameworks. Here's a synthesis of key insights drawn from the provided studies:

➤ **Cultural and Sociological Dynamics**

- **Kinnauri Society** (*Rahimzadeh, 2020*): The shift from traditional polyandrous systems to nuclear family setups has enhanced opportunities for women's education and economic involvement, reflecting the adaptive nature of marital structures in changing economies.
- **Tamil Nadu Tribes** (*Govindaraj, 2021*): The Toda and Irula tribes illustrate how traditional marriage systems are deeply intertwined with cultural identity and survival, maintaining unique practices despite external influences.

➤ **Biological and Ecological Perspectives**

- **High Altitudes and Survival** (*Gautam & Kshatriya, 2011*): Polyandry in high-altitude regions serves as a biological and cultural adaptation, optimizing reproductive success and resource management.

- **Socio-biological Trade-offs** (*Beall & Goldstein, 1981*): Tibetan fraternal polyandry, while reducing individual fitness, underscores sacrifices made for collective familial stability.

➤ **Sexual Selection and Reproductive Strategies**

- **Evolutionary Implications** (*Parker & Birkhead, 2013*): Polyandry alters sexual selection dynamics, reducing male dominance while enabling cryptic female choice and sperm competition.
- **Broader Patterns in Birds and Humans** (*Hosken & Stockley, 2003*): Female reproductive strategies maximize genetic quality through polyandry, despite risks such as disease and predation.
- **Indonesian Legal Systems** (*Asmuni et al., 2020*): Polyandry is strictly prohibited in Islamic law and Indonesian criminal law, reflecting tensions between cultural practices and modern legal systems.
- **American Polygamy** (*Faucon, 2014*): Proposed legal frameworks aim to balance religious motivations and societal norms, focusing on equitable regulations for polygamous unions.

➤ **Gender Dynamics and Economic Influences**

- **Changing Marital Norms in India** (*Reed, 2022*): Dual-income partnerships challenge traditional gender roles, promoting egalitarian divisions of labor and reshaping societal norms.
- **Women's Status in Subsistence Economies** (*Bhasin, 2013*): In pastoral societies, women's economic contributions elevate their social standing, despite male dominance in public domains.

➤ **Theoretical and Historical Insights**

- **Polyandry as a Social Mechanism** (*Luintel, 2004*): It mitigates risks of household division, bride price pressures, and economic friction, showcasing its role as a unifying strategy.
- **Historical Evolution of Marital Systems** (*Fortunato, 2018; Goldstein, 1978*): Marriage systems evolve alongside ecological and social changes, highlighting their role in resource transfer and cultural continuity.

➤ **Comparative and Ethnographic Analyses**

- **Nyinba of Nepal** (*Levine & Silk, 1997*): Fraternal polyandry reflects cultural value yet faces contradictions like marital breakdowns, revealing complexities in its perpetuation.
- **Cross-Cultural Studies** (*Levine & Sangree, 1980*): Comparative analyses uncover universal challenges and adaptive traits of polyandrous societies.

This collection underscores the diversity of polyandry as a marital system, shaped by ecological, economic, cultural, and legal forces. The studies collectively emphasize its adaptive functions while highlighting tensions with modern societal norms and legal frameworks. Polyandry, a complex marital arrangement where one woman is married to multiple men, has been extensively studied across different cultures and time periods. Scholars have explored its sociological, economic, and psychological implications, often juxtaposing it with monogamous and polygamous systems.

2.2 Chronological Literature Review

Radcliffe-Brown (1941) interprets polyandry not as a cultural anomaly but as a social solution aimed at preserving fraternal unity and joint household stability. He suggests that such marriage systems are shaped by economic and ecological pressures—especially where land is scarce. His theory resonates with Himalayan regions, where shared landholding among brothers helps sustain family units. Rather than dismissing polyandry as unusual, Radcliffe-Brown presents it as a functional social structure designed to

maintain cohesion and resource-sharing. His framework helps explain why polyandry persists in areas like Shillai, grounding it in practical needs rather than exotic tradition.

Berreman (1962) examined the dynamics and organization of fraternal polyandry among the Pahari people in the Himalayas in his seminal ethnographic research, "Himalayan Polyandry and the Domestic Cycle." In biologically limited regions, he showed how polyandry functioned as a logical and adaptive system for preserving household continuity, avoiding land fragmentation, and preserving economic stability. Kinship, economy, and ecology are closely related, as demonstrated by Berreman's work, which also demonstrates how family structure adapts to material and demographic demands. Similar ecological and familial factors have historically influenced the persistence and slow transition of polyandrous marriage customs in Shillai Tehsil, where his findings offer a basis for the current study.

Y.S. Parmar's *Polyandry in the Himalayas* (1975) offers a balanced, analytical perspective on the practice of polyandry, rejecting uninformed or moralistic critiques. He highlights how economic necessities like land preservation, inheritance laws, and subsistence-based livelihood systems are at the core of polyandrous rituals. Parmar contends that in order to avoid surface change, any attempt to regulate or phase down polyandry must address these underlying economic reasons. The author offers a more sophisticated explanation of how such organizations change in response to environmental and survival needs by placing polyandry within its historical and socioeconomic context. This method is especially useful for dispelling social stigma and identifying the practical reasoning for conventional marriage contracts, providing important insight into the dynamics influencing change in modern settings such as Shillai.

Goldstein (1978) highlighted the impact of ecological and social factors on marriage systems, including polyandry, in high-altitude regions. This research offers a fundamental realization of the environmental justification for polyandry's continued pervasiveness, which is directly applicable to the socio-ecological circumstances in Shillai Tehsil.

Beall and Goldstein (1981) revealed that Tibetan fraternal polyandry in Nepal involves reproductive sacrifices, lowering allele transmission probabilities.

Ghosh (1987) states that polyandry in the Lahaul region is a reflection of the ethno-cultural heritage of the population, according to a thorough analysis. With significant parallels for comprehending the transitional character of polyandry in areas such as Shillai Tehsil, the study ascribes its slow decline to changing societal mechanisms.

Raha and Coomar's (1987) research highlights that polyandry is a reasonable response to certain natural limitations, including little arable land and severe weather, rather than just a cultural quirk. Raha (1986) goes on to say that in areas like Kinnaur, the high-altitude economy required a special division of labor among adult males, which in turn facilitated the development and maintenance of fraternal polyandry. Understanding how these marriage systems emerge in response to demographic, vocational, and environmental forces rather than independently is made possible by these discoveries. This viewpoint aids in dismantling oversimplified or moralistic viewpoints and offers a deeper structural-functional explanation of the practice, both of which are extremely pertinent to the current Shillai Tehsil study.

Singh (1988) traces the roots of polyandry in India to early Vedic and Indo-European societies, suggesting that it is not merely a tribal or marginal phenomenon but one with significant historical depth. By doing so, he reframes polyandry as a deeply embedded aspect of Indian kinship and marital tradition. Singh's work highlights the need for further research into the historical development of this practice and its transformations over time. His approach is useful in placing contemporary polyandrous customs—such as those found in Shillai Tehsil—within a larger civilizational context, allowing for a richer understanding of how social organization and marriage practices have evolved over centuries.

Cassidy and Lee (1989) critiqued ethnocentric biases in polyandry research and summed up common traits among polyandrous societies. They also provide a summary of shared features among polyandrous societies, such as resource scarcity, fraternal cooperation, and household unity. This work supports a more respectful understanding of polyandry—an approach highly relevant to analyzing its persistence and transformation in Shillai Tehsil.

Agarwal (1994) offers a compelling analysis of how land ownership is central to women's empowerment in rural South Asia. She critiques the common belief that employment by itself guarantees empowerment, arguing that without direct and secure access to land, women continue to face structural inequalities. This is especially visible in polyandrous communities, where property and inheritance laws tend to prioritize male lineage. In such settings, women often perform vital domestic and agricultural tasks, yet are excluded from land titles. Agarwal's arguments provide an important lens to evaluate how traditional marital systems influence women's rights and how social change might shift these dynamics to improve their bargaining power within households and society.

Willett (1995) analyzes the structural and functional features of fraternal polyandry in Tibetan civilizations in his review "Tibetan Fraternal Polyandry: A Review of Its Advantages and Breakdown." According to him, the system has several important benefits, including social stability inside the home, economic cooperation among brothers, and the preservation of family landholdings. Willett goes on to address the reasons why polyandry is dissolving, such as modernization, shifting moral standards, and the impact of government and educational initiatives. A critical knowledge of how conventional marriage structures change in response to outside socioeconomic influences is offered by his research. For the current study on Shillai Tehsil, where comparable ecological and cultural factors have historically influenced the continuation and evolution of polyandrous marital customs, this approach provides comparative insight.

Samal et al. (1996) offered a comprehensive viewpoint on polyandry among the Jaunsaries, a Central Himalayan community. The study linked polyandry to both their natural adaptations and socio-economic development.

Arun (1999) examined the differences between the sexes in land ownership in Kerala, a state that is frequently mentioned for its progressive social metrics. Women's access to and control over agricultural resources are nevertheless restricted by cultural, economic, and social factors, despite their ostensibly high position, according to the study. Gender roles in polyandrous cultures like Shillai Tehsil are reflected in this, which draws attention to the disparity between perceived and actual empowerment.

Haddix (2001) employed multivariate analysis to identify wealth distribution and group size as critical factors affecting the stability of Tibetan maternal polyandrous marriages. This analysis offers insights relevant to understanding the economic dimensions of polyandry in regions like Shillai Tehsil.

Grent (2002) examines Tibetan polyandry, particularly in exile communities like Dharamsala, where it is impacted by economic, religious, and psychological factors. The practice serves as both a marker of ethnic identity and a response to collective historical experiences. This perspective is particularly relevant to the present research, as it highlights how economic and emotional resilience, along with cultural preservation, can shape the continuity or transformation of polyandrous traditions, even in changing contexts like Shillai Tehsil.

Childs (2003) found that women involved in polyandrous marriages within taxpayer households had higher fertility rates compared to those in other arrangements, underscoring its impact on reproductive outcomes.

Pedersen (2005) examines its symbolic and kinship dimensions, uncovering how it reflects deeply rooted familial and social logics. By situating polyandry within both historical and psychological frameworks, Pedersen contributes to a more layered understanding of the institution—moving beyond materialist explanations. This broader interpretive lens is particularly valuable for the present study, which seeks to explore not only structural and economic factors but also social meanings and symbolic continuities in the transition of polyandrous practices in Shillai Tehsil.

Fjeld (2006) offers a thorough anthropological examination of the continuation and evolution of polyandry within Tibetan kinship relations in her groundbreaking book *The Return of Polyandry: Kinship and Marriage in Central Tibet*. Her research indicates that polyandry is a dynamic institution that is always adjusting to societal and socioeconomic shifts rather than just being a historical or dwindling practice. Fjeld explains that polyandry has important roles in Central Tibet, including fostering kinship unity, guaranteeing economic cooperation, and upholding family landholdings. The current research of Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, where similar ecological and kinship-based economic factors have historically supported polyandrous partnerships, makes this

viewpoint pertinent. According to Fjeld's concept, polyandry is not a complete disappearance but rather an adaptable social mechanism that is changing as part of a larger socio-cultural evolution.

Kanwar Ranjor Singh's work *Sirmour Riyasat Ka Itihaas* (2007) offers a thorough description of the political background, social organization, traditions, and administration of the former princely state of Sirmour, which today makes up a sizable portion of the Sirmour district in Himachal Pradesh. In order to contextualize the emergence and persistence of polyandrous behaviors in this area, the book clarifies the conventional socioeconomic structures, such as kinship patterns, landholding systems, and community standards. This text's rich historical context aids in placing current views into a long-standing political and cultural framework.

Borgerhoff Mulder (2009) highlighted the benefits of multiple marriages for Pimbwe women, framing serial monogamy as a form of both polygyny and polyandry.

K. Starkweather (2009) analyzes polyandry across diverse societies, identifying patterns based on regional, economic, and cultural factors. The research notes the high status of polyandrous unions in Indian and African contexts, where they functioned as mechanisms to maintain family wealth. However, the low status of women in these unions reflects gender inequities embedded within these systems.

Gautam and Kshatriya (2011) concluded that polyandry aids human adaptation in high altitudes, enhancing reproductive success through bio-cultural mechanisms.

Gurung (2012) analyzed data from 1998 and 2008 to show how the practice of polyandry was rapidly evolving among the Loba populations of Upper Mustang. Similar to the current transformation in Shillai Tehsil, this longitudinal view sheds light on how socioeconomic shifts and outside factors have influenced the development of traditional marriage systems.

Starkweather and Hames (2012) proposed that polyandry may have been a persistent feature of human evolutionary history, particularly among small-scale societies facing demographic and ecological pressures. According to their evolutionary approach,

polyandry in areas such as Shillai Tehsil is a smart response to social and environmental constraints rather than just a cultural oddity.

Bhasin (2013) argued that women gain economic and social strength through significant contributions to subsistence tasks in pastoral areas, despite continued male dominance in public domains. In polyandrous families, where women's labor is essential but frequently underappreciated—especially in areas like Shillai Tehsil—this knowledge helps put gender dynamics into perspective.

Pizzari and Wedell (2013) argued that ecological factors might obscure polyandry's impact on population fitness, warning that such masking could fail under environmental changes.

Faucon (2014) explored polygamy in America, advocating for legal recognition and regulation to address equity and religious motivations. Comparative analysis relevant to the legal and cultural disputes surrounding polyandry in places like Shillai Tehsil is provided by this study.

Jahan (2014) examined egalitarian communities that practiced polyandry and slash-and-burn farming, attributing the practice's genesis to their purported ancestry from the Pandavas of the Mahabharata rather than to demographic disparities like skewed sex ratios. This study sheds light on how mythology and cultural identity support polyandrous customs and provides insights into comparable belief-based continuities in areas such as Shillai Tehsil.

Mukherjee and Das (2014) provided in-depth insights into the social structure, driving forces, and cultural significance of this unusual marital practice through an empirical study on polyandrous marriages in the Jaunsari community of Uttarakhand. Their research advances regional knowledge of polyandry, which is helpful for contrasting related customs across Shillai Tehsil.

Chauhan and Chauhan (2015) discussed the Reet marriage system in hilly societies, comparing it to the Arsha form of marriage described in ancient Indian texts, wherein the bride's father receives symbolic gifts rather than a bride price.

Mehta (2016) assessed the seasonal and economic factors influencing marginalized farmers, noting that government-sponsored programs significantly impacted their livelihoods. Understanding the economic forces driving changes in customs, such as the fall in polyandry in rural areas like Shillai Tehsil, is made easier with the help of these insights.

Benedict (2017) advances the discussion by classifying polyandrous marriages into six distinct types, highlighting the variation in husband relationships and the degree of agency women possess within these unions. This classification moves beyond the dominant narrative of fraternal polyandry and opens up a more nuanced view of how roles and power are distributed. Benedict's approach sheds light on how kinship, authority, and emotional bonds are negotiated differently in each type. This typology is particularly relevant for examining polyandry in Shillai Tehsil today, as it allows for a more layered understanding of both enduring traditions and emerging changes in marital practices.

Machoko (2017) advocated for the acceptance of polyandry in Zimbabwe, suggesting that it empowers women to assert sexual autonomy, much like the societal acceptance of polygyny. This study can contribute to a more comprehensive knowledge of how gender roles are evolving in polyandrous settings such as Shillai Tehsil.

Boulton et al. (2018) claim that the selective forces favoring polyandry in some groups are shaped by male behavior, female conditions, and environmental factors.

Fortunato (2018) explores how marital systems have changed throughout time, moving the analytical emphasis from simply reproductive roles to the function of marriage in the generational transfer of resources. This viewpoint provides insightful information about how polyandrous arrangements might have developed as a means of protecting family assets and guaranteeing financial stability, particularly in settings with limited resources like Shillai Tehsil.

Pokharel (2020) analyzed perceptions of polyandry's changes, focusing on its historical ties to transhumance trade and the need for male collectivism to sustain the economy.

Rahimzadeh (2020) explored Kinnaur's shift from traditional polyandry to contemporary family arrangements, emphasizing how economic opportunity, migration, education, etc., changed marriage patterns. This study provides valuable background information for comprehending comparable transitional dynamics in Shillai Tehsil, where modernization and social mobility are impacting the decrease in polyandrous marriage.

In "Defending Polyandry: An Exploratory Note from Lachung Valley of Sikkim, India," Anjan, Chaudhuri, and Chatterjee (2021) investigate the continued use of polyandry as a culturally adaptable institution in the Eastern Himalayas. According to their findings, polyandry in the Lachung Valley is still a practical reaction to social cohesiveness, economic interdependence, and ecological constraints. According to the authors, polyandry should be viewed as a logical response to regional socioeconomic and environmental settings rather than as a receding or regressive trend. This viewpoint provides helpful comparative understanding for the current investigation of Shillai Tehsil, where polyandry has historically been influenced by comparable ecological and familial circumstances.

Geetha (2021) delves deep into the criticism of polyandry in Kerala by colonial and reformist groups, especially the Nair community. The paper emphasizes how moral stigmatization, social reform movements, and colonial education contributed to the slow decline of polyandrous customs. In light of contemporary education and social mobility, the views of people of Shillai Tehsil on polyandry are evolving, and this investigation highlights how outside ideological forces can alter long-standing marital traditions.

Govindaraj (2021) closely studies the Toda and Irula communities while examining Tamil Nadu's tribal marriage customs. This comparative perspective is helpful in placing polyandrous customs of Shillai Tehsil within the wider framework of Indian tribal marriage systems.

M. Sharma (2021) accentuates the role of cultural and social systems in sustaining polyandry, particularly in areas like Jaunsar-Bawar. The study reveals the interplay between evolutionary biology, cultural anthropology, and gender dynamics, suggesting that polyandry, while diminishing, has historically thrived in atmospheres where it aligns with social and economic structures.

Antakshari (2022) examines how polyandry among the Kinnaura tribe in Himachal Pradesh has persisted and changed. According to the study, polyandry still exists in some areas because it is economically advantageous, especially when combined with undivided landholdings, a household's shared labor, and a pool of revenue sources. But the study also shows that many families have re-examined or changed traditional marriage arrangements as a result of modernization, educational advancement, and shifting personal goals. The shift is not complete; rather, it represents a nuanced interaction between custom and contemporary values as people and communities balance economic realism with individual liberty. This approach, which echoes similar phenomena seen in Shillai Tehsil and other polyandrous regions, is essential to understanding how polyandry adapts rather than disappears.

Laddunuri (2022) detects a number of causes, including the prohibition of female infanticide, industrialization, urbanization, and heightened knowledge of women's rights, as the reasons for the progressive fall in polyandry. The study also highlights the stress polyandrous tribe's face from the pervasiveness of monogamous norms, which causes traditional practices to erode in areas like Ladakh and Jaunsar. These observations are consistent with the contemporary changes in Shillai Tehsil, where cultural and socioeconomic factors are also changing the traditions around marriage.

Das and Kamthan (2023) explore the legal implications of polygamous and polyandrous unions in India. They argue for reformative measures to address gender-biased laws and highlight the adverse effects of such practices on women and children. The persistence of these unions in specific regions underscores the tension between traditional customs and modern legal frameworks. This analysis is particularly relevant to the present research, as it situates the transition of polyandrous marriages in Shillai Tehsil within the larger discourse of legal reform, gender justice, and social change.

2.3 Conclusion

The extensive body of literature reviewed highlights polyandry as a deeply complex and multifaceted institution shaped by historical, cultural, ecological, and economic factors. Its prevalence across diverse societies and its evolutionary underpinnings illustrate its adaptability as a social practice. Historical analyses, such as those by Singh (1988) and

Ghosh (1987), underscore the cultural roots of polyandry, emphasizing its prevalence among Indo-European and Vedic Aryan societies. This historical perspective provides a foundation for understanding how traditional marital systems evolved to address the challenges posed by specific socio-economic and ecological contexts.

Ecological and economic perspectives, particularly those offered by Raha and Coomar (1987), Samal et al. (1996), and Gautam and Kshatriya (2011), reveal the pragmatic basis of polyandry. In regions such as Kinnaur and Jaunsar-Bawar, harsh environmental conditions and resource scarcity have driven communities to adopt this practice as a mechanism for survival. Gurung (2012) and Pokharel (2020) further emphasize how modern economic pressures, migration, and changing livelihoods are influencing its gradual transformation or decline. These studies collectively demonstrate that polyandry is not merely a relic of the past but a dynamic institution responding to external pressures.

The intersection of polyandry with gender dynamics emerges as a critical theme in the literature. While Agarwal (1994), Arun (1999), and Machoko (2017) highlight its potential to challenge patriarchal norms and empower women, other studies, such as those by Mukherjee and Das (2014) and Das and Kamthan (2023), underline the persistent inequalities that women face within these unions. Despite offering women some economic and social security, polyandry often reinforces existing power imbalances. These nuanced findings point to the dual role of polyandry as both a strategy for survival and a reflection of systemic gender inequities.

Biological and evolutionary perspectives provide a broader framework to understand polyandry's role in human societies. Scholars such as Starkweather and Hames (2012), Childs (2003), and Fedorka and Mousseau (2002) argue that polyandry enhances reproductive success and population fitness, particularly in environments with limited resources. This evolutionary lens adds depth to the understanding of polyandry, linking human practices to broader biological imperatives.

The reviewed literature also highlights the role of modernization, legal frameworks, and societal change in shaping the future of polyandry. Studies such as Rahimzadeh (2020), Geetha (2021), and Das and Kamthan (2023) examine how colonial and contemporary legal systems, along with socio-economic reforms, have contributed to the decline of

polyandry. The growing emphasis on monogamous norms, women's education, and economic independence signals a shift away from traditional marital arrangements. However, this shift is not without challenges, as it often entails the erosion of cultural practices and identity for communities where polyandry was integral.

In conclusion, the literature underscores the multifaceted nature of polyandry, reflecting its adaptability and resilience as a social institution. While its prevalence is declining under the pressures of modernization and globalization, its historical, ecological, and cultural significance remains a valuable area of study. The findings emphasize the need for further research that bridges the gaps between cultural anthropology, gender studies, and legal frameworks to address the evolving dynamics of polyandry. By understanding its past and present implications, future studies can contribute to a more nuanced appreciation of this complex marital system.

CHAPTER – III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

One of the most critical aspects of conducting a research study is selecting an appropriate methodology. A study plan serves as a methodology designed to investigate predetermined relationships among components using scientific methods and numerical analysis. Methodology forms the foundation of research, giving meaning and coherence to the study's findings. The methodology section outlines how the data will be collected, organized, analyzed, and interpreted using specific techniques and tools. It also provides comprehensive details about variables and structures. Selecting a particular research methodology is akin to choosing a strategic plan of action.

The research methodology relies on scientific methods, forming the basis for all tools relevant to the study's objectives. Each instrument used was evaluated under standardized setups and conditions to ensure accuracy and reliability. Developing a plan that outlines the course of the investigation is a crucial step. Prior research was thoroughly reviewed and analyzed to define the study's objectives, which guided the methodology.

The qualitative method was identified as an alternative approach that addresses specific research questions effectively. The study's objectives clearly outline the expected outcomes, forming the framework for the analysis. A well-defined research methodology was designed to meet the study's requirements, ensuring comprehensive data analysis and the derivation of meaningful conclusions.

Subsequently, the study area, population, and sample framework were evaluated, and the survey approach was selected. The questionnaire used for data collection was described in detail. To achieve the primary goal of this study, this chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the research methodology, along with a detailed account of the research instruments employed.

Personal Interviews

Direct, face-to-face interviews provided valuable insights into participants' lived experiences. This approach allowed for a deeper exploration of their motivations, cultural

practices, and the complexities surrounding polyandry. The in-person interaction enabled the researcher to observe subtle nonverbal cues and contextual details, adding richness and depth to the collected data.

Telephonic Conversations

Phone interviews were an effective alternative for engaging with participants who were either geographically distant or unable to meet in person. This method offered convenience in scheduling and facilitated input from a broader and more diverse pool of respondents. Although it lacked the ability to capture visual expressions and body language, telephonic interviews successfully gathered detailed verbal accounts and helped uncover the participants' viewpoints and experiences.

Focus Group Method

The focus group approach is a qualitative research technique extensively utilized in domains such as marketing, sociology, and political science. This method involves gathering a small, diverse group of individuals, typically ranging from 6 to 12 participants, to engage in a structured discussion about a particular subject, such as a product, idea, service, or social issue. These sessions are designed to uncover the participants' perspectives, attitudes, and experiences regarding the topic under consideration.

Through the dynamic exchange of ideas and interactions within the group, researchers gain valuable insights that can help predict the reactions and opinions of a broader audience. The discussions are held in an open, conversational environment, encouraging participants to express themselves freely while engaging with one another's viewpoints. Researchers play an essential role in moderating the session, capturing observations, or recording the discussion for further analysis. Selecting a well-matched group of participants is crucial to ensure that the findings are both meaningful and applicable. This method serves as a powerful tool for decision-making in areas such as product innovation, marketing strategies, and policy development.

Case Study Method

The case study method is a comprehensive research approach commonly applied in fields like social sciences and life sciences to gain a detailed understanding of a single subject, whether it is an individual, a group, or a specific event. This method is especially prominent in areas like clinical psychology, but it is also relevant to other disciplines. By thoroughly exploring the subject in its real-life context, case studies aim to uncover underlying principles, causal relationships, and broader implications.

Distinctive features of case studies include their emphasis on intensive analysis of a limited number of cases, enabling researchers to delve deeply into the complexities and nuances of the subject. They incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques and often span an extended time frame to capture the subject's evolution and intricacies. The continuous nature of case studies allows them to provide rich, holistic insights, making this method particularly useful for understanding multifaceted phenomena in real-world settings.

Research Design

This study adopts an exploratory research design to investigate the transition in polyandrous marriage traditions in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh. The exploratory component aims to uncover the underlying factors, motivations, and socio-cultural dynamics influencing polyandrous practices, while the descriptive aspect provides a detailed account of the tradition's historical context and its present state. This design is particularly suited for capturing the complexities of a culturally sensitive phenomenon like polyandry, ensuring a nuanced understanding of its evolution.

Research Methodology

A qualitative methodology is employed to gather rich and detailed insights into the lives of individuals and families practicing polyandry. The study incorporates ethnographic techniques, enabling in-depth observation and documentation of cultural practices and familial interactions. A case study approach is also integrated, focusing on specific families within the Shillai Tehsil to provide contextualized narratives of how polyandry has adapted or declined over time. This methodology allows the researcher to capture diverse perspectives and identify patterns that contribute to the transition in polyandrous marriages.

Criteria of Inclusion

For the research topic "Transition in Polyandrous Marriage Tradition: A Study in Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh," the inclusion criteria are designed to ensure the selection of participants who can provide relevant and meaningful insights. Participants must be residents of Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh and belong to communities or families that practice or have historically practiced polyandrous marriages.

The study will include individuals aged 21 years and above who are capable of providing informed consent. Participants should have direct experience with or knowledge of polyandrous marriage traditions, either as practitioners, family members, or observers, and must be aware of cultural shifts or transitions in these practices over the past two decades. Men and women, as well as individuals of other genders, will be included to capture diverse perspectives. Participants must be proficient in the local language, such as Pahari or Hindi, to ensure effective communication during interviews or discussions.

Additionally, individuals should be willing to participate voluntarily and provide informed consent. The study also seeks participants who reside in areas that are geographically accessible or are willing to participate remotely, if required. Lastly, participants should possess adequate knowledge of the socio-cultural, historical, and economic aspects of polyandrous marriages in the region to contribute meaningfully to the research.

Data Collection Methods

In order to assure thorough data collection, the fieldwork for this study was finished in two separate phases. September to November 2023 was the time frame for the first phase, while June to September 2024 was the one for the second. The data collection involves a combination of primary and secondary sources. Primary data is obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including men and women in polyandrous marriages, community elders, and local leaders. Observational methods are also used to document cultural rituals, daily practices, and interactions within polyandrous households. Secondary data, including historical records,

census reports, and prior academic research on polyandry in Himachal Pradesh, provides the necessary contextual background and supplements primary findings.

Analysis and Ethical Considerations

The collected data is analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the tradition and its transition. Coding techniques are employed to categorize responses, ensuring a systematic approach to interpretation. Ethical considerations are paramount, given the sensitive nature of the subject. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, with assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. The research adheres to ethical guidelines to respect cultural values and avoid misrepresentation. References to previous studies and frameworks, including those by Westermarck (1926) and Malinowski (1944), guide the analysis to maintain academic rigor.

Objectives of the study

- To study the tradition and motivation behind polyandry
- To understand the status of women and men in polyandrous marriage
- To explore changes taking place in the polyandrous system in contemporary time

Research Question:

- How does polyandry function in modern times?
- What are the reasons for the sustenance of the polyandrous marriage tradition?
- How are education, social mobility, and media impacting the polyandry tradition in the contemporary period?

Research Gaps

Understanding the Evolution of Polyandry

- There is a lack of in-depth study on how localized historical and environmental factors have shaped the motivations and persistence of polyandry in regions like Shillai Tehsil.

Gender and Power Dynamics

- The gender dynamics within polyandrous marriages, particularly the roles and experiences of men, remain underexplored in existing research.

Addressing Contemporary Transitions:

- There is limited understanding of how modern influences such as globalization, legal reforms, and education are driving changes in the polyandrous marriage system in contemporary societies.

Tool for data collection

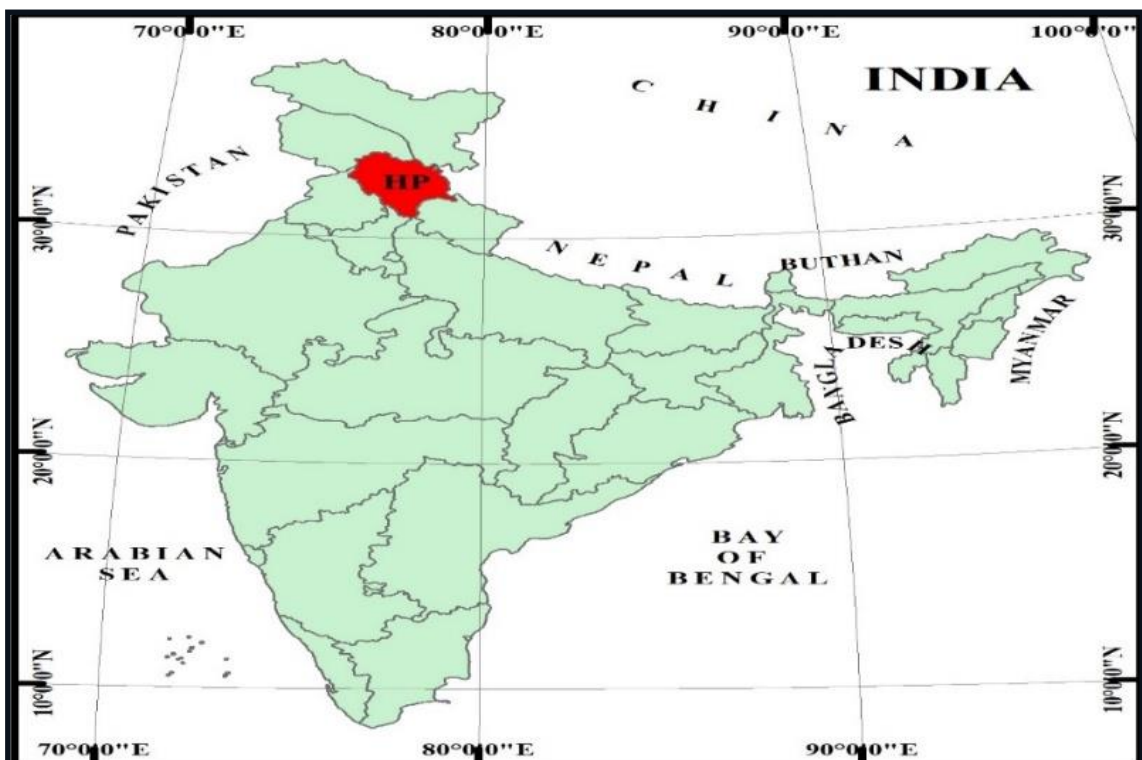
An interview schedule with three major sections was developed, keeping the objectives and research questions in view. The sections are the motivation behind the polyandry tradition, the status of men and women in the polyandrous tradition, and changes in the polyandrous tradition. A brief description of the questions asked in each section is as follows. Section one dealt with questions on polyandry, deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and economic contexts, often arising from factors like limited resources and geographical isolation, particularly in regions like Shillai Tehsil. Cultural and religious influences, along with traditions and rituals, underscore its significance in preserving family property, income, and economic stability. Historically, polyandry has fostered cooperation within families, shaping inheritance patterns and child-rearing practices. While motivations vary, the practice reflects a collective response to societal and environmental challenges, emphasizing resource preservation and community well-being.

Section two focused on how polyandry challenges traditional gender roles, with power dynamics shaped by shared decision-making and economic contributions. Gender roles may be flexible or defined, influenced by both men and women contributing to livelihoods. Conflict resolution and responsibilities reflect efforts to maintain harmony, while economic roles significantly impact individual status within the household.

Section three elicited responses to the polyandrous tradition, which is experiencing shifts due to changing societal norms, legal frameworks, and generational perspectives.

Education, employment, and exposure to diverse cultures significantly influence these transitions, as younger generations increasingly redefine polyandry in the context of individual freedoms and gender equality. Resistance and advocacy against the practice reflect evolving attitudes, while societal and legal challenges continue to shape its persistence and adaptation.

Locale of study The study was conducted in Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh, India. Himachal Pradesh is one of the constituent states of the Republic of India. The state is located in the northern part of India



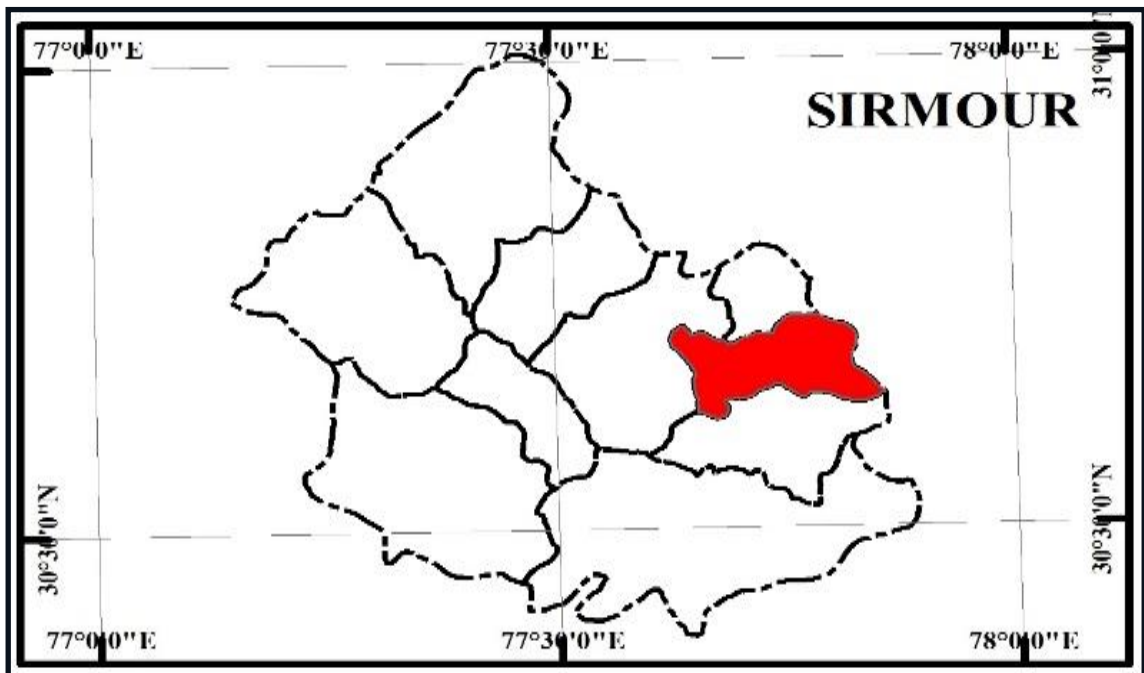
(Source: mapofindia.com) MAP: INDIA 3.1

Himachal Pradesh, India's northernmost state is situated in the Western Himalayas and is one of the thirteen mountain states of the country. It shares its borders with the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to the north, Punjab to the west, Haryana to the southwest, Uttarakhand to the southeast, and a very narrow border with Uttar Pradesh to the south. To the east, the state shares an international boundary with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. Known as *Veer Bhoomi* ("Land of the Brave") and

DevBhoomi or *DevBhumi* ("Land of Gods"), Himachal Pradesh is renowned for its cultural heritage, natural beauty, and historical significance.



(Source: mapofindia.com) MAP: HIMACHAL PRADESH 3.2



(Source: mapofindia.com) MAP: DISTRICT SIRMOUR 3.3

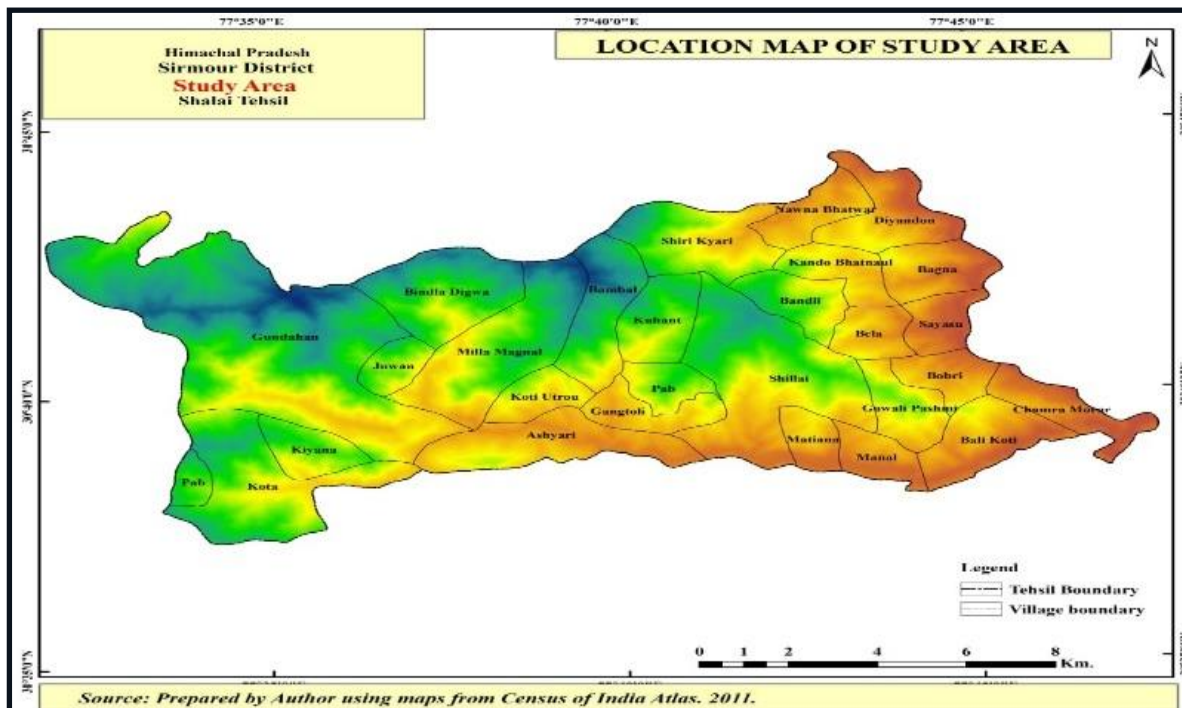
Himachal Pradesh is divided into twelve districts, which are grouped into three administrative divisions: Mandi, Kangra, and Shimla. These districts are further subdivided into 172 tehsils, 78 blocks, and 73 subdivisions. Due to its challenging topography, the state historically remained relatively untouched by outside influences, preserving its unique cultural identity. However, in recent decades, Himachal Pradesh has undergone significant social and economic development, leading to rapid transformation.

The state is linguistically diverse, with Western Pahari languages, commonly referred to as Himachali languages, being widely spoken. Prominent Pahari dialects include Kangri, Mandyali, Kulvi, Chambeali, Bharmauri, and Shillai. Tehsil, located in the Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh, spans an area of 127 square kilometers and has a population of 36,905, as per the 2011 Census. The population density is 292 persons per square kilometer, and the tehsil comprises approximately 27 villages and 5,046 households. The gender distribution includes 19,403 men and 17,502 women, resulting in an average sex ratio of 902 females per 1,000 males. The literacy rate in Shillai Tehsil stands at 57.50%, with a significant gender disparity: 63.96% of men are literate compared to only 50.33% of women. Despite this, the tehsil demonstrates gradual progress in education and development. Shillai is notable for its rural charm and traditional lifestyle, reflecting both the challenges and opportunities present in the region.

Table 3.1: Demographic Profile

	Total	Male	Female
Children (Age 0-6)	5,684	2,905	2,779
Literacy	67.97%	63.96%	50.33%
Scheduled Caste	11,044	5,755	5,289
Scheduled Tribe	28	15	13
Illiterate	15,685	6,992	8,693

(Source: www.census2011.co.in)



(Source: mapsofindia.com) MAP: SHILLAI TEHSIL 3.4

Population and Sample Design

A sample design is a well-defined strategy for selecting a sample from a specific population. It refers to the method or process a researcher employs to choose the elements included in the sample. Additionally, the sample design may specify the sample size, or the number of elements to be included. The sample design is determined before data collection begins, providing a structured approach to ensure validity. Researchers can choose from a wide range of sample designs, some of which are more precise and easier to implement than others. The chosen design must be reliable and appropriate for addressing the research question effectively. The researcher has used the purposive sampling method for the present study. The sample comprised aged individuals and young men and women who have either practiced or been directly associated with the polyandrous marriage tradition in the study area.

Sample Size

About 95 families in Shillai Tehsil were found to be polyandrous, according to the survey. Following initial contact and rapport-building with 70 of these families, 24 families were specifically chosen for in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and case studies.

Yamane's formula (1967) $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ yields the sample size for a quantitative study with a finite population of 95 and a 5% margin of error, which comes out to be roughly 77 respondents. Nonetheless, purposeful sampling was used to choose participants because this study is qualitative in nature. The objective of this method was to incorporate instances with a wealth of information that represented a range of socioeconomic, age, and educational backgrounds.

After the 23rd interview, no new themes or patterns surfaced; therefore, theoretical saturation was used to identify the final sample of 24 households. Due to data saturation, the sample size was deemed appropriate for the study. The richness and complexity of the polyandrous marital tradition in the study area are thus sufficiently represented by the sample that was chosen.

Careful consideration is required when determining the sample size to ensure it accurately represents the population and maintains statistical reliability. Factors such as the cost of data collection and the need for sufficient statistical power often influence the selection of the sample size. Finally, 19 individuals were interviewed based on the responses that were received for acceptance; three of those interviews could not be completed, and two participants withdrew. Ultimately, over the course of five months, the maximum possible interviews, i.e., 16 in-depth interviews, 4 focused group discussions, & 4 case studies, were conducted. Because of the data saturation, the sample size was thought to be appropriate.

Data Saturation

Data saturation occurs when no new information relevant to the research topic emerges from the data. This indicates that the sample size is sufficient. Saturation is not merely seeing the same stories or incidents repeatedly (Charmaz, 2014). It is achieved when gathering additional data no longer provides new theoretical insights or identifies new characteristics of the theoretical categories.

In qualitative research, determining an appropriate sample size requires careful judgment and experience. Researchers must weigh the value of the collected data against the study's objectives (Patton, 2002). Some researchers refer to this process as "data redundancy."

Table3.2: Sampling Frame

Tools	Purpose	Numbers	Details
Semi-Structured Interview	Regarding tradition behind this system, status of men/woman	16	Who is the member of polyandrous family
Focus Group Discussion	Regarding motivation behind this tradition, Changes of this polyandrous system, social acceptance	20	4 FGDs with the all-family members
Case Study	To understand some unique situation and untold stories.	4	Polyandrous family

Data analysis

Data analysis and interpretation are crucial stages in the research process. For this study, narrative analysis was employed as an effective method to explore the qualitative data. The researcher collected information through recorded conversations with respondents, ensuring that personal biases and preconceived notions were consciously set aside to maintain ethical integrity and validity in the research. During fieldwork, the researcher made every effort to convey the cultural context of the field without imposing personal judgments.

Thematic content analysis was used to identify and extract key themes from the data. These themes are discussed in detail in the results and discussion section of the forthcoming chapter. This chapter outlines the research approach and provides justifications for the decisions made throughout the investigation. It aims to lay the foundation for understanding the conclusions and insights that will be drawn in future research.

Table 3.3 List of final themes obtained from analysis of interviews

Themes	Sub Themes
Motivation behind Polyandry Tradition	Cultural and Religious Belief
	Historical
	Division of Property
	Unity of Family
	Financial Security
	Well Nurtured Child
Status of Men and Women in Polyandrous Tradition	Economics Decision Making
	Conflicts
Changes in polyandrous tradition	Modernization
	Education
	Economic Diversification
	Gender Role Changing and Woman's Autonomy
	Migration
	Media Influence
	Legal Complication

Data Presentation in Qualitative Research

Presenting analyzed data in qualitative research involves effectively conveying the insights drawn from rich, detailed narratives collected through various methods. In this study, three complementary approaches—personal interviews using an interview schedule, focus group discussions, and case studies—were employed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Each method contributed unique perspectives, and their combined use provided a holistic view of the phenomena under investigation. Personal interviews offered in-depth, individualized accounts, revealing participants' personal experiences, beliefs, and motivations. Focus group discussions facilitated dynamic exchanges among participants, uncovering collective attitudes, shared perspectives, and diverse viewpoints.

The case study method added a contextual layer, examining specific individuals or groups in real-life settings to highlight complexities and patterns that might otherwise remain hidden. Together, these methods formed a triangulation approach, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. The data presentation prioritized clarity and depth, using thematic organization, verbatim quotes, and illustrative examples to capture the nuanced meanings behind the participants' narratives. This integrated approach ensured that the presentation not only reflected the diversity of experiences but also provided actionable insights for further research or decision-making.

CHAPTER – IV

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Analysis of Data Gathered from Polyandrous Families of Shillai Tehsil

The qualitative analysis of data gathered from polyandrous families of Shillai Tehsil in the Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh provides valuable insights into the socio-cultural and economic dynamics of this unique marital tradition. Data collection was conducted through personal interviews, telephonic conversations, and online interactions, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the practice and its on-going transition.

Personal interviews

Face-to-face interactions with participants provided an in-depth perspective on their lived experiences. These interviews offered a nuanced understanding of the motivations, traditions, and challenges associated with polyandry. Personal interaction enabled the researcher to observe non-verbal cues and contextual nuances, enriching the data.

Telephonic conversations

Telephonic interviews were particularly useful in reaching respondents who were geographically distant or unavailable for in-person interviews. These conversations allowed for flexibility in scheduling and facilitated data collection from a diverse set of participants. While limited in capturing visual cues, telephonic methods proved effective in gathering verbal narratives and understanding the respondents' perspectives.

Focus group method

Focus group research is a qualitative research method widely used in fields like marketing, sociology, and political analysis. It involves assembling a small group of 5-8 people who represent diverse demographic backgrounds to participate in a guided discussion about a specific topic, such as a product, service, concept, or ideology. These discussions help researchers gather insights into the participants' perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes. By observing and analyzing the group's reactions and interactions, researchers aim to predict the responses of a larger population.

The process typically takes place in an interactive group setting where participants freely share their thoughts and engage in dialogue with one another. Researchers play a crucial role by either taking detailed notes or recording key observations to extract meaningful insights. The success of focus group research heavily depends on carefully selecting participants to ensure that the responses are both relevant and representative. This method allows for a deeper understanding of the topic at hand and helps inform decision-making in areas like product development, advertising, or policy formation.

Case study method

A case study is a research method commonly used in social sciences and life sciences to conduct an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group, or event. This method is particularly prevalent in clinical psychology and, to a lesser extent, other disciplines. By examining persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, or institutions holistically, case studies explore phenomena within their real-life contexts, providing valuable insights into the underlying principles and causes of specific issues.

Key characteristics of case studies include a focus on a small number of units for detailed analysis, allowing for a deep and thorough examination of the social unit being studied. They employ both qualitative and quantitative approaches and often span a sufficiently broad time frame to ensure comprehensive understanding. Additionally, case studies are continuous in nature, making them an effective research strategy for capturing the complexities of real-world phenomena.

Detailing of themes and sub-themes used for analysis

The analysis of the polyandrous tradition in Shillai Tehsil focused on three broad themes—Motivation behind Polyandry Tradition, Status of Men and Women in Polyandrous Tradition, and Changes in Polyandrous Tradition. Each theme was further broken into sub-themes to facilitate a nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural, economic, and personal dynamics surrounding this practice.

Motivation behind Polyandry Tradition

This theme explored the underlying reasons for the practice of polyandry in Shillai Tehsil.

- **Cultural and Religious Belief:** Investigates the role of traditions and religious norms in sustaining polyandry.
- **Historical:** Explores the historical roots of polyandry in the region, emphasizing its legacy and evolution.
- **Division of Property:** Examines how polyandry helps retain undivided family assets, ensuring equitable distribution among family members.
- **Unity of Family:** Highlights how polyandry fosters familial unity by maintaining close ties among siblings.
- **Financial Security:** Assesses the economic advantages of shared financial responsibilities within polyandrous households.
- **Well-Nurtured Child:** Focuses on the belief that multiple caregivers provide better child-rearing support.

Status of Men and Women in Polyandrous Tradition

This theme delves into the gender roles and power dynamics within polyandrous households.

- **Economic Decision-Making:** Explores how financial matters are managed and the roles men and women play in decision-making processes.
- **Conflicts:** Analyses how disputes are resolved within polyandrous families, particularly focusing on the impact of gender roles on conflict resolution.

Changes in Polyandrous Tradition

This theme examines the factors influencing the transformation of polyandry in contemporary times.

- **Modernization:** Analyzes how exposure to modern values and lifestyles is altering the perception and practice of polyandry.
- **Education:** Highlights the role of increased literacy and awareness in shifting societal norms.

- **Economic Diversification:** Assesses how alternative income opportunities reduce the dependency on traditional practices like polyandry.
- **Gender Role Changing and Women’s Autonomy:** Explores the evolving roles of women and their increasing independence in polyandrous households.
- **Migration:** Examines the impact of male outmigration on the continuity of polyandrous traditions.
- **Media Influence:** Investigates how media exposure has contributed to changing attitudes toward polyandry.
- **Legal Complications:** Explores the legal challenges and ambiguities associated with the practice in the modern context.

Findings

Table 4.1: Interviewee Profiling

Participants	Age	Village	Sex	Cate.	Religion	Language Speak	Education	Occupation
P1	45	Shillai	F	GEN	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	8 th	Farmer
P2	46	Koti-Bouch	M	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	10 th	Tailoring
P3	36	Koti - Uttrou	F	OBC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	9 th	House wife & Farmer
P4	39	Balikoti	M	GEN	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	12 th	Shopkeeper & Farmer
P5	40	Bakras	F	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	8 th	Farmer
P6	41	Naya	M	OBC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	9 th	Factory
P7	55	Drabil	F	GEN	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	Illiterate	House wife
P8	50	Bela – Bashwa	F	OBC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	Illiterate	MNREGA & Farmer
P9	54	Jarwa – Juneli	M	GEN	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	7 th	Laborer & Farmer
P10	38	Nainidhar	F	OBC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	10 th	Shopkeeper

P11	37	Dahar	F	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	12 th	Aaganwadi
P12	41	Jhakando	F	GEN	Hindu	Pahadi&Hindi	10 th	House wife &Farmer
P13	40	Kota - Pab	M	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	10 th	Driver
P14	46	Kuhant	F	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	9 th	MNREGA & House wife
P15	58	Manal	M	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	Illiterate	Farmer
P16	26	Bambal	F	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	Graduate	Private Job

Table 4.1 presents demographic and socio-economic details of 16 participants involved in the study on polyandrous families in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh. The participants, identified with unique codes (P1–P16) to ensure anonymity, range in age from 21 to 60 years, representing individuals at various stages of life. They come from diverse villages across Shillai Tehsil, ensuring geographic representation. The sample includes both male and female participants, with women forming the majority (10 females and 6 males). Participants belong to different category groups, including General (GEN), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Other Backward Classes (OBC), reflecting the caste diversity of the region. All participants follow Hinduism, which aligns with the predominant religion in the area, and the primary languages spoken are Pahadi and Hindi, representing the linguistic culture of Himachal Pradesh.

Educational levels among the participants vary significantly, ranging from illiterate to graduate, indicating differing levels of access to education within the community. For instance, while some participants, like P16, have attained higher education and are engaged in modern professions such as teaching, others are limited to traditional roles and remain illiterate. Occupations are diverse, with many participants engaged in farming, while others work as tailors, shopkeepers, and laborers and in roles like teaching or participating in government-supported schemes such as MNREGA. This reflects both the economic diversity and the gradual shift towards modern livelihoods within the region.

Women participants predominantly engage in traditional roles, such as farming and housework, though some also contribute economically through schemes like MNREGA or as Anganwadi workers. Men are involved in activities like farming, driving, and running shops, indicating gender-specific roles in economic activities.

The representation of participants from various villages ensures that the study captures the regional diversity within Shillai Tehsil and provides a comprehensive view of polyandrous families in the area.

In summary, the table offers a detailed socio-demographic profile of the participants, highlighting the diversity in age, caste, education, and occupations. This diverse representation provides a strong foundation for understanding the cultural, social, and economic contexts of polyandrous families and their experiences, making the study more robust and inclusive.

Table 4.2: Participants of Focus Group Discussion Profiling

Participant s	Age	Vill	Sex	Caste	Reli	Language	Qualificatio n	Occupation
Group 01								
Wife	36	Naya - Panjod	F	GEN	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	9 th	House wife &Farmer
Husband	42		M		Hindu	Pahadi&Hindi	10 th	Govt Job
Husband	39		M		Hindu	Pahadi&Hindi	4 th	Farmer
Son	18		M		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	12 th	Farmer
Son	15		M		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	School Going	NA
Group 02								
Husband	40	Rast	M	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	10 th	Driver
Husband	48		M		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	12 th	Peon
Wife	39		F		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	12 th	Shopkeeper & Farmer
Daughter	19		F		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	College going	

Daughter	14		F		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi		
Group 03								
Husband	43	Lani Bora d	M	OB C	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	9 th	Farming
Husband	38		M		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	7 th	Factory
wife	35		F		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	9 th	Sweeper in private school & Farming
Father	67		M		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	2 nd	Both little-bit help in house work
Mother	60		F		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	Illiterate	
Group 04								
wife	56	Kiya riGundah	F	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	Illiterate	House wife &Farmer
Husband	62		M		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	3 rd	Farmer
Husband	58		M		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	2 nd	Farmer &MNREG A
Father	80		M		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	Illiterate	At home (due to health)
Daughter	35		F		Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	8 th	Mentally not well

Table 4.2 provides a detailed overview of the social profile of participants involved in the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Participants in the focus group discussion will be profiled from four households, each with five individuals, reflecting a range of ages, professions, and socio-cultural backgrounds from Shillai Tehsil. Analysis of each family has shed light on the dynamics of polyandrous homes in the area.

Group 1:

This family from Naya-Panjod consists of a wife, two husbands, and two sons. The wife, aged 36, is a housewife and farmer with a 9th-grade education, while her husbands, aged 42 and 39, work in a government job and farming, respectively, with varying educational

levels (10th grade and 4th grade). The sons, aged 18 and 15, are engaged in farming and schooling, indicating the generational continuity of traditional roles alongside education. This group reflects a mix of professional and agricultural livelihoods.

Group 2:

Originating from Rast, this family includes two husbands, one wife, and two daughters. The husbands, aged 40 and 48, are employed as a driver and a peon, respectively, with 10th- and 12th-grade qualifications. The wife, aged 39, is a shopkeeper and farmer with a 12th-grade education, actively contributing to the family's economic activities. The daughters, aged 19 and 14, are college-going and school-going, highlighting the emphasis on education for younger generations. This group illustrates a blend of traditional and modern occupational pursuits.

Group 3:

This family from Lani-Borad comprises two husbands, a wife, and the parents of one of the spouses. The husbands, aged 43 and 38, work in farming and a factory, with 9th- and 7th-grade educational levels. The wife, aged 35, is a sweeper in a private school and a farmer, showcasing her dual roles in contributing to household income. The elderly parents, aged 67 and 60, assist minimally in household work, with the father having limited schooling and the mother being illiterate. This group reflects intergenerational support within the household.

Group 4:

Based in Kiyari-Gundah, this family features a wife, two husbands, an elderly father, and a daughter. The wife, aged 56, is illiterate and works as a housewife and farmer. Her husbands, aged 62 and 58, are farmers, with one also participating in MNREGA. Both have minimal education (3rd and 2nd grade). The father, aged 80, is confined to the home due to health issues, and the 35-year-old daughter, with an 8th-grade education, is mentally unwell. This group highlights challenges related to health, education, and economic roles within polyandrous families.

In summary, the focus group discussions highlight the diversity in educational backgrounds, occupational roles, and family dynamics across polyandrous households in

Shillai Tehsil. While some families integrate modern professions and education, others remain deeply rooted in traditional agricultural practices and face challenges related to health and economic opportunities.

Table 4.3: Case Study Profiling

Participants	Age	Vill	Sex	Cate	Reli	Language	Education	Occupation
CS1	29	Ashyadi	F	OBC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	12 th	Tailoring
CS2	40	NawanBhatwat	M	GEN	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	PHD	Farmer
CS3	42	Hallah	F	OBC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi	Graduate	Teacher
CS4	50	Loza-Manal	F	SC	Hindu	Pahadi& Hindi,	7 th	House wife

Table No. 4.3 presents the demographic, educational, and occupational characteristics of participants from four case study families in Shillai Tehsil, Sirmaur District, Himachal Pradesh.

Participant 1 Case Study:

CS1 is a 29-year-old female from Ashyadi village, belonging to the OBC category. She speaks Pahadi and Hindi and has completed her 12th grade and her involvement in self-employment and contributing to household income.

Participant 2 Case Study:

CS2 is a 40-year-old male from Nawana-Bhatwat village, belonging to the General (GEN) category. He is highly educated, holding a Ph.D. degree, and works in a professional job. His profile represents the upward mobility and integration of modern education within traditional communities.

Participant 3 Case Study:

CS3 is a 42-year-old female from Hallah village, also from the OBC category. She has a graduate degree and is employed as a teacher. Her role reflects the evolving status of women, who are increasingly taking up educational and professional responsibilities.

Participant 4 Case Study :

CS4 is a 50-year-old male from Loza-Manal village, belonging to the Scheduled Caste (SC) category. He has completed 10th grade and works with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), highlighting his engagement in rural development initiatives.

The case study profiling emphasizes a diverse set of individuals in terms of age, caste, education, and occupation. It reflects varying levels of education and employment, showcasing traditional and modern roles within the socio-economic framework of Shillai Tehsil. While some participants are engaged in traditional rural employment, others have achieved higher education and professional roles, illustrating a spectrum of social transformation in the region.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Interviewee Profiling

Table 4.4: Details of Family Members (P1)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	45	Wife	F	8th	Farmer	4.5 Lakh P. A
02	50	Husband 1	M	10 th	Govt. Job	
03	48	Husband 2	M	5 th	Farmer	
04	25	Son	M	12 th	Laborer	
05	22	Daughter	F	12 th	Farmer	
06	18	Son	M	College going	NA	

Table No. 4.4 provides insights into the family structure, demographics, education, occupation, and income levels of Participant 1 (P1), interviewed as part of the study.

The female head of the family, aged 45, has completed her education up to the 8th grade and is actively involved in farming. Her efforts contribute to the family's annual income

of ₹4.5 lakh. The first husband, aged 50, has completed his 10th-grade education and holds a government job, serving as the primary breadwinner. The second husband, aged 48, has completed up to the 5th grade and focuses on farming to meet the family's agricultural needs.

The eldest son, aged 25, has completed his 12th-grade education and works as a laborer, further supplementing the household income. The 22-year-old daughter, also a 12th-grade graduate, supports the family's farming activities. The youngest son, aged 18, is currently pursuing higher education in college, reflecting the family's emphasis on education and the potential for upward mobility.

This family represents a polyandrous household, comprising multiple male partners, a shared workforce, and diverse educational backgrounds. The family balances traditional farming activities with formal employment and education, reflecting their adaptation to changing socio-economic dynamics while maintaining traditional practices. The combined income and varied roles highlight the economic and social structure of polyandrous families in the region.

Table 4.5: Details of Family Members (P2)

Sr No	Age	Relation	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	46	Husband	M	10 th	Tailoring	250000
02	42	Husband	M	8 th	Farmer	
03	40	wife	F	9 th	House wife & Farming	
04	75	Father	M	Illiterate	All help in daily house work	
05	71	Father	M	5 th		
06	70	Mother	F	Illiterate		
07	19	Daughter	F	In 12 th	NA	
08	17	Daughter	F	In 10 th		

Table No. 4.5 outlines the family structure, demographics, education, occupations, and income details of Participant 2 (P2), providing a detailed view of a polyandrous family in the study.

The first husband, aged 46, has completed 10th grade and works as a tailor, contributing ₹2.5 lakh annually to the family's income. The second husband, aged 42, has an 8th-grade education and is actively engaged in farming, ensuring the family's agricultural needs are met. The wife, aged 40, has studied up to the 9th grade and manages farming alongside household responsibilities, showcasing her multifaceted role in the family.

The family includes three elder members: Father 1, aged 75, who, despite being illiterate, assists in daily household chores; Father 2, aged 71, who has a 5th-grade education and provides additional support; and the mother, aged 70, who is also illiterate but plays an integral role in the household dynamics. The daughter, aged 19, is pursuing her 12th-grade education, highlighting the family's commitment to the education of younger members.

This family illustrates a polyandrous setup with shared responsibilities among male partners and support from elder family members. While one husband earns through tailoring, the other focuses on farming, balancing traditional and modern livelihood practices. The presence of elderly family members assisting with household tasks and the educational aspirations of the daughter reflect the family's intergenerational cooperation and gradual integration of contemporary values. The family's total income highlights their modest financial stability amidst a mix of traditional roles and evolving societal norms.

Table 4.6: Details of Family Members (P3)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	36	Wife	F	9 th	House wife & Farmer	Together 3 lakhs to 3.50 PA
02	40	Husband 1	M	10 th	Meson	-Do-
03	37	Husband 2	M	12 th	Lok Mitr-kender	-Do-
04	73	Father	M	6 th	Old Age	-Do-
05	69	Mother	F	2 nd	Old Age	-Do-

06	19	Daughter	F	BA I	College Going	NA
07	17	Daughter	F	11 th	School Going	NA
08	13	Son	M	7 th	School Going	NA

Table No 4.6 provides an overview of the family members of Participant 3 (P3), highlighting their relationships, age, education, occupations, and financial contributions.

The wife, aged 36, has completed her 9th grade and contributes to the family by managing household chores and participating in farming, with the family earning an estimated annual income of ₹3 to ₹3.5 lakh. The first husband, aged 40, is a mason and holds a 10th-grade education, providing skilled labor to support the family. The second husband, aged 37, has completed 12th grade and works at a LokMitra Kendra, adding further financial support through his government service-related role.

The elderly father, aged 73, has a 6th-grade education but, due to his age, does not engage in formal work, though he may assist with lighter duties. The mother, aged 69, has a 2nd-grade education and, like the father, is in old age but contributes to the household in more traditional roles. The eldest daughter, aged 19, is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in her first year of college, highlighting the family's focus on higher education. The second daughter, aged 17, is continuing her education in 11th grade, while the youngest child, a son aged 13, is in the 7th grade, reflecting the family's ongoing support for the education of all children.

This polyandrous family demonstrates a balance of traditional and modern roles. The husbands' professions—masonry and work at a LokMitra Kendra—ensure a steady income, while the wife contributes through farming and household management. The presence of elderly parents adds a multigenerational dynamic, emphasizing traditional family values. The children's educational pursuits indicate the family's focus on empowering the younger generation through education, aiming for a better future while maintaining cultural roots. The family's overall income suggests moderate financial stability.

Table 4.7: Details of Family Members (P4)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	39	Husband 1	M	12 th	Shopkeeper & Farmer	2.5 to 3.5 Lakh PA
02	45	Husband 2	M	8 th	Farmer	Combined
03	38	wife	F	12 th	Beauty Parlour	Combined
04	67	Father	M	Illiterate	NA	NA
05	17	Daughter	F	School Going	NA	NA
06	15	Daughter	F	Do	NA	NA
07	11	Daughter	F	Do	NA	NA
08	07	Boy	M	Do	NA	NA

Table No. 4.7 provides information about the family members of Participant 4 (P4), including their relationships, age, education, occupation, and income sources. The first husband, aged 39, has completed 12th grade and contributes to the family by working as both a shopkeeper and a farmer, with the family earning an estimated annual income of ₹2.5 to ₹3.5 lakh. The second husband, aged 45, holds an 8th-grade education and works as a farmer, further supporting the family financially through agricultural work. The wife, aged 38, has also completed 12th grade and works at a beauty parlour, providing additional income with her professional skills.

The father, aged 67, is illiterate and does not hold a formal occupation but offers emotional and traditional support to the family, a typical role in many multigenerational households. The eldest daughter, aged 17, is a school-going student, underscoring the family's emphasis on education for its younger members. The second daughter, aged 15, is also a school student, reinforcing the family's commitment to education. The third daughter, aged 11, continues her education, and the youngest child, a 7-year-old son, is in early education, highlighting the family's dedication to ensuring that all children, regardless of gender, receive an education.

The family of Participant 4 shows a combination of modern and traditional roles. Both husbands contribute financially through their respective occupations as a shopkeeper, farmer, and farmer, while the wife also contributes through her beauty parlour work. The

family's income is moderate, ranging between ₹2.5 and ₹3.5 lakh annually. The family places a significant emphasis on education, with all the children attending school, which suggests a progressive mind-set for future generations. The presence of an illiterate father highlights the role of the elderly in the family, providing wisdom and cultural support despite a lack of formal education.

Table 4.8: Details of Family Members (P5)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	40	Wife	F	8 th	Farmer	2.50 lakh Annually
02	42	Husband	M 2	10 th	Private job	
03	48	Husband	M 1	7 th	Farmer & MNREGA	
04	67	Mother	F	Illiterate	Helping in daily house work	
05	20	Son	M	College going	NA	
06	21	Son	M			

Table No. 4.8 gives a summary of Participant 5's family structure, educational background, jobs, and sources of income. (P5). The wife, aged 40, has completed her education up to the 8th grade and works as a farmer, contributing significantly to the family's annual income of approximately ₹2.5 lakh. The first husband, aged 48, has studied up to the 7th grade and works both as a farmer and participates in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) scheme, which helps provide additional financial support. The second husband, aged 42, has completed 10th grade and holds a private job, adding an extra layer of economic stability to the family.

The mother, aged 67, is illiterate but plays a vital role by assisting in daily household tasks, offering essential non-financial support that helps the family function smoothly. The eldest son, aged 20, is currently pursuing a college education, reflecting the family's commitment to providing higher education for their children. The second son, aged 21, is

not mentioned with specific details about his education or occupation, which suggests that he may also be pursuing education or preparing to contribute to the family's economic structure.

This family demonstrates a blend of traditional and modern roles. The wife and both husbands contribute to the household income through farming, MNREGA participation, and a private job. The annual income of ₹2.5 lakh reflects modest means, balanced by the family's effort to ensure educational opportunities for their children. The mother, despite being illiterate, plays an active role in managing household responsibilities. This family setup showcases a mix of economic interdependence and a focus on the next generation's education.

Table 4.9: Details of Family Members (P6)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	41	Husband 2	M	9 th	Factory	2 to 2.50 lakh Annually
02	50	Husband 1	M	4 th	Labor and farming	
03	42	Wife	F	3 rd	Housewife	
04	20	Son	M	ITI going on	NA	
05	17	Daughter	F	School going		
06	15	Daughter	F			
07	12	Daughter	F			
08	10	Son	M			

Table No. 4.9 outlines the family composition, educational background, and occupations of Participant 6 (P6), emphasizing the contributions and roles of each member. The elder husband, aged 50, has completed up to the 4th grade and works in labor and farming, contributing to the family's financial stability through traditional occupations. The younger husband, aged 41, has completed 9th grade and works in a factory, earning an annual income of ₹2 to ₹2.5 lakh, which forms a significant part of the family's

livelihood. The wife, aged 42, has studied up to the 3rd grade and is a housewife who manages the domestic responsibilities, playing a crucial role in the family's daily life.

The elder son, aged 20, is pursuing vocational education at an Industrial Training Institute (ITI), reflecting the family's desire to enhance future earning opportunities. The daughters, aged 17, 15, and 12, are all school-going, showcasing the family's commitment to providing basic education to their children, despite their limited resources. The youngest son, aged 10, is also in school, highlighting the family's dedication to ensuring that all their children receive an education.

This family demonstrates a balanced division of roles with contributions from husbands, one through labor and farming and the other through factory work. The wife provides domestic support, while the children, especially the elder son pursuing ITI, highlight the family's focus on skill development and education. Despite modest educational backgrounds, the family invests in education for the younger generation to ensure better economic prospects.

Table 4.10: Details of Family Members (P7)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	55	Wife	F	Illiterate	House wife	30000 Annually
02	63	Husband	M	6 th	Little bit farming	
03	61	Husband	M	5 th	(Old age pension)	

In table 4.10, the family consists of a 55-year-old wife who is illiterate and manages household chores, earning an annual income of ₹30,000. The 63-year-old husband has a 6th-grade education, engages in small-scale farming, and receives an old-age pension. Another male family member, aged 61 and educated up to the 5th grade, has limited contributions. The family has two married daughters who are no longer part of the household, leaving behind a small, elderly-centered family structure reliant on modest farming and pension.

This household exhibits a minimal-income structure, with older members primarily depending on small-scale farming and government pension benefits. The absence of younger family members reduces the earning capacity, indicating a dependency on subsistence agriculture and social security.

Table 4.11: Details of Family Members (P8)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	50	Wife	F	Illiterate	House wife MNREGA	Annually 4 lakhs
02	58	Husband 1	M	5 th	Farmer	
03	54	Husband 2	M	7 th	Farmer	
04	82	Father	M	Illiterate	Old aged	
05	79	Father	M	Illiterate		
06	28	Son	M	Graduate	Both working in factory	
07	26	Daughter in law	F	12 th		
08	23	Son	M	Graduate	Multitask worker in PWD	

Table 4.11 describes a household with a 50-year-old wife who helps out with housework and MNREGA despite not being literate. Both of the husbands, who are farmers and only have a fifth- or seventh-grade education, respectively, are 58 and 54 years old. Two old men, ages 79 and 82, are illiterate and rely on others to take care of them. While one graduate son (age 23) works as a multitasker at PWD, the other graduate son (age 28) and his wife, who has a 12th grade education, work in a factory.

The family showcases a blend of traditional and modern roles, where older generations are dependent, and younger members diversify income sources through formal employment and factory work. The household achieves an annual income of ₹4 lakhs through a mix of farming, MNREGA, and external jobs.

Table 4.12: Details of Family Members (P9)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	54	Husband 1	M	7 th	Laborer & Farmer	Annually 6 lakhs
02	52	Husband 2	M	9 th	Farmer	
03	48	Wife	F	6 th	House wife	
04	74	Mother	F	Illiterate	Old aged	
05	29	Son	M	ITI	Electrician	
06	27	Daughter in law	F	12 th	Shopkeeper	
07	26	Son	M	Graduate	Working in hotel	
08	25	Daughter in law	F	11 th	Farming & House wife	
09	23	Son	M	12 th	Shop	

In table no. 4.12 family are supported by two husbands—one (54), a laborer and farmer (7th grade), and the other (52), a farmer (9th grade)—together contributing ₹6 lakhs annually. The 48-year-old wife is a housewife with a 6th-grade education. The household includes an elderly mother (74), who is illiterate, and three sons engaged in diverse occupations: one is an ITI-trained electrician, one works in a hotel, and another runs a shop. Two daughters-in-law are involved in farming and shop keeping.

This is a moderately affluent family with members contributing to income through a mix of farming, labor, and skilled occupations. The younger generation has diversified into technical and entrepreneurial roles, reflecting a shift from traditional farming.

Table 4.13: Details of Family Members (P10)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	38	Wife	F	10 th	Shopkeeper	All together 3

						lakh PA
02	40	Husband 1	M	12 th	Motor Mechanic	Do
03	43	Husband 2	M	10 th	Driver& Farming	Do
04	18	Daughter	F	12 th	Helping house & Farming	DO
05	15	Daughter	F	School Going	NA	NA
06	11	Daughter	F	School Going	NA	NA

Table No. 4.13 presents the case of a wife aged 38, who works as a shopkeeper with a 10th-grade education and contributes to an annual household income of ₹3 lakhs. The two husbands, aged 40 and 43, are engaged in occupations as a motor mechanic and a driver/farmer, respectively. The daughters (aged 18, 15, and 11) assist with farming and household tasks or are still in school.

This family relies on multiple income streams, including a shop, mechanical work, and farming. The younger generation is actively involved in education or household activities, reflecting an effort to balance traditional roles with emerging opportunities.

Table 4.14: Details of Family Members (P11)

Sr No	Age	Relationships	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	37	Wife	F	12 th	Aaganwadi	PA 5 lakh
02	39	Husband 1	M	10 th	Private Job & Farming	
03	41	Husband 2	M	12 th	Govt Job	
04	63	Father	M	4 th	Helping in farming	
05	60	Mother	F	3 rd	Do	
06	17	Son	M	School Going	Do	
07	14	Son	M	School Going	Do	
08	12	Daughter	F	School Going	Do	

Table No. 4.14 shows the profile of a family with a 37-year-old woman who works as an Aanganwadi worker and makes a substantial contribution to the ₹5 lakhs yearly income of the home. In addition to overseeing farm operations, the two spouses, who are 39 and 41 years old, work for the government and business. The children are currently enrolled in school, while the aging parents assist with domestic tasks. The children are 17, 14, and 12 years old.

The family balances traditional farming with modern employment in both private and government sectors. The wife's Aanganwadi job highlights the increasing role of women in contributing to household income. The younger generation's focus on education indicates aspirations for improved economic prospects.

Table 4.15: Details of Family Members (P12)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	41	Wife	F	10 th	House wife & Farmer	Annually 4 lakh
02	44	Husband 2	M	12 th	petrol pump	
03	46	Husband 1	M	10 th	Fruits and vegetables shop	
04	68	Mother	F	2 nd	Old aged	
05	21	Son	M	Graduate	Helping in farming	NA
06	21	Son	M	Graduate		
07	17	Daughter	F	11 th		
08	15	Son	M	9 th		

Table No. 4.15 discussed a family that includes a 41-year-old wife who is a housewife and farmer, contributing to an annual income of ₹4 lakhs. One husband (44) works at a petrol pump, while the other (46) runs a fruit and vegetable shop. An elderly mother (68) supports household tasks. The two 21-year-old graduate sons assist with farming, while younger children are pursuing education.

The family demonstrates a balanced approach to livelihood, integrating farming, business, and formal employment. The emphasis on the younger generation's education and involvement in farming reflects aspirations for continued economic stability and growth.

Table 4.16: Details of Family Members (P13)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	40	Husband 1	M	10 th	Driver	Annually 2.5 lakh
02	38	Husband 2	M	2 nd	Labour	
03	36	Wife	F	9 th	House wife & farming	
04	67	Father	M	Illiterate	Old age	
05	17	Son	M	School going	NA	
06	14	Daughter	F			

The family profile in Table No. 4.16 consists of a 40-year-old driver who makes ₹2.5 lakhs a year and a 38-year-old laborer who has completed the second grade. The 36-year-old spouse, who completed the ninth grade, oversees both farming and household duties. While the children, a 14-year-old daughter and a 17-year-old boy, are presently pursuing their education, the 67-year-old father is illiterate and dependent on the family.

The household primarily relies on the income from driving and labor work. While the wife contributes through farming, the family faces financial limitations due to limited educational attainment and reliance on basic income sources.

Table 4.17: Details of Family Members (P14)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	46	Wife	F	9 th	House wife & MNREGA	Annually 3 lakhs
02	52	Husband	M	9 th	Farming	
03	80	Father	M	Illiterate	Old aged	
04	78	Father	M	Illiterate		
05	22	Daughter	F	Going college	NA	
06	20	Daughter	F	Going college	NA	

The family profile in Table No. 4.17 includes a 46-year-old wife who works as an MNREGA employee and takes care of the home, earning ₹3 lakhs a year. The 52-year-old spouse is a farmer with a 9th-grade education. Due to their lack of literacy, the two elderly fathers, who are 78 and 80 years old, rely on the younger generation for assistance. One of the daughters, who are 20 and 22, is presently enrolled in college, and both are working for higher education.

The family strikes a balance between traditional farming and government employment schemes (MNREGA). With the younger generation focusing on higher education, the family demonstrates aspirations for upward mobility despite dependence on basic agricultural practices.

Table 4.18: Details of Family Members (P15)

Sr. No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	58	Husband 1	M	Illiterate	All together doing house work, Animal Husbandry & Farming	Annually 8 lakhs
02	52	Husband 2	M	9 th		
03	50	Wife	F	5 th		
04	28	Son	M	10 th		
05	25	Daughter in law	F	10 th		
06	26	Son	M	12 th		
07	24	Daughter in law	F	12 th		
08	24	Daughter	F	Doing PG		

The family profile in Table No. 4.18 consists of a 58-year-old husband and a 52-year-old second husband who work in agriculture, animal husbandry, and housekeeping. The 50-year-old wife actively participates in these household and economic endeavors, having completed the fifth grade of education. Two boys, ages 28 and 26, and their spouses comprise the younger generation. All have completed at least the 10th or 12th grade, and there is a 24-year-old daughter enrolled in a postgraduate program. A total of ₹8 lakhs is earned by the household each year.

The adaptive aspect of polyandrous family arrangements, where shared responsibilities and combined labor maintain household stability and economic resilience, is notably reflected in the intergenerational cooperation in both the domestic and economic domains. The younger generation's educational pursuits highlight the family's investment in their future.

Table 4.19: Details of Family Members (P16)

Sr No	Age	Relationship	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	26	Wife	F	Graduate	Teaching in privet school	Annually 7 lakhs
02	27	Husband 1	M	12 th	House work Farming & shopkeeper	
03	27	Husband 2	M	12 th		
04	52	Father	M	9 th		
05	50	Mother	F	6 th		
08	80	Grand mother	F	Illiterate	old aged	

Table No. 4.19 includes a 26-year-old wife who is a graduate and works as a private school teacher, contributing to an annual income of ₹7 lakhs. Two husbands (both aged 27) support household tasks, farming, and shopkeeping. The elder generation, comprising the father (52) and mother (50), are educated up to the 9th and 6th grades, respectively, and assist in family activities. The grandmother (80) is illiterate and dependent.

This family spans three generations, with the first and third generations in polyandrous marriages, while the second generation opted out. This family showcases generational variations in marriage practices, transitioning in and out of polyandry. With a diversified income structure and emphasis on education, the household reflects modern values and a strong economic foundation.

Details of Family Members of Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussion 1

Table 4.20: Details of Family Members

Sr No	Relationship	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	Wife	36	F	9 th	House wife & Farmer	Annually 7.5 lakh
02	Husband	42	M	10 th	Govt Job	
03	Husband	39	M	4 th	Farmer	
04	Son	18	M	12 th	Farmer	
05	Son	15	M	School Going	NA	

Table No. 4.20 (FGD 1) indicates that the family in the focused group discussion has a 36-year-old wife who completed the ninth grade and is responsible for managing the household and agricultural duties, earning ₹7.5 lakhs annually. The first husband, 42, works for the government and has finished the 10th grade. The second husband, 39, is a farmer and has only completed the 4th grade. An 18-year-old who works as a farmer and a 15-year-old who is still in school are the couple's two sons. This scenario illustrates Shillai Tehsil's ongoing socioeconomic shift in polyandrous households, where new contemporary job prospects coexist with traditional agrarian livelihoods.

Focus Group Discussion 2

Table 4.21: Details of Family Members

Sr No	Relationship	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	Husband	40	M	10 th	Driver	Annually 5 lakhs
02	Husband	48	M	12 th	Peon	
03	Wife	39	F	12 th	Shopkeeper & Farmer	
04	Daughter	19	F	College going	Helping in farming	NA
05	Daughter	14	F	School going		

Table No. 4.21 (FGD 2) presents the profile of a family led by a 40-year-old husband who works as a driver and earns an annual income of ₹5 lakhs. The second husband, aged 48, is employed as a peon and has completed education up to the 12th grade. The wife, aged 39, is also educated up to the 12th grade and works as a shopkeeper and farmer. The family has two daughters, aged 19 and 14; the elder daughter is pursuing college education and assists in farming, while the younger one is currently attending school.

The family benefits from diverse income sources, including government employment, farming, and business. The focus on education for the daughters indicates a progressive outlook despite traditional family roles.

Focus Group Discussion 3

Table 4.22: Details of Family Members

Sr No	Relationship	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	Husband	43	M	9 th	Farming	Annually 3lakh
02	Husband	38	M	7 th	Factory	
03	wife	35	F	9 th	private Job & Farming	
04	Father	67	M	2 nd	help in house work	
05	Mother	60	F	Illiterate	help in house work	

The profile of a family is shown in Table No. 4.22 (FGD 3), which includes a 43-year-old farmer who completed the ninth grade and a 38-year-old factory worker who completed the seventh grade. The 35-year-old wife, who completed the ninth grade, works as a sweeper at a private school and helps out around the farm. With the mother being illiterate and the father having only completed the second grade, the elderly parents, who are 60 and 67 years old, offer little assistance around the house. The yearly income of the household is ₹3 lakhs.

This scenario illustrates a combination of traditional and contemporary job responsibilities, where a modest but steady life is facilitated by a lack of formal education and reliance on several sources of income.

Focus Group Discussion 4

Table 4.23: Details of Family Members

Sr No	Relationship	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	wife	56	F	Illiterate	House wife & Farmer	Annually 2 lakhs
02	Husband	62	M	3 rd	Farmer	
03	Husband	58	M	2 nd	Farmer & MNREGA	
04	Father	80	M	Illiterate	At home (due to health)	NA

Table No. 4.23 (FGD 4) describes the characteristics of a family that includes a 56-year-old lady who earns ₹2 lakhs a year from farming and home chores while being illiterate. The two husbands, the first 62 and the second 58, are both farmers and have only completed the third and second grades of school, respectively. Due to health concerns, the 80-year-old father is unable to participate in home chores and is illiterate. A mentally ill 35-year-old daughter who completed the eighth grade is also a member of the family. In Shillai Tehsil's polyandrous homes, this instance illustrates the enduring nature of traditional agrarian livelihoods as well as the difficulties experienced by older and dependent family members.

The family faces economic and health challenges due to low education levels and dependency on manual labor. The presence of an ill family member and an elderly dependent further strains the family resources.

Details of Family Members of Case Study

Case Study 1

Table 4.24: Details of Family Members

Sr No	Relationship	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
1	Wife	29	F	12 th	Tailoring	Annually 10 lakhs
2	Husband	35	M	12 th	Govt. job	
3	Husband	32	M	10 th	Farming	
4	Daughter	02	F	NA		

The profile of a family is shown in Table No. 4.24 (Case Study 1) and includes a 29-year-old wife who has completed the 12th grade, works as a tailor, and supplies ₹10 lakhs in household income annually. The first husband is 35 years old and works for the government. He has completed the 12th grade, while the second husband is 32 years old and a farmer with only a 10th-grade education. Their daughter is two years old. A balanced mix of government work, farming, and self-employment shows this family's financial stability and emphasizes the wife's active economic contribution to maintaining the home.

Case Study 2

Table 4.25: Details of Family Members

Sr No	Relationship	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	Husband	40	M	PHD	Farmer	450000 PA
02	Husband	46	M	8 th	Meson	
03	Husband	43	M	12 th	Carpenter	
04	Wife	40	F	10 th	House wife	
05	Son	19	M	12 th	NA	
06	Daughter	16	F	10 th		NA
07	Daughter	14	F	8 th		NA

Table No. 4.25 (Case Study 2) illustrates a distinct instance of a polyandrous family with three husbands and one wife. With a Ph.D. and a farming career, the first spouse, 43, provides ₹4.5 lakhs to the home annually. The third husband, forty, is a carpenter with a 12th-grade education, while the second husband, forty-six, worked as a mason after graduating from the eighth grade. The forty-year-old wife is a homemaker who completed the tenth grade. The children consist of a 14-year-old daughter in the eighth grade, a 16-year-old daughter enrolled in the tenth grade, and a 19-year-old son who has finished the twelfth grade. A 19-year-old son who has finished the 12th grade, a 16-year-old daughter enrolled in the 10th grade, and a 14-year-old daughter in the 8th grade are among the children.

This rare polyandrous family model in Shillai tehsil demonstrates strong collaboration among members to sustain their livelihood. Education is emphasized for the children, and the family's combined incomes support a moderately stable economic status.

Case Study 3

Table 4.26: Details of Family Members (CS3)

Sr No	Relation	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	Wife	42	F	Graduate	Teacher	Annually 4.5 lakh
02	Husband 2	44	M	8 th	Farming & labour	
03	Husband 1	46	M	11 th	Farming	
04	Daughter	20	F	College student	Helping in farming	NA
05	Daughter	18	F	12 th		
06	Son	15	M	9 th		
07	Son	11	M	6 th		
08	Mother	76	F	Illiterate		

Table No. 4.26 (Case Study 3) details a family headed by a 42-year-old wife who is a graduate who works as a teacher, manages the home, and farms, earning ₹4.5 lakhs a year. The first husband is 46 years old and a farmer with an 11th-grade education. The second husband is 44 years old and oversees both farming and labor duties. He has an 8th grade education. The mother, 76, is illiterate, and the family has four children: a daughter, 20, who is a college student; an 18-year-old daughter who has finished the 12th grade; a 15-year-old son who is in the 9th grade; and an 11-year-old son who is in the 6th grade.

This instance illustrates how traditional agrarian practices and contemporary educational goals can coexist in a polyandrous household by combining educational attainment, job diversification, and gender role flexibility. This family's income is derived from a mix of government welfare work, private employment, labor, and farming. She is a teacher by profession and holds a graduate degree. Her position illustrates the changing status of women, who are increasingly assuming professional and educational roles. Notwithstanding the older generation's poor level of education, the youngsters are making academic progress and exhibiting the possibility of upward mobility.

Case Study 4

Table 4.27: Details of Family Members (CS4)

Sr No	Relationship	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Income
01	Wife	50	F	7 th	House wife	Annually 7.5 lakh
02	Husband 2	48	M	10 th	Privet job	
03	Husband 1	52	M	10 th	All together & shopkeeper & farming	
04	Son	21	M	College going		
05	Son	17	M	School going		

In the family outlined in Table No. 4.27 (Case Study 4), the 50-year-old wife, who completed the seventh grade, oversees home duties and helps the family make ₹7.5 lakhs a year. In addition to farming, the two husbands, ages 52 and 48, who both completed the tenth grade, co-manage a store. The two sons of the family are a 17-year-old who is in school and a 21-year-old who is a college student. This instance serves as an example of how a variety of professions, including farming and business, support stable finances. Children's involvement in schooling in a polyandrous household is indicative of the family's emphasis on generational advancement and upward mobility.

Motivation behind polyandry tradition

Polyandry, the practice of a woman having multiple husbands, is motivated by various social, economic, and cultural factors. In some communities, polyandry is seen as a solution to challenges related to resource distribution, particularly in regions with limited land or resources, as it prevents the fragmentation of land among multiple heirs. Additionally, cultural and religious beliefs may dictate the acceptance of polyandry, with some societies seeing it as a norm. The practice can also be motivated by personal and emotional fulfillment, as it provides a unique family structure that may offer stronger emotional and practical support.

Table 4.28: Factors Contributing to Polyandrous Relationships

Factor	No of Participants	Percentage
Cultural or religious beliefs	7	19.44
Economic considerations	6	16.67
Personal and emotional fulfillment	4	11.11
All above mentioned	19	52.78
Any Other	0	0
Total	36	100

Table No. 4.28 lists the variables that affect the choice to enter into polyandrous relationships. According to the results, cultural and religious views are important because 19.44% of respondents said they were the main driving force. Economic factors were mentioned by 16.67% of participants, especially the protection of family resources and

land. A complex interaction of cultural, economic, and emotional variables shapes the practice, as evidenced by the 11.11% that went for personal and emotional fulfillment.

Table 4.29: Cultural or Religious Contexts

Cultural or religious contexts	No of Participants	Percentage
Yes	31	86.11
No	2	5.56
Don't know	3	8.33
Total	36	100

According to Table No. 4.29, a sizable majority of participants (86.11%) associated polyandry with traditional belief systems, indicating that the practice is still more common in particular cultural and religious contexts. In these societies, polyandry is seen as a respected and socially acceptable institution that is ingrained in religious doctrine or cultural standards. This practice's continued existence is linked to preserving social order, controlling inheritance, and handling resource scarcity—all of which are intricately linked to cultural identity and communal values.

Table 4.30: Potential Advantages of Polyandry

Potential advantages of polyandry	No of Participants	Percentage
Increased emotional support	3	8.33
Shared responsibilities and workload	5	13.89
Variety in intimate relationships	3	8.33
All above mentioned	23	63.89
Any other (please specify)	2	5.56
Total	36	100

The perceived benefits of polyandry as expressed by participants are shown in Table No. 4.30. The most often mentioned benefit (63.89%) is the amalgamation of several benefits, including variety in close relationships, shared responsibility, and improved emotional support. All of these elements work together to lessen the strain on any one person and to foster a cohesive, emotionally stable family unit. Furthermore, the transfer of labor and resources made possible by polyandry enhances the household's overall economic and

social stability, which is especially beneficial in rural or resource-constrained environments.

Table 4.31: Involvement in a Polyandrous Relationship

Involvement in a polyandrous relationship	No of Participants	Percentage
Personal choice	2	5.56
Cultural or religious reasons	17	47.22
Open communication with partners	1	2.78
All above mentioned	16	44.44
Others (please specify__		0
Total	36	100

Table No. 4.31 shows the variables that affect participation in polyandrous partnerships. Religious or cultural reasons were cited by the majority of responders (47.22%), indicating the practice's historical roots. To further demonstrate a balance between tradition and human agency, 44.44% of respondents mentioned a combination of personal choice, cultural or religious convictions, and open communication between partners. The fact that a smaller percentage (5.56%) cited personal preference as the main driver highlights the growing influence of autonomy in forming modern polyandrous partnerships.

Table 4.32: Consider Being in a Polyandrous Relationship

Consider being in a polyandrous relationship	No of Participants	Percentage
Yes, I would be open to it	9	25
No, I'm not interested	17	47.22
Maybe, it depends on the circumstances	3	8.33
Not sure	7	19.45
Total	36	100

Perceptions of participants' willingness to participate in a polyandrous relationship are shown in Table No. 4.32. The results show a mixed attitude: while a higher percentage (47.22%) rejected the idea, 25% indicated that they were open to it. This suggests that polyandry is still a less popular choice. And 19.45% were unsure, while 8.33% said they might think about it in certain situations. These results indicate that opinions regarding polyandry are still influenced by culture and individual concerns, despite some acceptability.

Table 4.33: Religion and cultural beliefs influence the acceptance of Polyandry

Religion and cultural beliefs influence the acceptance of Polyandry	No of Participants	Percentage
They strongly oppose polyandry	5	13.89
They are neutral and can vary depending on the specific religion/culture	11	30.56
They accept and support polyandry	7	19.44
All above mentioned	7	19.44
Not sure	4	11.11
Other (please specify)	2	5.56
Total	36	100

Table No. 4.33 highlights the role of religion and cultural beliefs in shaping the acceptance of polyandry. The data reveal a varied response—30.56% of participants remained neutral, indicating that acceptance often depends on specific religious or cultural settings. While 19.44% supported polyandry and an equal share held mixed opinions, 13.89% strongly opposed the practice, reflecting prevailing resistance within certain communities. Overall, the findings suggest that acceptance of polyandry is context-dependent, influenced by cultural traditions, belief systems, and varying degrees of social tolerance.

Table 4.34: Polyandry Challenges Traditional Gender Roles and Expectations

Polyandry challenges traditional gender roles and expectations	No of Participants	Percentage
Yes, it promotes gender equality	6	16.67
No, it reinforces traditional gender roles	7	19.44
It depends on the specific dynamics of the relationship	17	47.22
I don't know	6	16.67
Total	36	100

The responses in Table 4.34 show a mixed view on whether polyandry challenges traditional gender roles and expectations. A minority (16.67%) believes that polyandry promotes gender equality, suggesting that it allows for more balanced power dynamics between men and women. However, a similar proportion (19.44%) feels that polyandry reinforces traditional gender roles, indicating that some view polyandry as simply an

extension of patriarchal structures. The majority (47.22%) believe that the impact of polyandry on gender roles depends on the specific dynamics of the relationship, suggesting that the practice itself does not uniformly challenge or reinforce gender norms but is influenced by individual circumstances. A small portion (16.67%) is unsure about this issue.

Table 4.35: Perceived Power Dynamics in a Polyandrous Relationship

Perceive the power dynamics in a polyandrous relationship	Participants	%
Equal - All partners have equal power and agency.	19	52.78
Unequal - There is likely to be a power imbalance.	3	8.34
It varies depending on the specific relationship.	7	19.44
I'm not sure about the power dynamics in polyandry.	7	19.44
Total	36	100

Table 4.35 indicates that most participants (52.78%) perceive polyandry as promoting equal power dynamics, where all partners have equal power and agency. This suggests that polyandrous relationships may offer a more balanced distribution of power compared to traditional marital structures. However, a small portion (8.34%) believes there is likely to be a power imbalance, perhaps due to external social or familial pressures. Another 19.44% feel that power dynamics in polyandry vary depending on the specific relationship, while the same percentage (19.44%) remain unsure about how power is distributed in such unions. This shows that perceptions of power in polyandry are diverse and may vary based on individual cases.

Table 4.36: Gender Roles of Men and Women in Polyandry

Gender roles of men and women clearly outlined or flexible in polyandry	Participants	%
Yes	15	41.67
No	21	58.33
Total	36	100

The data in Table 4.36 reveals a significant division in opinions about whether gender roles in polyandry are clearly outlined or flexible. While 41.67% of participants believe that genders roles are clearly outlined in polyandrous relationships, a larger proportion (58.33%) disagree, suggesting that gender roles may be more flexible or not strictly defined in such arrangements. This indicates that polyandrous relationships may allow for

more fluid and negotiable roles for both men and women, which contrasts with the rigid expectations typically found in monogamous societies.

Table 4.37: Are You Satisfied with the Role Allocated by Society/Family?

Are you satisfied with role allocated by society/family?	No of Participants	Percentage
Yes	11	68.75
No	5	31.25
Total	16	100

Table 4.37 shows how satisfied participants were with the positions that society or their families assigned them. The fact that the majority of the 16 participants (68.75%) expressed happiness shows that many people are happy with the responsibilities they have been assigned by their families or society. Nonetheless, 31.25% of participants voiced discontent, suggesting that some might feel constrained or yearn for more freedom. This result emphasizes that role satisfaction varies even among polyandrous households—people may still find it difficult to define their social roles appropriately and battle with conventional expectations.

Table 4.38: Both Men and Women Work for Livelihood

Both men and women work for livelihood	No of Participants	Percentage
Yes	35	97.22
No	1	2.78
Total	36	100

The results in Table 4.38 indicate that a vast majority (97.22%) of participants believe both men and women contribute to the livelihood of their families. This highlights a shared responsibility in household income generation, with both genders actively participating in work outside the home, likely reflecting modern economic realities where both partners contribute to family finances. Only 2.78% of participants disagree with this, which may suggest rare cases where one partner, likely the male, is the sole breadwinner, and the other partner (female) may not engage in paid work

Table 4.39: Challenges do you foresee in polyandrous relationships

Challenges do you foresee in polyandrous relationships	No of Participants	Percentage
Balancing time and attention among multiple partners	20	55.56
Managing potential conflicts and jealousy	9	25
Navigating societal stigma and judgments	7	19.44
Total	36	100

Table 4.39 presents the challenges that participants foresee in polyandrous relationships. The most common concern (55.56%) is balancing time and attention among multiple partners. This reflects the difficulty in managing multiple relationships simultaneously, where each partner's needs must be met. A quarter (25%) of participants expressed concerns about managing potential conflicts and jealousy, which could arise from the emotional complexity of polyandrous relationships. Finally, 19.44% are worried about societal stigma and judgments, which indicates that polyandry is still viewed with skepticism or disapproval by society, potentially leading to social exclusion or bias.

Table 4.40: Factors that might influence changes in the polyandrous system

Factors that might influence changes in the polyandrous system	No of Participants	Percentage
Education	5	13.89
Interaction with media and social media	0	0
Infrastructural development like roads; medical and health facilities	0	0
Interaction with other society	0	0
Employment	3	8.33
All above mentioned	28	77.78
Total	36	100

Table 4.40 outlines the factors that might influence changes in the polyandrous system. A dominant majority (77.78%) believes that all the mentioned factors—education, employment, interaction with other societies, and infrastructural development—will contribute to changes in the practice of polyandry. Education (13.89%) and employment (8.33%) are seen as primary drivers of change, suggesting that increased awareness, access to knowledge, and economic opportunities could shift social structures. The

absence of interaction with media, social media, and infrastructural development in this context (0%) suggests that while such factors might influence other cultural practices, they are not seen as critical to altering polyandrous relationships in this case.

Qualitative analysis

In-depth interview analysis

Motivation behind the polyandry tradition

The historical and cultural roots of polyandry

Polyandry has historically been ingrained in many cultures' cultural and practical realities, especially in areas with scarce resources and difficult geographic conditions. The necessity to protect family unity, prevent land division, and guarantee the family's financial existence served as the key driving forces behind this custom.

Religious and traditional beliefs that promoted cooperation and togetherness frequently provided support for the spiritual and cultural value of polyandry. According to Respondent Telu Ram (Male, 50), "Our ancestors thought that brothers should live together like Pandavas, without jealousy or division."

Although polyandry is less prevalent now, certain groups still consider it to be an important aspect of their cultural legacy. Respondent Hari Krishan (Male, 32) remarked nostalgically, "Our elders survived because of it, even though we don't follow it now." It strengthened families.

The participants concurred that although this tradition was crucial in the past; its significance has diminished due to contemporary factors like urbanization, education, and alternative work options. "Now, girls are educated and working," said Respondent Meera (Female, 37). They are opposed to sharing husbands. Life has evolved.

Likewise, polyandry "was not forced; it was our way of living together peacefully," according to Respondent Kanta (Female, 55). There was no argument—just one house,

one lady, and one kitchen. These stories demonstrate how polyandry preserved resources and promoted family unity by enabling brothers to share a female.

Specific Rituals, Ceremonies, or Norms Associated with Polyandry

In the past, polyandrous marriages within societies were identified by unique rites and rituals that reflected their practical use and cultural value. These customs all emphasized peace, unity, and avoiding rivalry amongst brothers who share a wife.

"During our grandfather's time, the bride would perform the Saptapadi not only with one husband but also symbolically with all brothers," explained Respondent Desh Raj (Male, 58). It displayed unity and equality. Customs like the Saptapadi, in which the bride walked seven steps beside each brother, and the village elders' communal blessing ceremony, represented shared duties and the welfare of the entire family.

According to Respondent Kaushalya Devi (Female, 52), "The wife was introduced to each brother through a family custom known as Parivariksanskar after marriage. Respect for one another and the avoidance of jealousy were its goals."

Other rituals emphasized harmony within the household. Respondent Jagdeesh (Male, 45) recalled, "Everyone in the household shared the same light, the same destiny, when one family lamp was lit during festivals." In many traditions, brothers would even sign specific oaths or pledges to respect one another's duties; it was deemed extremely dishonorable to break such commitments.

Festivals and group gatherings served to reaffirm these principles. "I prayed for all of my husband's together during Sanjhi Puja," Respondent Sudarshna (Female, 48) wrote. It served as our means of maintaining harmony and calm within the house.

In order to represent unity, families also planted the Kangdali Phool as part of their customs. Social respect and a clear understanding of marital duties were guaranteed by customs such as enjoying meals together or recognizing the eldest brother alone in public. Despite their decline, these customs played a significant role in presenting polyandry as more than merely a useful arrangement. They gave the custom depth and spiritual

dignity, highlighting its significance in preserving family unity and gaining respect from the society.

Belief That Polyandry Helps Keep Family Property

The majority of participants affirmed that polyandry played a vital role in maintaining family property and income. By preventing the division of land, it ensured that brothers worked together on a single farm, preserving the family's financial stability. This collective effort not only kept the property intact but also strengthened familial bonds, enabling the family to function as a cohesive unit.

According to Respondent Desh Raj (Male, 58), "Our fields were small in the past, and if brothers divided them, no one could survive." Therefore, in order to preserve the family and the land, we married a single woman.

In the words of Respondent Telu Ram (Male, 50), "If each brother took his share of land separately, none of us could survive." As we worked on a single plot of land, polyandry kept us united. In a similar vein, Respondent Bhagawati Devi (Female, 47) observed, "Peace is brought when the land remains in one family." If not, families disintegrate and brothers quarrel.

In areas where land was limited and farming was the main source of income, polyandry was especially advantageous. Inheritance and property partition problems that may otherwise split families apart and undermine economic stability were abolished. This approach protected assets for generations to come, according to Respondent Devinder Sharma (Male, 33), who states, "Our ancestors followed this system so that no land would go out of the family; it was about survival, not luxury."

Polyandry offered an inherent support system as well. Sustainability was ensured by others running the farm and household in the event that one brother died or was unable to help. A number of respondents, like Respondent Hari Krishan (Male, 32), noted that the practice is no longer as significant because of the decline in reliance on land-based livelihoods due to urban migration and alternative employment. Respondents nevertheless maintained that polyandry was a revered custom because of its historical significance in preserving property and unity.

Impact of Polyandry on Family Dynamics, Inheritance, and Child-Rearing

Polyandry significantly influences family dynamics by fostering cooperation and shared responsibilities. All husbands contribute to household tasks and child-rearing, ensuring that no single individual bears the entire burden. This collective effort promotes family unity, as children are raised by all brothers without distinction between biological and non-biological fathers. Such arrangements strengthen familial bonds and create a harmonious living environment.

Family dynamics are greatly impacted by polyandry since it promotes cooperation and shared accountability. According to Respondent Kaushalya Devi (a 52-year-old woman), "All husbands participate in child care." No one says, "This is my kid." Rather, they are all the children of the family.

Brothers manage property jointly, which makes decisions easier and preserves stability when it comes to inheritance. As Respondent Telu Ram (Male, 50) clarified: "There is no conflict regarding inheritance because the land is not divided. They all eat and work together." Collective caring is also shown in child-rearing techniques. Respondent Sudarshna Rani (a 48-year-old woman) shared, "This system teaches children respect." They witness the fathers working together as they grow up.

Respondents stated that although this social framework fosters harmony and emotional equilibrium, it may also restrict personal autonomy in the contemporary setting. "Times have changed; people want privacy and their own families now," Respondent Devinder Sharma (Male, 33) observed. However, we learned togetherness the old-fashioned way.

All things considered, polyandry promotes stability and unity by providing that property is preserved and that all family members share duties. Even though its necessity has changed due to modernization, it still serves as a historical mechanism for family unity and economic resilience.

Status of Men and Women in Polyandrous Tradition

Gender Roles and Responsibilities within Polyandrous Marriages

Traditional expectations shape polyandrous marriages, which are specifically tailored to their family structures. Men's and women's respective roles and duties are a reflection of hierarchy and cooperation.

Respondent Meera Devi, a 37-year-old woman "I look after the kids, the house, and the cooking. Together, my spouse and I visit the fields. I talk to both of them and help them understand if they argue." Meera's statement emphasizes how important women's emotional and home roles are. They run the home and mediate disputes to keep the peace in the family.

Respondent Jagdeesh, a 45-year-old man "Together, we brothers labor in the fields. At home, my wife is in charge of everything. We pay attention to her choices on family affairs." With women handling the family's domestic concerns and males handling exterior labor, Jagdeesh's approach exemplifies the complementary gender dynamics that foster harmony and collaboration.

Respondent Asha Kumari (35 years old, Female) "I try to keep the peace if any husband is feeling jealous." My obligation is to treat everyone fairly. The emotional and relational responsibilities of women as mediators are exemplified by this quote. In polyandrous households, their power resides in preserving emotional equilibrium.

Respondent Subhash Chand (38 years old, Male) "We brothers work together to earn money." However, she is in charge of how the funds are used." This highlights women's managerial ability in allocating resources and making decisions, implying that although men contribute financially, women have primary organizational responsibility inside the home.

Conflict Resolution in Polyandrous Households

Conflict resolution in polyandrous households involves a balance of practical and emotional mediation, often divided between the men and women of the family.

Respondent 43-year-old male Madan Lal "We brothers get together and talk about any issues pertaining to farming or money. We all agree on what is best for the family and the

oldest brother takes the lead." Men's collective and cooperative attitude to settling practical conflicts is highlighted by Madan Lal (M, 43). Fairness and family harmony are assured through collective decision-making and the eldest brother's leadership.

Response Asha Kumari (35 years old, Female) "I have separate conversations with each husband if he feels neglected. In order to eradicate jealousy, it is my responsibility to make everyone feel valued and noticed." The emotional mediation role that women perform in polyandrous families is demonstrated by Asha Kumari (F, 35) reaction. They maintain balance by resolving internal emotional problems and avoiding conflict.

Respondent Subhash Chand, a 38-year-old man "Occasionally, the brothers quarrel over who put in more hours or made more money. Then the oldest brother or our wife helps to defuse the issue." We prevent problems from growing. Men and women have a similar conflict-resolution system, as explained by Subhash Chand (M, 38). While men talk about practical issues, women help by reducing tension and offering emotional stability.

Respondent Meera (37 years old, female) "All of my husband's feel equal because of me. When someone becomes upset, I try to calmly explain the situation. The elders also provide us advice when necessary." The combination of elders' judgment and women's emotional mediation is highlighted by Meera (F, 37), demonstrating how internal and external strategies work together to preserve domestic harmony.

Economic Contributions and Gender Status in Polyandrous Households

In polyandrous households, economic contributions largely shape the status of both men and women, though in distinct ways. Men are typically the primary earners, working in farming or manual labor. Their financial contributions are crucial to the family's survival, and this work is often linked to their prestige and authority in the family. The men's role in providing for the family creates a visible connection between their economic success and their status.

Respondent: Telu Ram (50 years old, Male): Our brothers go out to work as daily wage workers and farmers. We bring our earnings home and give them to our spouse. Food, clothing, and savings are all things she oversees. Even though we make money, she decides how it is spent." Men's financial contributions determine their standing, but the

woman has economic control since she oversees budgeting and distribution, as Telu Ram (M, 50) demonstrates. This demonstrates interdependence instead of power.

36-year-old female Prem Lata "My husband makes money outside the house, but money runs out quickly if I don't handle things well at home. What I save and what I spend is up to me. They pay attention to my advice as well." According to Prem Lata (F, 36), women's economic agency is found in managing the home. Despite not having a direct source of income, she has authority and respect because of her role in financial planning.

Respondent: Madan Lal (43 years old, Male) "Every brother contributes equally in our system. Due to the fact that everything is shared, others do not protest if one makes less. Fairness is ensured by the wife, who maintains the accounts." The wife's function as a financial mediator and the group's revenue sharing are highlighted by Madan Lal (M, 43). Her authority over household finances raises her social standing.

Respondent Taro Devi (39 years old, female) "Men put in a lot of effort outside, but juggling three spouses is as challenging. I take care of their household chores, meals, and feelings. I maintain harmony among them, which is why they respect me." One way that people can contribute economically and socially is through emotional labor, according to Taro Devi (F, 39). By ensuring stability through her unpaid labor, she gains respect and symbolic status.

Changes in Polyandrous Tradition

Shifts in the Perception of Polyandry among Generations

Respondent: Kanta (55 years old) "We thought polyandry protected the land from division and kept the family together in our day. Our kids now claim that it is an outdated custom that is incompatible with contemporary living." (*Interview conducted in Village Banal, Shillai Tehsil*). The way that different generations see polyandry is highlighted by Kanta remark. While newer generations, who have been exposed to new ideas, increasingly see the ritual as outdated, older ladies saw it as a symbol of stability and solidarity.

Respondent (Male, 43) Madan Lal "We work and study outside of the hamlet and interact with people from other backgrounds. It doesn't make sense to me anymore for brothers to share a wife. Nowadays, everyone wants their own family life." (*Interview conducted in Village Kando, Shillai Tehsil*). The younger generation's propensity for monogamous relationships and individual autonomy is reflected in Madan Lal comment. Traditional perspectives have been altered by education and mobility, which have decreased the social acceptance of polyandry.

Respondent Sudarshna (48 years old, female) "My boys don't want to do things the old-fashioned way. They claim that they wish to live apart and get married independently. People today think differently since the times have changed." (*Interview conducted in Village Tikri, Shillai Tehsil*). The story of Madhu demonstrates how, even among families who previously engaged in polyandry, generational change is taking place. The opposition from the younger generation points to a slow but persistent trend toward preferences for nuclear families.

Respondent Harnam Singh, 70 years old, male "Before, we had no education, no jobs, and no land to split. It made sense to practice polyandry. They no longer rely on family land because everyone makes their own money now." (*Interview conducted in Village Bhatwari, Shillai Tehsil*). Harnam Singh's analysis links the decrease in polyandry to educational advancement and economic change. His story emphasizes how the practical necessity of polyandrous setups has decreased due to industrialization.

Trends in Societal Attitudes towards Polyandry over Recent Years

The perception of polyandry has undergone a significant shift among younger generations compared to older ones. Education, urbanization, and exposure to modern values have led young people to question its relevance. Unlike their elders, who valued polyandry for preserving family unity, resources, and stability, younger individuals prioritize personal choice, independence, and monogamous relationships. Economic factors, such as increased employment opportunities and reduced dependence on shared resources, have further diminished the practice's importance. While older generations viewed polyandry as practical and essential, the younger generation often sees it as outdated and incompatible with contemporary aspirations, signaling its gradual decline.

Respondent Desh Raj (58 years old, male) “In the past, everyone believed that polyandry was the only way to preserve our territory and allow us to live as a single, harmonious family. People now make fun of it. Young people no longer like to share their spouses or property, indicating that times have changed” (*Interview conducted in Village Pab, Shillai Tehsil*). The older generation’s recognition of shifting social standards is reflected in Desh Raj’s perspective. He admits that in contemporary situations, what was once a recognized technique has become out of date. The sentimentality and acceptance of change brought about by exposure and education are highlighted in his statement.

Respondent Telu Ram (50 years old) "Women in our time didn't challenge such customs. My daughters, however, claim they will not adhere to these traditions. They wish to pursue their education, careers, and marriages on their own." (*Interview conducted in Village Kupvi, Shillai Tehsil*). The experience of Telu Ram demonstrates how empowerment and education may change perceptions on polyandry. The generational divide between her and her daughters highlights the ways in which women's consciousness and independence have subverted conventional wisdom.

Respondent Devinder Sharma, age 33 and male “We live modern lifestyles and work in cities these days. Old traditions and land are not what we rely on. Everybody aspires to start their own family and develop their own future.” (*Interview conducted in Village Kando, Shillai Tehsil*). The impact of urbanization and economic independence in diminishing the significance of polyandry is encapsulated in Devinder Sharma's viewpoint. His remarks are in line with the desires of the younger generation for autonomy and uniqueness.

Respondent Asha Kumari (35-year-old woman) "Everything has changed because of education. People are aware that marriage should be based on love and free will rather than kinship or property.” (*Interview conducted in Village Shillai, Shillai Tehsil*). Asha Kumari's viewpoint exemplifies how knowledge has changed how people view marriage on an emotional and moral level. In rural Himachal Pradesh, the transition from group survival to individual fulfillment represents a more profound societal change.

Impact of Education, Employment, Development, Access to Information, and Exposure to Diverse Cultural Influences on Polyandrous Relationships in Contemporary Society

Polyandry is increasingly becoming less common as a result of the impact of education and contemporary job options. In the past, a large number of people adhered to polyandrous customs because they were unaware of or uninformed about other social structures. But with more access to media and education, individuals have been exposed to a wider range of lifestyles and are increasingly beginning to doubt the value and necessity of polyandry in the modern world.

Respondent: Madan Lal (43 years old, male) "No one in our era questioned the advice of elders. However, our kids now study outside and tell us, "Father, this tradition is outdated and doesn't work in the modern world." Education has brought about a complete transformation. Madan Lal's remark draws attention to the disparity in attitudes regarding polyandry between generations. Younger people are prioritizing independence and choice, which challenges long-standing family customs, thanks to education and exposure to urban life.

Respondent Taro Devi (39 years old, female) "Everyone has a phone and a TV these days. People observe the lives of others. The younger girls don't want to share a husband; they feel that is not their style of life." In particular, Taro Devi's remarks highlight how media exposure and information access are increasingly influencing young women's views on gender roles and marital equality.

Respondent Hari Krishan, 32 years old, male "Many people from our village are employed in Chandigarh or Dehradun. They don't want to go back to such traditions once they start making money and live on their own." As demonstrated by Krishan's response, urban exposure and job relocation lessen reliance on conventional joint family structures while promoting financial independence and personal autonomy.

Respondent Kanta 55-year-old woman People used to get married in this manner to protect the land. With daughters learning and sons working for the government, everyone is now making money. Who needs such outdated setups these days?" According to Kanta the functional foundation of polyandry has been undermined by economic

development and diversification. In today's socioeconomic environment, the traditional need to protect family property is less strong.

Instances of Resistance or Advocacy Against Polyandry within Communities

Within the investigated region, there has been a growing emergence of anti-polyandry sentiment, particularly among younger and more educated community members. Although polyandry was traditionally seen as a traditional marriage custom that guaranteed societal cohesiveness and economic stability, people who value individuality and personal freedom are now questioning it more and more. There are intergenerational conflicts and occasionally outright arguments within families as young men and women start to express their displeasure with the practice.

Respondent Poonam (31 years old, female) "I disagree with my grandmother's assertion that this method kept families together. I'd like to wed anybody I choose. Sharing a husband is wrong, in my opinion." The increasing assertion of women's agency and autonomy is embodied in Poonam's statement. Nowadays, educated young women question traditional gender norms and view polyandry as a limitation on their emotional and personal autonomy.

Respondent Anil Kumar (Male, 35 years) "I studied in Shimla, and after seeing how people live there, I realized this system doesn't make sense anymore. Everyone should have their own family." Anil's perspective also suggests a change in how men view the world. Even among people who historically profited from polyandry, the preference for monogamy among men is influenced by exposure to metropolitan environments and alternative marital arrangements, indicating a fall in accepted polyandry.

Respondent Suman (Female, 40 years) "Earlier, no one spoke against it, but now girls are talking. Some even refuse such marriages. Elders get angry, but times have changed." Suman's remark indicates a shift in social discourse: despite social condemnation, younger women are openly expressing resistance. This suggests a subtle but tenacious internal social transformation.

Respondent Trilok Rana (Male, 41 years) "If we continue this system, our children will suffer. It creates confusion and fights among brothers. It's time to move on." Trilok's

statement is an example of pragmatic resistance, grounded in both philosophy and the real-world difficulties that polyandry poses in contemporary family relationships.

Legal Challenges that Have Affected or May Affect Polyandrous Relationships

Despite having a long history, polyandry is becoming more and more controversial in India due to contemporary legal and constitutional frameworks. In some rural and tribal areas, polyandrous marriages are still practiced unofficially even if the Indian legal system does not officially recognize them. A complicated area of negotiation and dispute has been generated by the meeting point of contemporary legal ideas with customary practices, especially those pertaining to marriage, gender equality, and individual rights.

Respondent Poonam (Female, 31 years) “The government laws don’t support our way of marriage. We can’t register our marriage or claim rights properly.” This reveals a significant issue with legal invisibility. Due to their frequent lack of legal recognition, women in polyandrous marriages frequently find it challenging to assert their formal legal claims to property, inheritance, or spousal rights. Without registration under the Hindu Marriage Act (1955), these kinds of partnerships are not protected by the law.

Respondent Trilok Rana (Male, 41 years) “When we go for official work, they ask for the wife’s name. But we have one wife for two brothers—the papers don’t accept it.” This demonstrates the bureaucratic and administrative challenges that polyandrous households encounter. Modern institutions function on monogamous foundations, which create real-world difficulties with legal identity, documentation, and welfare benefit access.

Respondent Taro Devi (39-year-old female) “There is no legislation to safeguard women like us in the event of a conflict. Everything is dependent on the elders in the family.” Her remarks demonstrate the gendered weakness of the law. Because they are not legally recognized, women in polyandrous unions rely on unofficial authority structures instead of legal recourse. This demonstrates the distinction between legislative protection and custom.

Overall, the trend among younger generations is to either completely reject polyandry or transform it into a more modern and equitable practice. This shift reflects a broader societal change where individual rights, gender equality, and personal freedom are

prioritized over traditional customs. As these ideas continue to take root, it is likely that polyandry will continue to decline or evolve in response to the changing expectations of younger generations.

Focus group discussion analysis

Focus Group Discussion 1

Motivation behind Polyandry Tradition

Historical and Cultural Roots of Polyandry

Polyandry within this community has deep historical roots, primarily stemming from the need to preserve family resources, especially land. In areas with scarce land, polyandry ensured that property remained intact by preventing its division among brothers. This practice was essential for the family's survival and prosperity. It also fostered unity among brothers, reducing rivalry and ensuring a collective approach to managing resources and inheritance. For women, polyandry allowed them to hold significant authority as the head of the household, overseeing the family unit with respect.

The practice also helped maintain family peace and unity. Polyandry was seen as a way to avoid conflicts over inheritance, as all brothers shared the same wife and therefore had equal rights to family property. It was viewed not just as a means of managing resources but also as a way of ensuring that brothers could cohabit harmoniously, without jealousy or competition. The system promoted cooperation rather than division, making it a culturally accepted tradition for many generations.

However, the younger generation, exposed to modern education and employment opportunities, views polyandry differently. While they understand its historical importance, they do not feel compelled to follow this practice. With more options available, especially outside traditional farming, younger people are less inclined to maintain the custom and are increasingly questioning its relevance in contemporary society.

Rituals and Ceremonies in Polyandry

Polyandry in this community was marked by distinct rituals that emphasized unity and equality among the brothers. One such ritual involved all brothers participating in the wedding ceremony together, signifying the collective nature of the marriage. The oldest brother typically took the lead in the ceremony, but the intention was to show that the marriage involved all the men equally. This was followed by blessings for the family and land, highlighting the importance of prosperity and harmony in the family structure.

Rituals were also central to maintaining balance within the family. Each brother had an equal share of responsibilities, from household chores to decision-making. The wife, who played a unifying role, was ceremonially introduced to each brother's home, symbolizing her equal belonging to each husband. This ritual underscored the importance of her role in maintaining family unity and peace, while also reinforcing the collaborative nature of the marriage.

While these rituals were once a significant part of the culture, the younger generation views them with less frequency and interest. These practices, once common and revered, are now becoming less prevalent, as contemporary ideas about marriage and relationships, influenced by education and evolving norms, challenge their relevance.

Polyandry and Property Retention

Polyandry was initially seen as an effective solution for preserving family property, especially in areas with limited resources. By having all brothers share the same wife, families avoided dividing land or resources, ensuring that the family estate remained intact. This was crucial for survival, as dividing the property would have rendered it insufficient for supporting all family members. The practice was thus a practical and economic necessity to ensure the long-term viability of the family.

In addition to preserving property, polyandry also helped manage the collective responsibilities of the family. By not having to divide the household, the family could pool resources and work together efficiently. This arrangement minimized the risk of financial strain and allowed the family to function as a cohesive unit, sharing both the burdens and benefits of family life.

However, with modern changes, including education and alternative career paths, younger generations no longer feel the same pressure to maintain property or resources within a single family unit. Today, families have other ways to manage resources and property, and polyandry is no longer seen as essential for ensuring financial stability.

Motivations for Choosing Polyandry

The primary motivations behind polyandry in the past were economic necessity and the desire to maintain family unity. Families with limited resources relied on polyandry to keep their land and property intact, preventing its division among brothers. This arrangement also fostered a sense of cooperation, as all brothers shared duties and responsibilities. Polyandry thus ensured that the family stayed together, both in terms of property and family life, without the division that would occur in monogamous marriages.

Another motivation for polyandry was to provide security for women. By having multiple husbands, women were less likely to be left alone if one husband went away or passed away. The shared responsibility of multiple husbands ensured that the woman would always have support, creating a safety net for her within the family structure. This collective arrangement provided a level of stability and security that was difficult to achieve in monogamous households, especially in rural settings.

However, with the rise of education and alternative employment opportunities, these motivations are no longer as relevant to younger generations. Today, people have more choices for managing family life and resources, and polyandry is no longer seen as the necessary solution it once was. The younger generation views polyandry as a traditional practice that no longer aligns with their needs or values.

Impact of Polyandry on Family Dynamics

Polyandry created a unique family structure where all brothers lived together under one roof, sharing responsibilities and resources. This arrangement minimized conflicts over inheritance and ensured that the family property stayed intact. The children in such families were raised collectively, with all the brothers playing a fatherly role, which created a sense of shared responsibility and unity within the family.

In terms of child-rearing, the collective nature of polyandry meant that all brothers contributed to raising the children. This led to a close-knit family dynamic where each child had multiple father figures, offering diverse guidance and support. While this system created a strong sense of family unity, it could also be confusing for children to have multiple paternal figures in the household.

Today, younger generations view this structure with less enthusiasm. While the shared responsibilities of polyandry had practical benefits in the past, modern family dynamics, influenced by changing societal norms and individual freedoms, no longer prioritize this collective approach. The younger generation values autonomy and individuality, and they are increasingly moving away from polyandry as a way of life.

Status of men and women in polyandrous tradition

Gender Roles and Responsibilities in Polyandrous Marriages

In polyandrous marriages, traditional gender roles are distinct but balanced. Men typically handle the economic activities, particularly farming and land management, contributing to the family's financial stability. On the other hand, the woman's role is centered on managing the household—cooking, cleaning, and raising the children. Though the roles are defined, they complement each other, with both genders contributing to the overall functioning of the family.

While the men focus on external responsibilities, the woman has a more challenging internal role. She is responsible for not just the household chores but also for maintaining relationships between her husbands, ensuring peace and harmony within the family. The woman's strength and ability to manage these complex relationships are highly valued in polyandrous households. While this division of labor is fixed traditionally, there are signs of change today, with women taking on more external roles due to education and employment opportunities.

The younger generation is witnessing a shift in these traditional roles. Although the old roles are still acknowledged, women are increasingly participating in economic activities outside the home, challenging the rigid separation of domestic and economic spheres.

This change reflects broader societal shifts, where women's roles are evolving and expanding beyond traditional boundaries.

Conflict Resolution in Polyandrous Households

In polyandrous households, conflicts, especially those related to economic matters or the division of labor, are often resolved by the elders, who step in as mediators. The older generation plays a vital role in maintaining peace and offering solutions during disagreements between the brothers. The family values harmony and efforts are made to resolve conflicts swiftly and fairly, ensuring that the household functions smoothly.

For the woman, particularly the wife, conflict resolution often involves dealing with emotional or personal matters between her husbands's. The wife is expected to manage these relationships delicately, often taking on the role of mediator. In cases where tensions rise, she typically discusses the issue with the eldest husband, who leads the resolution process. The wife's ability to maintain balance within the household is crucial for peace and unity.

The younger generation recognizes that the wife plays a central role in maintaining family dynamics. Through stories from the older generation, it is understood that the wife's role in conflict resolution is pivotal. While the brothers work together on practical matters, the wife addresses personal and emotional issues, ensuring that family members continue to coexist harmoniously.

Economic Contributions and Status in Polyandrous Households

Economic contributions in polyandrous households often shape the roles and status of both men and women. Men, as the primary economic providers, gain respect and authority within the household through their ability to work the land or contribute financially. The more they contribute the more respect they earn in decision-making, particularly regarding economic matters.

Although the woman does not contribute to the household income in the same way as the men, her role is vital in maintaining the household and managing family dynamics. Her status derives from her emotional and practical strength—running the home efficiently and maintaining harmony among her husbands and children. Her ability to balance the

needs of everyone in the family gives her a form of respect that complements the men's economic contributions.

In today's society, these roles are shifting. As women take on jobs and contribute financially, their status within the family is rising. The traditional division of authority based on economic power is evolving, with women gaining more respect and authority as they contribute to both the household and the economy. This reflects broader societal changes in gender roles and family dynamics.

Changes in polyandrous tradition

Changes in Perception of Polyandry among Younger Generations

Younger generations are increasingly questioning the tradition of polyandry, with many viewing it as outdated or irrelevant in today's society. While it was once seen as a practical solution, particularly in rural areas where land was limited and family unity was essential, younger people now have more options and freedoms. There's a growing focus on individual choice, with young women in particular expressing concerns about the emotional challenges and potential imbalances in polyandrous marriages. They are more likely to pursue relationships based on equality and mutual respect, challenging traditional practices. The exposure to new ideas through education, media, and a shift in societal values has contributed to this change.

Trends in Societal Attitudes towards Polyandry

Societal attitudes toward polyandry have been shifting in recent years, driven by factors like urbanization, education, and women's empowerment. While polyandry was once necessary for maintaining family structure and economic stability, it is now seen by many as impractical. People now prioritize personal choice and individual rights over traditional practices. Education and the influence of media have introduced alternative relationship models, leading many to question the relevance of polyandry. The growing independence of women and their increasing access to employment opportunities have contributed significantly to this change, with many seeing polyandry as an outdated system.

Impact of Education, Employment, Development, and Access to Information

The expansion of education, access to information, and employment opportunities, particularly for women, has had a profound impact on polyandrous relationships. In the past, polyandry was rooted in survival and practicality, especially in rural areas where land was limited. However, as people gain more access to education and employment outside agriculture, the need for polyandry diminishes. Exposure to diverse cultural influences through education and media has broadened perspectives on relationships, leading younger generations to question whether polyandry fits with modern values of gender equality and personal choice.

Resistance or Advocacy against Polyandry

Resistance to polyandry has grown over the years, particularly with the rise of education, individual rights, and women's empowerment. In the past, polyandry was widely accepted, but as people have become more aware of their rights and alternative lifestyles, some individuals and groups, particularly women's organizations, have advocated against the practice. These groups argue that polyandry limits women's rights and independence, calling for greater gender equality and alternative marriage systems. Some younger people, influenced by these ideas, are actively pushing for changes in traditional marriage practices, including challenging polyandry.

How Younger Generations Are Redefining Polyandry

Younger generations are increasingly questioning polyandry, particularly in light of changing societal norms around gender equality and individual freedoms. They view marriage as a personal choice and are more likely to pursue relationships based on equality and mutual respect, rather than following traditional customs. The younger generation, particularly women, are more empowered to make decisions about their relationships and are less willing to accept polyandry without considering its impact on their personal lives. Education and exposure to diverse cultural influences have broadened their understanding of relationships, leading them to seek alternatives that align with their values of equality and independence.

Legal Challenges to Polyandrous Relationships

Polyandrous relationships may face legal challenges in contemporary society, especially as laws increasingly focus on individual rights and gender equality. In the past, polyandry was largely a matter of tradition, with little legal interference. However, as awareness of legal rights grows, particularly among women, polyandry may come into conflict with modern legal systems that prioritize monogamy and equality. Women, in particular, may challenge polyandry as a practice that limits their rights and opportunities for equal partnership. Issues such as inheritance and property rights may also pose challenges under modern legal frameworks, as polyandrous marriages may not fit neatly into current family law systems focused on monogamy.

Focus Group Discussion 2

Motivation behind Polyandry Tradition

Historical and Cultural Roots of Polyandry

Polyandry in the community has deep roots in economic and survival strategies. Historically, it was practiced to preserve family land and ensure it didn't get divided into smaller and less productive parcels. The system allowed brothers to share a wife, which helped keep the land intact and maintain family unity. It was a way to manage scarce resources and avoid fragmentation. Additionally, polyandry helped maintain family harmony, as the brothers worked together and shared not just property but also responsibilities.

Rituals, Ceremonies, or Norms Associated with Polyandry

Polyandry was marked by significant cultural rituals. A key part of the marriage ceremony involved the woman presenting gifts to each of the brothers, symbolizing her acceptance of all of them. After the marriage, there would be a communal feast to affirm the union. There were also customs regarding the sharing of time with the wife, with brothers expected to split their time equally. Rituals such as family blessings, led by elders, were conducted to solidify the family's unity. The wife also played a significant role in family rituals, including leading prayers during religious occasions.

Polyandry and Family Property and Income

Polyandry served as a strategy to preserve family property and income, particularly in regions where land was limited. By keeping the family unit intact and sharing the resources, the property remained undivided, which prevented financial instability. The pooling of income from various sources—whether farming or trade—enabled the family to stay stronger financially. In the past, when land was a central part of the livelihood, polyandry helped ensure economic survival by preventing the land from being divided among separate households.

Motivations for Choosing Polyandry

The primary motivation for polyandry was economic survival. In farming communities with limited resources, dividing the land would have led to unsustainable living conditions. Polyandry allowed families to work together, share income, and avoid disputes over inheritance or property. Another reason was the difficulty of finding multiple wives in isolated communities. Polyandry simplified the marriage process and kept families close-knit, preventing isolation and ensuring stability. In these contexts, polyandry was not just a cultural practice but a necessary survival mechanism.

Impact of Polyandry on Family Dynamics, Inheritance, and Child-Rearing

Polyandry has a profound impact on family dynamics, especially regarding inheritance and child-rearing. In terms of inheritance, the property remained unified, as all the brothers shared ownership of it. However, this created challenges if no clear division of responsibilities existed. Family dynamics were unique, with shared responsibilities among the brothers and a central role for the wife, who had to manage relationships with all the husbands and children. Children benefited from multiple male role models, who provided security, but inheritance could be complicated, as all the brothers had equal claims to the family's wealth. The emotional dynamics could be challenging for the wife, who had to balance the relationships with all of her husband's while maintaining family unity.

Status of men and women in polyandrous tradition

Gender Roles and Responsibilities in Polyandrous Marriages

In polyandrous marriages, gender roles are distinctly defined but interdependent. The men primarily handle economic duties, such as working the land or generating income for the family, while the wife manages the household, raises the children, and oversees emotional and relational dynamics. The wife's role is considered more demanding, as she must balance relationships with multiple husbands, ensure harmony in the family, and take on the practical responsibility of household management. Despite these differences, the roles are complementary, with the men focusing on external responsibilities and the wife maintaining the internal household dynamics.

Conflict Resolution in Polyandrous Households

Conflict resolution in polyandrous households varies based on gender. Men typically resolve disputes, particularly related to work or finances, through direct discussions, and if necessary, the eldest brother intervenes to make a final decision. The wife, however, plays a crucial emotional role, especially when tensions arise between the husbands. She often acts as a mediator, speaking individually with each husband to understand their concerns before facilitating a group discussion. This role can be emotionally taxing for the wife, as she is responsible for maintaining harmony and addressing the emotional needs of all family members.

Economic Contributions and Status in Polyandrous Households

Economic contributions significantly impact the status of men in polyandrous households. Brothers are expected to contribute equally to the family's livelihood, and those who contribute more are often given greater influence within the family. The wife's status, however, does not rely on economic contributions but on her ability to manage the home and maintain relationships within the family. Her authority comes from her role as the emotional and social cornerstone of the household. However, as more women begin to work outside the home and contribute financially, their status within the family is rising, showing a shift in the traditional power dynamics.

Changes in polyandrous tradition

Changes in Perception of Polyandry Among Younger Generations

There has been a noticeable shift in how polyandry is viewed by younger generations compared to older generations. In the past, polyandry was essential for maintaining family stability and managing land resources. However, with economic opportunities, greater mobility, and exposure to new ideas, younger people no longer see polyandry as necessary. Many young women, in particular, are less inclined to enter into polyandrous marriages as they have more options and value personal independence. Younger generations are increasingly prioritizing individual choice, equality in relationships, and personal happiness over traditional practices like polyandry.

Trends in Societal Attitudes towards Polyandry

Societal attitudes towards polyandry have shifted significantly in recent years. Economic development, increased education, and changing views on family dynamics have led to a decline in support for polyandry. Women's rights and empowerment have been key factors in this shift, as women are now more able to make informed choices about their relationships. There is also a growing emphasis on individual rights, equality, and personal freedom, which contrasts with the collective, traditional structure that polyandry represents. Consequently, polyandry is seen by many as outdated and unnecessary in modern society.

Impact of Education, Employment, Development, and Exposure to Information on Polyandry

Education, economic independence, and access to diverse cultural influences have all played significant roles in the decline of polyandry. With greater education, people are more aware of their rights and alternative lifestyles, reducing the necessity of polyandry, which once helped manage land and resources. Employment opportunities have allowed individuals, especially women, to become financially independent, further diminishing the need for polyandry. The internet and exposure to global perspectives have also led to a broader understanding of different relationship models, making polyandry less appealing as it no longer aligns with modern values of equality and personal choice.

Resistance or Advocacy Against Polyandry

There has been growing resistance to polyandry, particularly among women, who are increasingly asserting their right to make choices about their relationships. Educated

women, especially those who are financially independent, are more likely to resist polyandry, viewing it as a limiting practice that restricts their freedom. Some local organizations and younger generations have advocated for monogamy and equal rights in marriage, challenging polyandry as outdated. This resistance has gained traction in more developed areas, with social media and increased access to information amplifying voices against polyandry.

Redefining Polyandry in the Context of Changing Norms

Younger generations are redefining the concept of relationships, moving away from polyandry in favor of more egalitarian and monogamous arrangements. Gender equality, individual rights, and personal freedom are central to this shift. Young people today, both women and men, prefer relationships based on mutual respect and equal partnership. The rise of gender equality movements and the availability of education have contributed to this change, making polyandry seem outdated. Younger individuals are less likely to accept practices that don't align with modern values of fairness and equality.

Legal Challenges to Polyandry

Polyandry may face increasing legal challenges due to its conflict with contemporary marriage laws, which typically support monogamy. In many legal systems, polyandry is not recognized, and women in polyandrous marriages might struggle to claim the same rights as those in monogamous marriages. Property and inheritance laws may also be complicated in polyandrous families, leading to potential legal disputes. As more women become aware of their legal rights, they may challenge polyandry on the grounds of gender inequality, further pushing for legal frameworks that promote equality in marriage.

Focus Group Discussion 3

Motivation behind Polyandry Tradition

Historical and Cultural Roots

The focus group discussion on polyandry delved into its historical, cultural, and practical aspects within the community. The participants explored the roots of polyandry, with the

father explaining that it originated as a way to preserve family land, which would be too small for each son if divided. The mother emphasized the wife's central role in maintaining harmony among the brothers and managing family responsibilities, a position of respect despite its challenges. The sons, while acknowledging its historical significance, noted that polyandry is no longer as relevant today, as people no longer depend on land alone for survival. The daughter-in-law shared that polyandry provided women with a unique and stabilizing role within the household.

Rituals, Ceremonies, or Norms

The discussion then moved to the rituals, ceremonies, and norms associated with polyandry. The father described the wedding as a large community event where the wife had to show respect to all the brothers, a tradition symbolizing equality. The mother highlighted the wife's integration into the shared household, where she was introduced to all the brothers and welcomed by the mother-in-law. The sons mentioned the wife's crucial role in agricultural rituals; while the daughter-in-law pointed out that she symbolized unity by lighting the family hearth during ceremonies.

Impact on Family Property and Income

When asked about polyandry's impact on family property and income, the father and mother agreed that it helped keep the land intact, as dividing it would have made survival difficult. The sons acknowledged that polyandry prevented inheritance disputes by ensuring that property and income stayed within the family. The daughter-in-law also mentioned how it minimized conflict, as everyone contributed equally.

Motivations for Polyandry

The motivations for polyandry were explored next, with the father noting that it was primarily driven by the need to conserve land and work together as a family. The mother added that the limited number of women in isolated communities also made polyandry a practical solution. The sons mentioned that it provided stability and shared responsibility, while the daughter-in-law acknowledged that, although less common today, polyandry was once the best way to ensure family unity.

Impact on Family Dynamics, Inheritance, and Child-Rearing

Finally, the impact of polyandry on family dynamics, inheritance, and child-rearing was discussed. The father explained that polyandry helped avoid inheritance issues by keeping property undivided. The mother acknowledged the challenges of managing multiple relationships but pointed out that child-rearing was a shared responsibility, reducing burdens. The sons agreed that children were raised by all the brothers, which helped avoid inheritance conflicts. However, they also noted that there could be confusion about biological fatherhood, though the children still felt supported by the entire family. The daughter-in-law noted that while managing relationships with multiple husbands could be challenging, the support from the whole family provided security and made raising children easier.

Status of men and women in polyandrous tradition

Status of Men and Women in Polyandrous Tradition:

In polyandrous marriages, gender roles are often clearly defined, with men taking on the responsibility of farming and outside work, while the wife manages the household duties such as cooking, cleaning, and maintaining order within the home. The father emphasized that the men share the burden of agricultural tasks, which are essential for family survival, while the wife's role is equally crucial in ensuring that the home functions smoothly. Each role complements the other, with men focusing on external work and the wife managing the internal operations of the household.

However, the mother pointed out that the wife has a more complex and demanding role. Not only is she responsible for managing the home, but she also has to maintain harmony between her husbands, a task that can be emotionally and practically challenging. The men's roles, according to the mother, are more straightforward—they work, provide, and protect. The sons also agreed, emphasizing that while the men handle external responsibilities, it is the wife's responsibility to manage the domestic sphere and ensure that everything runs smoothly. This balance of roles allows the polyandrous family to function effectively, though the wife often carries the emotional weight of managing relationships within the home.

Conflict Resolution in Polyandrous Households:

Conflicts in polyandrous households often arise between the men, typically revolving around practical matters such as work distribution or income. The father explained that these disputes are usually resolved through open discussions between the brothers, and if a resolution is not reached, the eldest brother or another family elder steps in to make the final decision. The focus is on ensuring that the family remains united and that no one's interests are overlooked.

On the other hand, conflict resolution for women in polyandrous marriages is more emotionally complex. The mother described how the wife must navigate delicate emotional situations between her husbands's. When disagreements arise, the wife often plays the role of mediator, addressing each husband's concerns individually before seeking a solution. The sons agreed that while men handle practical issues directly, the wife is often the emotional anchor of the family. She ensures that no one feels neglected, and her approach to conflict resolution is more personal and subtle, aiming to maintain peace and harmony within the household.

Economic Contributions and Status in Polyandrous Households:

In polyandrous households, the economic contributions of men are closely tied to their status. The father explained that in farming communities, the men's standing in the family is directly related to how much they contribute to the family's income. The brothers share the responsibility of working the farm, and the one who works hardest or brings in the most income often holds more influence in family matters. The economic contributions of men are thus seen as a measure of their importance in the family.

However, the mother pointed out that the wife's role is not tied to direct financial contributions but rather to her ability to manage the household and keep the family running smoothly. Her status comes from her skill in balancing the needs of her husband and maintaining harmony in the home. Although she does not contribute to the family's income, her importance is vital to the family's well-being. The sons agreed that while the men's status is often determined by their economic contributions, the wife also holds significant authority due to her role in managing the domestic side of the family. The daughter-in-law added that while women may not contribute financially, their role in

maintaining the household's stability gives them a unique and powerful influence within the family. If women were to contribute financially, their status would likely increase even further.

Changes in Polyandrous Tradition

Over time, there has been a noticeable shift in the perception of polyandry, particularly among younger generations. The father reflected on how polyandry, once a practical solution to the challenges of farming life, helped keep land undivided and maintain family unity. However, as opportunities have expanded, younger people no longer view polyandry in the same way, with many choosing different paths. The mother noted that young women, in particular, are more independent and eager to make their own choices, rejecting polyandry as a viable option. Both sons agreed that modern aspirations—focused on careers, education, and personal independence—have led the younger generation to move away from traditional practices like polyandry.

The daughter-in-law also emphasized how younger women are challenging the tradition, seeking more equality in their relationships, and wanting more control over their lives. Polyandry, in their eyes, represents an outdated system that doesn't align with modern values of independence and choice. As young people are exposed to broader societal changes and evolving gender roles, they are increasingly stepping away from the practice, prioritizing personal freedom and equality over traditional family structures. This generational shift reflects a broader movement towards autonomy, especially among women, who no longer feel bound by historical practices that limit their independence.

Trends in Societal Attitudes Towards Polyandry:

The societal view on polyandry has evolved significantly, with many factors contributing to this shift. The father highlighted that polyandry was once essential for preserving family unity in farming communities, but younger generations now view it as unnecessary due to changing societal norms. The mother observed that today, more women are choosing independence, which aligns with the broader movement towards individual rights and gender equality. This shift in attitudes reflects a larger societal change, where polyandry is increasingly seen as incompatible with modern values, especially as women's empowerment continues to grow.

Education and economic development have played key roles in transforming societal attitudes, with younger generations becoming more educated and exposed to alternative family models. The sons explained that as people gain access to broader job opportunities, especially in urban areas, they no longer rely on polyandry for survival or resource sharing. Additionally, the availability of information about different cultures and relationship structures has made younger people more aware of alternatives, encouraging them to question the continued relevance of polyandry. The daughter-in-law agreed, noting that with increasing women's empowerment, polyandry is being viewed as an antiquated practice that does not support the autonomy and equality many young women now expect from their relationships.

Impact of Education, Employment, and Development on Polyandry:

The father reflected on the impact of education and employment on the persistence of polyandry, noting that in the past, a lack of educational opportunities and job prospects meant that polyandry was crucial for family survival. However, with greater access to education and diverse employment opportunities, polyandry has become less necessary. The mother observed that women, in particular, are gaining more education and independence, which has contributed to their rejection of polyandry. In the past, women had little agency in choosing their marital paths, but today, they are making decisions based on personal aspirations rather than traditional norms.

The sons agreed that economic development, along with improved access to education and employment, has empowered people to pursue individual goals rather than relying on family structures like polyandry. Urbanization has offered opportunities that allow for financial independence and a break from traditional farming life. As people move away from agriculture, the need for polyandry to manage family resources has diminished. The daughter-in-law added that exposure to diverse cultural influences has also played a part in reshaping attitudes, especially for women, who now have more choices and access to knowledge that encourages them to seek equality in their relationships.

Resistance to Polyandry in Communities.

Resistance to polyandry is becoming more evident, particularly among younger people and women. The father recalled that in his time, polyandry was widely accepted without

much question. However, in recent years, younger generations, especially those who have moved to urban areas or become more educated, have started to challenge its necessity. The mother noted that women are now more vocal in their opposition, seeking relationships based on equality and mutual respect rather than the hierarchical nature of polyandry. This resistance often creates tension in families where polyandry is still considered a vital part of tradition.

The sons agreed that education has sparked a greater awareness of personal rights and freedom, leading many young people to question polyandry's relevance in modern society. Some community leaders have also begun to speak out against the practice, advocating for more progressive relationship models that align with contemporary values of fairness and equality. The daughter-in-law observed that women's groups are increasingly speaking out against polyandry, citing its limitations on women's autonomy and calling for a re-examination of marital traditions in light of modern gender equality movements.

Engagement of Younger Generations with Polyandry:

Younger generations are actively redefining the concept of polyandry in response to shifting societal norms, individual freedoms, and movements for gender equality. The father acknowledged that today's youth see the world differently, with a greater emphasis on personal choice and freedom in relationships. The mother agreed, noting that her children and their peers no longer see polyandry as a viable option, given the growing emphasis on gender equality and personal independence. Both sons emphasized that modern values, which prioritize individual rights and equality, do not align with the collective nature of polyandry, and this shift in values has led to a decline in interest in the practice.

The daughter-in-law also noted that younger women are rejecting polyandry because it does not allow them the autonomy they seek in relationships. Women today are more educated, more empowered, and less willing to accept traditions that limit their choices. The modern emphasis on individualism, equality, and gender rights means that many young women are choosing to live independently or seek relationships based on mutual respect and shared decision-making. As these values become more widespread,

polyandry is increasingly viewed as a relic of the past, and younger generations are redefining the nature of family and relationships in ways that reflect their evolving perspectives on gender and freedom.

Legal Challenges to Polyandry:

The legal landscape surrounding polyandry is increasingly being scrutinized, as modern legal systems focus more on individual rights and gender equality. The father acknowledged that in the past, legal concerns were not as prominent, but today, as new laws have emerged around gender equality, polyandry may face legal challenges. The mother added that women have become more assertive in challenging traditional marriage practices when they feel they are being treated unfairly, and polyandry may come into conflict with contemporary laws that aim to protect gender equality.

The sons highlighted that polyandry could face legal complications, particularly in areas such as property rights and inheritance laws. Polyandry complicates these legal frameworks, and as society becomes more attuned to issues of equality, it may be increasingly difficult for polyandrous families to navigate legal systems that prioritize equal rights for all individuals. The daughter-in-law noted that with more women becoming aware of their legal rights, there may be legal challenges to polyandry, especially if women feel it violates their rights to equality and independence in marriage. As gender equality laws continue to evolve, polyandrous relationships may face growing scrutiny, with legal systems potentially intervening to protect individual rights.

Focus Group Discussion 4

Motivation behind Polyandry Tradition

Historical and Cultural Roots of Polyandry

Polyandry was primarily a strategy for resource management, particularly in societies where land was scarce. The father explained that, in the past, families faced the challenge of dividing land, which would leave each household with very little. As a result, brothers would stay together and marry the same woman to ensure their land and resources were shared, maintaining economic stability. The mother added that polyandry also promoted family unity and helped avoid inheritance conflicts. By having one wife for all brothers,

the family avoided potential strife, which could have arisen if brothers married outside of the family. While polyandry is not as common today, Daughter 1 acknowledged its historical importance, noting that when land was the main resource, it made sense to practice polyandry. The son-in-law emphasized that polyandry was a smart family and resource management strategy, as it helped avoid property division and maintained family cohesiveness. Daughter 2, though recognizing that modern society has alternative ways of managing resources, appreciated how polyandry allowed their ancestors to overcome adversity.

Rituals and Norms Associated with Polyandry

The rituals surrounding polyandry emphasized its importance within the community, according to the father. During marriage ceremonies, the brothers would sit together as equals, while the wife received blessings from the family elders, symbolizing that the marriage was about more than just the couple—it represented family unity. The mother explained that there were also specific norms regarding how the wife interacted with the brothers after the wedding. She was expected to care for all the brothers equally, with the elders reminding the brothers to share responsibilities for managing the household. The wife's role was to ensure balance, and no brother had more claim over her than the others. Daughter 1 recalled that during religious ceremonies, especially harvest festivals, the wife would take on a central role, leading prayers for the land's fertility and the family's well-being. Daughter 2 noted that polyandry also involved managing family property, with the wife playing a key role in maintaining the household's wealth. The son-in-law emphasized that the wife's central role was further symbolized in a ceremony where she prepared a meal for the entire family, demonstrating her ability to take care of everyone equally and keep the family united.

Polyandry and Family Property/Income Preservation

Polyandry served as a means to preserve family wealth, especially when it came to property and income. The father pointed out that in the past, polyandry helped families keep their land intact by preventing its division, which was critical in societies where land was a primary source of income. The mother recalled hearing from her elders that splitting property would have led to disastrous consequences, and polyandry allowed the

brothers to share everything—property, income, and responsibilities—ensuring the family’s wealth stayed intact. Daughter 1 recognized that, while the context has changed with modern jobs and education providing alternative ways to secure income, polyandry made sense in the past. It was a practical solution to prevent property division. The son-in-law agreed that polyandry helped concentrate family income, which allowed families to save, invest, and grow their wealth. Daughter 2 added that polyandry had a strong economic basis, serving as a strategy to keep wealth intact and enabling families to survive and thrive in difficult conditions.

Motivations for Polyandry

The motivations behind polyandry were largely practical, aimed at protecting family wealth and ensuring support within the household. The father explained that polyandry helped prevent the fragmentation of land, a key source of income. It was particularly important in communities where land was limited. The mother added that polyandry allowed all the brothers to contribute to the household, which strengthened the family structure and made it easier for everyone to play a role in supporting the home. Daughter 1 saw polyandry as a way to create a safety net—if one brother died or was unable to work, the others could still support the family. Daughter 2 observed that, in isolated communities, there were few options for finding partners, and polyandry allowed all brothers to marry without conflict over resources. The son-in-law pointed out that, although there are now other ways to manage family wealth and responsibilities, polyandry was a practical solution in the past. It helped pool resources and kept the family strong and united.

Status of Men and Women in Polyandrous Tradition

Impact of Polyandry on Family Dynamics and Inheritance

Polyandry had significant implications for family dynamics, inheritance, and child-rearing. The father explained that, by preventing property division, polyandry helped families maintain their wealth and shaped the way brothers interacted. The mother noted that polyandry created a unique family structure, where the wife became the central figure, and all the men shared responsibilities for the household and children. This created unity but could also lead to emotional complexities. Daughter 1 observed that, in polyandrous households, children were raised by more than just their

biological father, with a collective effort in child-rearing. However, this sometimes led to confusion about who the primary father figure was. Daughter 2 added that polyandry influenced how children viewed inheritance, as they saw property as shared rather than divided. This collaborative perspective shaped their approach to family, though it could complicate inheritance decisions later. The son-in-law emphasized that polyandry helped maintain family wealth by keeping property intact, but it required careful attention to relationships, particularly in child-rearing and inheritance matters.

Gender Roles and Responsibilities in Polyandrous Marriages

In polyandrous marriages, traditional gender roles were clearly defined. The father explained that men were responsible for the economic needs of the family, sharing these responsibilities among the brothers. Meanwhile, the wife's role was focused on running the household—cooking, cleaning, and raising the children. The mother elaborated that, beyond household chores, the wife also had to manage her relationships with all her husbands, balancing each of their emotional needs. This was a delicate task, as the wife had to ensure no husband felt neglected, while the men handled external economic matters. Daughter 1 remarked that the wife's role appeared to be more emotionally demanding, as she had to manage multiple relationships while the men primarily worked to provide for the family. Though gender roles in modern society are evolving, Daughter 1 noted that the traditional gender roles from polyandry still persist, albeit changing. Daughter 2 added that while these roles were distinct, there is a gradual shift, with women starting to take on more roles outside the home and men becoming more involved in domestic responsibilities. The son-in-law agreed that polyandry traditionally reinforced gender roles, with men as providers and the wife as the caretaker. However, these roles are changing over time, though the core responsibilities remain rooted in tradition.

Conflict Resolution in Polyandrous Households

Conflict resolution in polyandrous households involved both collective and individual approaches, with different processes for men and women. The grandfather explained that in the past, when brothers had disagreements, particularly about economic matters or work distribution, the elders of the family would intervene to mediate and maintain peace. The grandmother added that for the wife, especially when feeling overwhelmed, she would often discuss issues with her eldest husband. The wife played a crucial role in

managing relationships among her husband's and often acted as a mediator herself. The father mentioned that conflicts among the brothers usually arose over the division of responsibilities, like farm work or other tasks. They would often resolve issues through direct communication, and the wife's role was essential in maintaining harmony, particularly when it came to personal matters. If tension arose, she would address it with the eldest brother, who would take the lead in resolving the issue. The mother shared that, in her experience, women in polyandrous marriages had to balance emotional conflicts between husbands. She emphasized the importance of communication, stating that she would address tensions quickly, often through informal discussions, and for more serious matters, the whole family would sit down together to resolve the issue. The son mentioned hearing stories about how problems were resolved, noting that the wife played a significant role in managing the dynamics between the husbands. While the men worked together on practical matters, the wife took charge of resolving emotional or personal issues.

Economic Contributions and Gender Status in Polyandrous Households

Economic contributions played a major role in shaping the status of men and women in polyandrous households. The father explained that, historically, men were the primary breadwinners, and their authority in family matters was closely linked to their financial contributions. The more a man contributed, the greater his influence in family decisions. However, with more women entering the workforce and contributing economically, this dynamic is beginning to change. The mother added that traditionally, a woman's status was determined by her ability to manage the household and maintain harmony among her husband's. Her influence didn't stem from financial power, but rather from her skills as a homemaker and mediator. But as women increasingly earn their own income, their influence within the family is rising. Daughter 1 observed that as more women contribute financially, their status in polyandrous households is growing. While men historically held more control due to their economic roles, women are gaining more respect as they contribute in new ways. Daughter 2 emphasized that although women's traditional role in the household didn't involve financial contributions, their status was high because of their management skills. Now, as women participate more in economic activities, they are becoming more empowered within the family. The son-in-law agreed that men still

gain status through their financial contributions but noted that as women gain financial independence, their status is improving. The wife's role is no longer limited to managing the home; she is beginning to have a say in financial decisions as well.

Changes in polyandrous tradition

Changes in the Perception of Polyandry Across Generations

There has been a significant shift in how polyandry is perceived by younger and older generations. The father noted that in his generation, polyandry was viewed as a means of maintaining family unity and managing resources, but younger people today, with access to education and more opportunities, prioritize individual happiness and relationships based on personal choice. The mother emphasized that younger women are less likely to accept polyandry because they value independence and equality in relationships and no longer feel obligated to follow traditional practices. Daughter 1 shared that younger people see polyandry as outdated, preferring relationship models like monogamy that are more in line with modern values of equality and individualism. Daughter 2 agreed, stating that polyandry was once a practical solution, but with the increased availability of careers, education, and personal relationships, it no longer holds the same necessity. The son-in-law echoed this sentiment, noting that the younger generation views polyandry as a relic of the past and is more focused on relationships that reflect personal values and goals.

Trends in Societal Attitudes Toward Polyandry

Societal attitudes toward polyandry have evolved significantly. The father explained that polyandry was once seen as a solution to economic challenges and a way to keep families together, but with the rise of education, individualism, and modern values, many no longer feel the need to follow such traditional practices. The mother pointed out that women's empowerment, along with increased education and awareness of their rights, has played a major role in this shift. Women today are less inclined to be part of relationships that limit their independence. Daughter 1 also highlighted that education and exposure to diverse lifestyles have led to a reevaluation of polyandry, as younger generations focus more on personal happiness and equality. Daughter 2 emphasized that economic independence has reduced the reliance on shared family resources, further diminishing the need for polyandry. The son-in-law agreed that societal openness to

different relationship forms has made polyandry less appealing, as people are now more focused on equality and personal choice in relationships.

Impact of Education, Employment, Development, and Cultural Exposure on Polyandry

Education, employment, and exposure to diverse cultural influences have significantly contributed to the decline of polyandry. The father noted that as people become more educated, they begin to question traditional practices that no longer align with modern values. Polyandry, once seen as necessary, is no longer relevant due to the increased opportunities available today. The mother highlighted that exposure to diverse cultural influences has made people more aware of alternative relationship models, with women in particular becoming empowered to make their own choices about relationships, free from traditional constraints. Daughter 1 emphasized the role of financial independence, especially for women, in making polyandry unnecessary. With the ability to support themselves, individuals no longer need polyandry for economic security. Daughter 2 added that education and the internet have also played a role in reshaping ideas about gender roles and equality, making polyandry less compatible with modern beliefs about individual rights. The son-in-law noted that globalization and development have contributed to the decline of polyandry by offering more choices and opportunities, leading younger people to seek relationships based on equality and personal choice rather than tradition.

Resistance and Advocacy Against Polyandry

In recent years, there has been increasing resistance to polyandry, particularly among those with higher education. The father mentioned that as people become more educated, they see polyandry as incompatible with modern society, and some local leaders are advocating for its replacement with monogamy. The mother noted that women, in particular, have been at the forefront of this resistance, believing that polyandry limits their freedom and independence. Community-based organizations have emerged to educate women about their rights and challenge the continuation of polyandry. Daughter 1 added those younger generations, especially women, are increasingly against polyandry because it conflicts with their values of equality and individual rights. Advocacy work

promoting gender equality is becoming more common, though it remains a sensitive topic in some areas. Daughter 2 agreed, stating that the exposure to different cultural norms and values, especially through education and the internet, has led to more open discussions and resistance against polyandry. The son-in-law observed that both men and women, particularly those who are educated, are pushing against polyandry, arguing that it restricts personal freedoms and doesn't align with modern values of equality and fairness.

Younger Generations Redefining Polyandry in the Face of Changing Societal Norms

Younger generations are redefining the concept of polyandry as they embrace changing societal norms, individual freedoms, and gender equality. The father noted that young people today value personal freedom and equality more than tradition and are not inclined to follow customs like polyandry. The mother emphasized that young women, who are now more educated and independent, seek relationships where both partners share equal power, and polyandry doesn't fit into this model. Daughter 1 echoed this sentiment, stating that for her generation, polyandry is not of interest, as they believe in equal partnerships with shared rights. Daughter 2 agreed, noting that gender equality is important to her generation, and polyandry feels like an outdated system. Many of her friends also believe in the freedom to choose their own paths. The son-in-law pointed out that younger men also think differently, as they prioritize relationships based on mutual respect and equality. Polyandry, while suitable for different times, no longer aligns with the values and opportunities available today.

Legal Challenges to Polyandry

The modern legal framework, which favors monogamous marriages, poses challenges for polyandrous relationships. The father explained that laws regarding inheritance, property, and marital rights are designed for monogamous unions, and polyandry can create legal complexities. As more people question traditional marriage practices, these challenges are likely to increase. The mother noted that as gender equality laws evolve, polyandry may be seen as unfair, particularly for women, who may argue that they do not receive the same rights as those in monogamous marriages. Daughter 1 agreed, stating that polyandry could be viewed as incompatible with modern legal frameworks that promote

equality, and women are likely to challenge it if they feel their rights are being violated. Daughter 2 emphasized that with the promotion of women's rights, polyandry will likely face increased legal scrutiny. Legal cases could arise if women feel their rights are being compromised. The son-in-law observed that legal challenges are inevitable, as modern laws do not recognize polyandry. Courts may favor monogamous marriages, leading to legal issues for polyandrous families.

Case study analysis

Case Study 1: A Young Woman's Resilience in Modern Polyandry

In Shillai, P1, a young woman, enters into a polyandrous marriage with two brothers due to the family's lack of land and their desire to keep the property intact. Initially, P1 struggles to conform to the societal norms of polyandry, especially as many of her peers in nearby towns opt for monogamous marriages. However, over time, she finds support from her husbands, who share domestic chores and parenting responsibilities. This partnership allows her to adapt to the structure of a polyandrous marriage, gradually feeling empowered rather than resigned to the tradition.

P1's experience has had a lasting impact on the younger women in her community. She has begun advocating for awareness and education about women's autonomy within polyandrous relationships, helping shift attitudes toward marriage. Through her resilience, she has helped promote a more empowering view of marriage, encouraging younger women to embrace choices that allow for greater equality and self-determination, even in the context of polyandry.

Case Study 2: The Influence of Urban Migration on Polyandrous Households

P2, the eldest of three brothers in a polyandrous marriage, moves to a city in search of better job opportunities. His decision to migrate significantly changes the dynamics within the family. Left behind with more responsibility, P2's two younger brothers must balance their roles as husbands while managing household duties in their brother's absence. His wife also finds herself juggling the roles of being a wife to two husbands and taking on additional domestic and financial responsibilities.

This shift highlights the effects of urban migration on traditional polyandrous households. The economic strain of maintaining such a family structure without the support of all husbands' present challenges for their wife. The situation exemplifies how the increasing mobility of younger generations, seeking better economic opportunities, has raised doubts about the practicality of maintaining polyandrous marriages in the modern era.

Case Study 3: Navigating Gender Roles in Modern Polyandry

P3's marriage to two brothers provides a complex example of how gender roles are evolving within polyandrous families. As a schoolteacher earning more than her husbands, P3 challenges the traditional role of the male as the primary breadwinner in a polyandrous setup. Initially, her husband and in-laws were resistant to her financial contribution, but over time, she successfully convinced them of her importance to the family's financial stability.

P3's story is part of a larger trend where women in polyandrous marriages are redefining their roles by asserting their rights and responsibilities within the family. Her example reflects broader shifts in gender dynamics, where women are increasingly claiming more autonomy and negotiating their position in family structures that were historically dominated by patriarchal norms. Her success represents how women are challenging and reshaping traditional gender expectations in modern polyandry.

Case Study 4: An Elder's Perspective on Preserving Tradition Amidst Change

P4, whose wife is in a polyandrous family, continues to uphold the tradition of polyandry, marrying the two real brothers. She views the practice as an essential part of her family's history and a means of preserving their land. Despite the growing influence of urban life on his younger siblings, who begin to question the viability of polyandry, P4 remains committed to the tradition, believing it is crucial for the family's land preservation strategy and the honoring of cultural heritage.

The situation illustrates the generational divide regarding polyandry. While the elder generation, represented by P4, remains steadfast in their adherence to the tradition, the younger generation, exposed to urban lifestyles and modern values, is increasingly inclined to explore alternative relationship models. This case underscores the tension

between the desire to preserve traditional customs and the pressures of changing societal norms that challenge those practices.

CHAPTER – V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Polyandrous households in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, are examined from a socio-cultural, economic, and personal perspective. Personal interviews, phone calls, and internet contacts were all used to gather data, which allowed for a thorough knowledge of this unusual marriage custom and its continuous change. Through in-person interviews, the researcher was able to notice nonverbal clues and gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' actual experiences, including their motivations, customs, and difficulties. Participants who were geographically separated may be reached through telephone discussions, guaranteeing a variety of viewpoints even in the absence of in-person contact. While case studies provided in-depth analyses of particular families, placing the practice in authentic socio-cultural contexts, focus group discussions allowed for the guided analysis of group attitudes and beliefs.

The analysis was structured around three key themes: motivations behind polyandry, the status of men and women, and changes in the tradition. The motivations were linked to cultural beliefs, historical practices, and practical benefits, such as maintaining family unity, ensuring financial security, equitable property division, and better child-rearing through multiple caregivers. The status of men and women was examined through their roles in economic decision-making and conflict resolution within households. Changes in polyandry were analyzed through factors like modernization, education, economic diversification, shifting gender roles, migration, media influence, and legal challenges. Overall, the study highlights that while polyandry in Shillai is deeply rooted in historical and cultural legacies, it is undergoing significant transitions influenced by evolving socio-economic dynamics.

The study on polyandrous families in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, provides a comprehensive socio-demographic profile of 16 participants and highlights insights from focus group discussions and case study analyses. The participants, aged 21 to 60, represent diverse villages, age groups, and socio-economic backgrounds. Women form the majority of the sample, and participants belong to various caste groups, including General, Scheduled Castes, and Other Backward Classes, reflecting the region's caste

diversity. Predominantly Hindu, the participants speak Pahadi and Hindi, encapsulating the linguistic culture of Himachal Pradesh. Education levels range from illiterate to graduate, with occupations spanning farming, tailoring, shopkeeping, government jobs, and teaching. While some participants remain in traditional roles, others have embraced modern livelihoods, reflecting the community's socio-economic transition.

Focus group discussions involving four polyandrous families illustrate the diversity of household structures, occupational roles, and intergenerational dynamics. For instance, Group 1 from Naya-Panjod highlights a mix of professional and agricultural livelihoods, with the wife and husbands contributing to household income through farming and government jobs. Group 2 from Rast underscores the integration of modern professions, as the wife and husbands pursue diverse economic activities, and the daughters prioritize education. Group 3 from Lani-Borad showcases dual-income roles within a household that also includes elderly dependents. Group 4 from Kiyari-Gundah highlights challenges like limited education, health issues, and reliance on agricultural work. These groups collectively reflect the interplay between traditional practices and modern influences in polyandrous families.

The case study profiling further enriches the analysis by detailing the individual lives of participants. For example, Participant 1 (P1), a 34-year-old female tailor from the OBC category, exemplifies self-employment's role in supporting household income. Participant 2 (P2), a 40-year-old Ph.D. holder from the General category, represents upward mobility and modern education's impact within traditional communities. Participants like P3, a 27-year-old female teacher, and P4, a 42-year-old male working under MNREGA, illustrate the spectrum of educational attainment and occupational roles in the region. Collectively, these narratives showcase the diversity, challenges, and transformation occurring within polyandrous households in Shillai Tehsil, offering valuable insights into their socio-economic and cultural frameworks.

In-depth interview discussion and finding

Motivation behind the polyandry tradition

Polyandry, historically rooted in cultural and practical realities, emerged as a vital tradition in regions with limited resources and challenging geographies. The practice served as a mechanism to maintain family unity, prevent land fragmentation, and ensure economic survival. Particularly in mountainous or agrarian areas, polyandry allowed brothers to share a wife, fostering harmony while preserving the family's wealth. It also carried spiritual significance, supported by religious beliefs emphasizing unity and cooperation. While modern influences like education and urbanization have diminished its prevalence, polyandry remains a symbol of resilience and resourcefulness in certain communities.

Distinct rituals and ceremonies historically accompanied polyandrous marriages, reflecting their cultural and functional importance. Rituals such as the "Saptapadi" and communal blessings by village elders emphasized unity and collective responsibility. Ceremonies like the "Parivariksanskar" and the lighting of a communal lamp underscored family bonding, while festivals reinforced these ties. Such traditions framed polyandry as more than a practical arrangement, imbuing it with dignity and respect. Though many rituals have faded, their legacy highlights the importance of harmony and mutual respect in polyandrous relationships.

The preservation of family property was a key motivation for polyandry, as it prevented land division and ensured financial stability. By working together on a single farm, brothers could strengthen familial bonds while maintaining economic sustainability. Participants noted that this system eliminated inheritance disputes and provided a safety net during hardships, such as the loss of a family member. Though urbanization and alternative livelihoods have reduced the practice's relevance, its historical role in safeguarding family wealth and unity remains respected.

Economic factors were a driving force behind polyandry, particularly in regions where land scarcity necessitated collaboration. By sharing a wife, brothers could pool resources and responsibilities, preventing productivity losses. Social harmony was another motivation, as the system minimized sibling rivalry and promoted familial cohesion. Many participants acknowledged that cultural beliefs further reinforced polyandry as a

survival strategy and a means to uphold tradition, even as modernization gradually shifted its significance.

Polyandry had a profound impact on family dynamics, fostering shared responsibilities and promoting unity. All husbands contributed to household tasks and child-rearing, creating a collaborative environment where children were cared for collectively. This system blurred distinctions between biological and non-biological fathers, emphasizing unity and equality. Inheritance processes were simplified, with property managed collectively to prevent disputes, ensuring the family's wealth remained intact for future generations.

The practice of collective care giving in polyandrous families cultivated a strong sense of mutual respect and shared responsibility. Children benefited from the presence of multiple father figures, learning values of cooperation and unity. This dynamic not only strengthened familial bonds but also created a stable environment for growth and development. Participants highlighted how these practices reinforced the importance of harmony and togetherness within the family unit.

Despite its decline in modern times, polyandry remains a respected tradition in communities where it historically flourished. Its role in maintaining family unity, economic stability, and social harmony is widely acknowledged. While younger generations increasingly view it as outdated, they recognize its historical importance and the innovative solutions it offered to past challenges. This evolving perspective reflects the ongoing adaptation of cultural practices in response to societal changes.

The interviews underscored how polyandry has shaped family structures and community dynamics over generations. From preserving property to fostering collective child-rearing, the tradition has left an indelible mark on the cultural fabric of these communities. As modern influences reshape societal norms, the legacy of polyandry serves as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of traditional practices in overcoming adversity.

Status of men and women in polyandrous tradition

In polyandrous traditions, the roles and responsibilities of men and women are shaped by traditional expectations and the unique family structure. Women primarily manage domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. They also serve as emotional mediators, maintaining harmony among their multiple husbands, addressing jealousy, and preventing conflicts. Women act as the emotional and organizational center of the family, ensuring relationships remain balanced and fostering unity. Men, on the other hand, take on the role of providers, engaging in labor like farming or earning income to support the family. They collaborate as brothers, pooling resources and working together to ensure household stability. These roles, while distinct, are complementary. Women focus on internal family dynamics, while men handle external responsibilities, creating a balanced and cooperative environment.

Conflict resolution within polyandrous households reflects this division of roles. Men typically address practical disputes related to work, land, or responsibilities, often led by the eldest brother. Collaborative decision-making is emphasized, with brothers working together to find solutions. Women, however, handle emotional conflicts, such as jealousy or feelings of neglect, through private discussions with their husbands. As the equilibrium keepers, women ensure that all husbands feel valued, promoting harmony. Open dialogue and mutual compromise are central to resolving disagreements, and, when necessary, elders or the eldest brother may mediate. This structured yet flexible approach allows the family to function cohesively.

Economic contributions significantly shape the status of men and women in polyandrous households. Men's financial contributions through farming or labor grant them prestige and authority, as their work directly supports the family's survival. Women, while less visible in monetary contributions, play an equally important role by managing the household, nurturing children, and maintaining emotional and social cohesion. This management ensures smooth operations and unity within the family. Although men hold greater external economic power, women's status remains vital due to their domestic and relational leadership. Their efforts in balancing relationships and fostering harmony earn them significant respect. The interdependence of these roles—men providing financial stability and women ensuring emotional and social well-being—ensures the family's

overall success, with both genders receiving mutual respect and recognition for their contributions.

Changes in polyandrous tradition

The perception of polyandry has shifted significantly between younger and older generations. While older generations viewed polyandry as a practical tradition to preserve family resources and unity, younger people increasingly regard it as outdated. This shift is driven by factors like education, urbanization, and changing societal norms that prioritize individuality and personal autonomy. As a result, the practice of polyandry has been gradually declining.

Education has been a key factor in shaping attitudes toward polyandry. Exposure to modern ideas and alternative lifestyles has encouraged younger individuals to question the necessity of such practices. Many now view monogamy as the norm and prefer relationships rooted in personal choice rather than traditions designed to protect communal resources. This shift in perspective reflects broader changes in societal values and aspirations.

Economic changes have also played a significant role in the declining relevance of polyandry. In the past, polyandry was tied to land-based livelihoods, with families using it as a means to avoid dividing their land. However, with increased employment opportunities outside rural areas, younger generations are less dependent on traditional practices. Economic independence has enabled them to pursue individual careers and relationships, further reducing the appeal of polyandry.

Modern societal attitudes have increasingly emphasized personal freedom and contemporary marital norms over communal traditions. Younger people value independence and equality, which often conflicts with the principles underlying polyandry. As they gain access to education and urban lifestyles, these values become more deeply ingrained, leading to a broader rejection of polyandry as incompatible with modern life.

Resistance to polyandry is growing within communities, particularly among younger generations. Many young men and women are advocating for personal autonomy, rejecting the expectation to conform to polyandrous arrangements. Women, in particular, are vocal about their desire to choose monogamous relationships and break free from the constraints of tradition. This resistance has sparked tensions between younger individuals and older family members who continue to uphold polyandry.

Education, access to information, and exposure to diverse cultural influences have fueled the resistance to polyandry. With greater awareness of alternative marriage structures and individual rights, younger generations are increasingly challenging the tradition. This shift reflects a broader push for gender equality and personal freedom, with many advocating for relationships based on mutual respect and choice.

Legal and social changes are also affecting polyandrous relationships. As gender equality becomes a priority in modern society, younger people are rejecting practices that limit their autonomy. Some are even attempting to reform polyandrous arrangements, advocating for more equitable dynamics within such marriages. However, these efforts are part of a broader trend to move away from traditional customs altogether.

In conclusion, polyandry is increasingly viewed as irrelevant by younger generations due to education, economic independence, and exposure to modern values. While it remains a part of some communities, its prevalence is declining as individuals prioritize independence, equality, and personal choice. This generational shift signals the gradual fading or transformation of polyandry in response to evolving societal expectations.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Findings

In order to understand how polyandry is changing in Shillai Tehsil, four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with families and individuals of different ages, academic backgrounds, and professions. Following each discussion, the results are grouped thematically under the main domains.

Focus Group Discussion 1

Motivations behind the Practice

Historically, polyandry has been used to protect family land and maintain economic stability in areas with few resources. It encouraged harmony, collaboration, and mutual reliance among brothers and prevented property division. Because they handled relationships and household matters, women were respected and had a lot of power. But as a result of education and technology, newer generations are beginning to doubt its applicability.

Rituals and Ceremonies:

Polyandry rituals symbolized family unity, with marriage ceremonies emphasizing equality among brothers and shared responsibilities. The wife played a central role in managing relationships, leading prayers during religious ceremonies, and maintaining family property. These practices reinforced the cooperative nature of polyandrous households.

Family Property and Economic Stability:

Polyandry preserved family wealth by preventing property division and fostering collective income management. It enabled families to save, invest, and thrive in difficult conditions. Although modern society offers alternative ways to secure wealth, polyandry was once a practical solution for economic stability.

Gender Roles and Conflict Resolution:

Polyandry created unique family dynamics, where the wife acted as the central figure, managing relationships and child-rearing collectively with the brothers. Traditional gender roles assigned economic responsibilities to men and domestic and emotional management to women. Over time, these roles are shifting as women increasingly contribute to household income.

Contemporary Perceptions:

Gender awareness and contemporary education have pushed both men and women to choose individuality and independence over traditional marital structures. "A system of the past" is how younger participants characterized polyandry. In the past, polyandry

helped maintain family land and economic stability in areas with few resources. In addition to encouraging harmony, collaboration, and mutual reliance, it stopped brothers from dividing property. Women had a great deal of respect and authority because they handled relationships and household matters. But younger generations now doubt its applicability due to modernization and education.

Focus Group Discussion 2

Economic and Social Motivation:

In order to maintain life in hostile environments and avoid land partition, polyandry developed as an economic necessity. It encouraged brothers to rely on one another and gave women a sense of group security.

Gender Roles and Status in Polyandrous Tradition

Men's Roles: Focus on farming and external labor, with status often tied to economic contributions. Women's Roles: Central to household management, harmony, and emotional balance, though often carrying the heavier emotional burden.

Conflict Resolution:

While the woman mediated emotional difficulties, men tended to resolve practical disputes. In intricate family arrangements, this dual system preserved harmony.

Trends in Societal Attitudes

Polyandry is now seen as unnecessary, with changing societal norms favoring individual rights, gender equality, and personal freedom. Women's empowerment has accelerated this shift. Education and economic independence have provided alternatives to polyandry. Exposure to diverse cultural perspectives has further decreased its relevance, emphasizing equality and choice.

Legal Challenges:

Polyandry faces legal challenges due to modern laws designed for monogamous unions. Issues surrounding inheritance, marital rights, and gender equality create incompatibilities with current legal frameworks, making its future uncertain.

Focus Group Discussion 3

Historical Role and Present Decline:

The participants remembered polyandry as a survival strategy based on family harmony and land preservation. The approach no longer makes economic sense in light of new revenue streams and educational mobility.

Rituals, Ceremonies, and Norms:

Weddings are community-centered events symbolizing equality among brothers and welcoming the wife into the family. Women play key roles in agricultural rituals and family ceremonies, often symbolizing unity and cohesion within the household.

Gender Dynamics:

Male authority was correlated with economic contribution, but women's power was derived from emotional and household control. However, established hierarchies are being challenged by the increasing economic engagement of women.

Conflict Management and Child-Rearing:

The oldest brother frequently made the decisive decisions in financial conflicts, which were settled by men. By resolving relational issues and preserving harmony, the wife acted as an emotional mediator. Family members share responsibilities, which promotes a feeling of unity in spite of biological fatherhood uncertainties.

Perception among Younger Generations:

Younger generations view polyandry as outdated due to alternative economic opportunities, mobility, and exposure to modern values. Women prioritize independence and equality, moving away from traditional practices.

Future Outlook

Younger Generations: Transition to individual rights, egalitarian partnerships, and different family arrangements. Polyandry, despite its decline, is nevertheless a significant historical indicator of how a community has adapted to certain socioeconomic difficulties. The present analysis demonstrates how industrialization, economic growth, and changing gender dynamics are causing polyandry, which was previously a practical and culturally rooted institution, to undergo substantial change. As society attitudes move toward equality, autonomy, and personal choice, the tradition's future appears dim.

Focus Group Discussion 4

Cultural Continuity and Transformation:

Polyandry used to be an adaptable system that protected land, wealth, and fraternal cooperation. Nowadays, it only appears symbolically in a few houses.

Gender Relations and Family Roles:

Polyandry created unique family dynamics, where the wife acted as the central figure, managing relationships and child-rearing collectively with the brothers. Traditional gender roles assigned economic responsibilities to men and domestic and emotional management to women. Over time, these roles are shifting as women increasingly contribute to household income.

Conflict Resolution and Emotional Balance

Traditionally, elder intervention or the wife's mediation were used to settle disputes. Although the wife's emotional health was frequently jeopardized, participants recognized her moral authority.

Societal Attitudes and Legal Challenges

The study observed that monogamy is currently encouraged by legal and social standards. Participants cited women's rights and inheritance concerns as the two main obstacles to the continuation of polyandry under the current system.

Redefining Polyandry

Younger participants believed that polyandry was incompatible with the equality and freedom of today. Women prioritized mutually respectful partnerships and placed a special emphasis on personal choice and legal awareness.

Summary of All FGDs

Historically, ecological and economic survival served as the foundation for polyandry's tradition and motivation across FGDs; however, modernity, alternative livelihoods, and emerging value systems have undermined this justification. Despite the persistence of traditional gender roles, FGDs showed that power dynamics are changing as a result of economic engagement and education. With greater autonomy and decision-making, women's status has improved, while males are adjusting to new gender norms.

A period of transition from a tradition of necessity to a symbolic cultural memory was verified by all FGDs. Polyandry is no longer socially and legally viable due to modern gender awareness, education, and employment. Polyandry in Shillai Tehsil, once a pragmatic system ensuring economic cohesion and family survival, is undergoing a profound transition. The interplay of education, gender equality, legal reform, and modern aspirations has redefined marital expectations. As a result, the tradition is shifting from a living practice to a symbolic cultural memory—reflecting broader processes of social change and modernization in rural Himachal Pradesh.

Case studies discussion and findings

The qualitative study identifies several core themes that provide insights into the dynamics of polyandrous traditions. The first theme focuses on **the motivation behind polyandry**, highlighting factors such as cultural and religious beliefs, historical practices, the need to avoid property fragmentation, fostering family unity, ensuring financial security, and providing well-nurtured environments for children. These factors underscore the tradition's role in addressing economic and social stability within families.

The second theme examines the **status of men and women in polyandrous households**, exploring aspects like economic decision-making and conflicts that arise within these family structures. This highlights the complexities of shared responsibilities and power dynamics among spouses.

The third theme addresses **changes in polyandrous traditions** driven by modernization, education, economic diversification, evolving gender roles, urban migration, and the influence of media, legal frameworks, and public awareness. These factors illustrate how external pressures and societal shifts are reshaping traditional practices and leading to legal and cultural challenges.

From the case analyses, additional aggregate dimensions emerge: **resilience and empowerment**, where women in polyandrous relationships are increasingly finding autonomy and redefining their roles; **urban migration and its challenges**, which disrupt traditional family dynamics; **evolving gender roles**, reflecting broader societal changes in patriarchal norms; and **generational and cultural tensions**, highlighting the conflicts between preserving traditional practices and adapting to modern values. Together, these themes provide a comprehensive understanding of how polyandry navigates tradition and change.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explore the transition of polyandrous marriage traditions in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh, with a focus on understanding the motivations behind polyandry, the status of women and men within these marriages, and the changes occurring in this system in contemporary times.

Objective 1: To study the tradition and motivation behind polyandry

Historically, the main socioeconomic drivers of polyandry in Shillai Tehsil have been the necessity to preserve family unity in an agrarian environment and avoid land division. Fraternal polyandry, in which brothers share a single bride, was a practical way to guarantee that family resources, particularly land, remained undivided in an area marked by land scarcity and subsistence farming. Families were able to combine their resources and labor under this structure, which guaranteed their survival as a group in a harsh environment.

The custom was also shaped by societal and demographic factors, such as large male-to-female ratios in some regions that rationalized polyandry as a marital arrangement. Furthermore, polyandry made it possible to establish big, extended families—a necessity

for working in agriculture and surviving in hardy rural areas. Therefore, practical worries about maintaining family unity, economic stability, and land preservation served as the driving force behind polyandry.

Objective 2: To understand the status of women and men in polyandrous marriage

The socioeconomic context of polyandrous marriages has historically influenced the status of both men and women in these unions. Women in polyandrous marriages were the heads of the home, handling household chores, keeping the peace in the home, and supervising children. But because women had to manage their relationships with several spouses, most of whom were brothers; their role also required them to deal with intricate emotional and relational dynamics. Because the marital system was mostly based on male lineage and land succession, women's liberty was often limited, even if they were frequently regarded for their managerial abilities.

In contrast, men who were married into polyandrous households divided up household chores, work, and fatherhood. In terms of inheritance and familial contribution, the system kept brothers equal, but it also necessitated a great deal of cooperation and compromise. Every brother was expected to collaborate in order to maintain the household, and they all shared an equal portion in the family's property and assets. But a man's standing was strongly related to where he stood in the family order, with older brothers typically holding more power.

Although polyandry promoted economic stability and familial unity, it also put some emotional and relational strain on men and women because it required them to manage several relationships and shared obligations in a single household. Traditionally, gender roles were determined by the financial demands of the household, with men and women handling resources and making important decisions in different but equal ways.

Objective 3: To explore changes taking place in the polyandrous system in contemporary times.

Shillai Tehsil's polyandrous system has changed significantly in the modern era, mostly due to modernity. The need for polyandry has decreased as a result of the transition from

an agrarian economy based on subsistence to one that is more varied. People in Shillai are no longer reliant on family land for livelihood because they have more access to government employment, education, and possibilities in urban regions. The collective family structure that encouraged polyandrous marriages has been undermined by this economic independence since younger generations now have more options for making a living.

Indian law does not formally recognize polyandry, and modern legal systems place a higher priority on monogamy. This poses problems for property rights, inheritance, and the legal validity of marriage. Because of the state's emphasis on monogamy and the impact of contemporary media that promotes nuclear family values, younger generations now consider polyandry to be outmoded. The region's declining polyandry is partly due to social pressure to follow contemporary marriage ideals, which place an emphasis on passionate love and personal freedom.

The extended family framework that supported polyandry has broken down as a result of migration to urban areas in quest of better economic possibilities. In cities where nuclear families are the norm, it might be challenging to maintain polyandry. Monogamous marriages, which are more in line with urban lifestyles, are becoming more and more popular as people relocate and return home with contemporary values, rejecting polyandry.

Education has been a transforming factor in changing Shillai's traditional gender dynamics. Through work and education, women—who were before expected to run families and maintain relationships with several husbands—are becoming more independent and autonomous. Younger women are less inclined to pursue polyandry since they increasingly look for more equal partnerships as a result of this shift in gender norms. Furthermore, Shillai men and women are turning away from polyandrous marriages in favor of more egalitarian and customized unions as contemporary notions of gender equality and individual rights gain traction.

Though polyandry has not disappeared entirely, it is now practiced by a dwindling number of families in more remote and culturally insulated parts of the region. The overall trend, however, points to a gradual erosion of the tradition as modernization

continues to reshape the social and economic fabric of rural communities in Himachal Pradesh. The transformation of polyandrous marriages in Shillai reflects broader global patterns of cultural change as traditional practices adapt to the pressures of modernity.

LIMITATIONS

While this research on the transition in polyandrous marriage tradition in Shillai Tehsil has provided valuable insights, several limitations need to be acknowledged to understand the scope and generalizability of the findings.

- **Geographical Limitation**

The study only looks at the Himachal Pradesh district of Shillai Tehsil, where polyandry has historically been common. Although this offers a comprehensive insight into the custom in a particular area, the results might not be totally indicative of polyandrous customs in other regions of India or the Himalayas. The findings may not be broadly applicable due to the distinct socio-economic and cultural variables associated with polyandry in other places such as Ladakh or Zaskar.

- **Sample Size and Diversity**

Logistical limitations, such as accessibility to rural places and participant willingness to participate in conversations about a potentially stigmatized procedure, may restrict the study's sample size. Furthermore, the results might not accurately reflect the viewpoints of younger, urbanized people who have moved or adopted modern lifestyles if the sample is primarily composed of older generations or those residing in Shillai's more traditional, rural areas.

A broader, more varied sample comprising individuals from various age brackets, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographic locales would offer a more complete picture of how polyandry is changing in the area. It's possible that the current sample leans more conservative or traditional and that the attitudes and experiences of younger generations aren't adequately represented.

- **Cultural Sensitivity and Stigma**

Talking about polyandrous marriages can raise specific cultural issues and stigmas, particularly in a setting that is modernizing quickly. It's possible that some individuals were reluctant to answer directly out of concern for social rejection or judgment. The topic of polyandry is frequently seen as taboo, especially in contemporary contexts where monogamy is more widely accepted. This could lead to incomplete or biased responses, especially if interviewees feel under pressure to fit in with current norms. Furthermore, women or younger individuals could be reluctant to talk candidly about their experiences in polyandrous marriages because of worries about social constraints, gender norms, or personal autonomy. These elements might have introduced biases into the data that was gathered, which would have prevented a complete knowledge of the lived realities of people in polyandrous relationships.

- **Limited Temporal Scope**

The study may not fully capture the long-term historical evolution of the practice across several generations since it primarily focuses on changes and transitions in polyandrous marriage practices in the present. The study looks at contemporary socioeconomic and cultural aspects, but it does not give enough historical background to comprehend the deeper cultural origins and changes that have shaped polyandry in this area throughout the ages.

- **Focus on External Factors Over Internal Dynamics**

The study explores the external factors that are driving the shift, such as education, urbanization, legislative reforms, and economic shifts, but it might not take into account the complex internal dynamics that exist inside polyandrous homes. In particular, in terms of emotional interactions, power dynamics, conflict resolution, and the internal decision-making processes that support or undermine polyandrous marriage, the study may not adequately examine how families navigate these transitions on a human level. It would be more thorough to analyze the emotional and psychological experiences of individuals living in polyandrous households, including how they view the changing tradition and

resolve difficulties brought about by contemporary changes. These micro-level dynamics, which are as crucial in comprehending the lived experiences of those affected, might be overlooked by the current focus on macro-level issues.

- **Impact of Modern Media and Globalization**

The study mentions how globalization and contemporary media shape attitudes on polyandry, but it might not go far enough in examining the impact of these factors on the custom in day-to-day living. While monogamous, nuclear families are portrayed in the media as the ideal, it is not entirely understood how much of this advertising permeates society and shapes individual choices. Though this should have been investigated more thoroughly, it's likely that the impact of global media and cultural standards on the fall of polyandry is much more significant than first thought.

A deeper look at how exposure to globalized ideas, social media, and mass communication networks affects attitudes on polyandry can be beneficial for the study, especially for younger generations who are more aware of worldwide trends. Examining the relationship between media usage and evolving marital customs may provide fresh insight into the effects of modernity.

- **Short-Term Study of Long-Term Change**

The current research may simply be a snapshot in time of the long-term cultural process that is the move from polyandry. Due to the strongly ingrained cultural history of polyandry, research conducted over brief periods of time may not capture the entire range of changes that take place over decades or even centuries. A longitudinal method tracking changes in marriage patterns across multiple generations might be beneficial to the study in order to give a more comprehensive picture of the long-term effects of modernization on tradition.

- Furthermore, some of the historic motives for polyandry may be reinstated in reaction to new obstacles, such as economic crises or environmental changes,

and the study may not fully account for this possibility. A longer view may show cyclical trends in the rise and fall of polyandry as a reaction to changing socioeconomic circumstances.

- **Generalization of Findings**

Although the study offers a perceptive examination of polyandry in Shillai, extrapolating these conclusions to other parts of India or the global polyandry community could provide challenges. Shillai's polyandry developed as a result of unique socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental circumstances derived from the geography and history of the area. Therefore, extrapolating the findings of this study to other polyandrous societies—in Ladakh, Nepal, or Tibet, for example—without taking into consideration regional differences could result in false presumptions regarding the practice of polyandry as a whole.

SUGGESTION & FUTURE DIRECTION

The research conducted on the transition of polyandrous marriage traditions in Shillai Tehsil has provided key insights into how modernization, social change, and economic shifts are affecting this age-old practice. Based on these findings, several suggestions can be made to deepen understanding, guide further research, and inform policy development. These recommendations aim to enhance both academic study and community engagement, as well as preserve cultural heritage while addressing the socio-economic needs of the region.

- **Expand Geographic Scope for Comparative Analysis**

Future studies should cover more areas where polyandry has historically been practiced, such as Ladakh, Zaskar, and specific regions of Nepal and Tibet, in order to obtain a more thorough understanding of polyandry and its transitions. Researchers can find similarities and contrasts in the causes influencing the practice's persistence or decrease by contrasting Shillai with other polyandrous places.

Comparative analysis might be useful in identifying factors that are unique to a given place, such as the climate, social structures, legal systems, and cultural norms, that may have influenced the development of polyandrous marriages. More generalizable findings regarding polyandry as a socio-cultural institution, both in India and other regions of the world, would be possible with this wider research focus.

- **Conduct Longitudinal Studies to Track Changes Over Time**

As the shift away from polyandry is a long-term cultural process, longitudinal studies should be taken into consideration in future research to monitor changes in marriage practices across several generations. Over several centuries, polyandry has gradually changed, and it's likely to do so again in reaction to contemporary cultural, legal, and economic influences.

A longitudinal approach would shed light on the ways in which modernization affects polyandry over time, how views about it evolve over the generations, and whether or not specific aspects of the custom are being modified to match new settings. This would give a deeper knowledge of the process of cultural adaptation and assist in capturing the long-term consequences of modernization on the tradition.

- **In-Depth Gender Analysis and Empowerment Initiatives**

Examining the position of women in polyandrous relationships was one of the study's main goals. Future studies, however, ought to offer a more thorough examination of gender roles, power relationships, and how modernity affects gender relations in polyandrous households. It would be beneficial to concentrate on the ways that women's education, gender equality, and personal autonomy impact the sustainability of polyandrous marriages. Initiatives that promote economic opportunity, legal awareness, and education for women in polyandrous communities should also be taken into account. These initiatives would contribute to ensuring that women, regardless of whether they are in polyandrous or other types of partnerships,

are free to choose their roles in marriage without being constrained by social or economic factors.

- **Study the Role of Legal Frameworks and Policy Interventions**

Like in other regions of India, polyandry is not formally recognized by the legal system in Shillai. This raises questions about property ownership, inheritance rights, and the legal standing of kids born in polyandrous marriages. Future studies should concentrate on the legal difficulties polyandrous families have and investigate possible legislative solutions that would offer legal protection and acknowledgment. Scholars should investigate whether laws pertaining to property rights, inheritance, and family structure may be modified to allow for polyandrous partnerships without placing needless limitations or judgments on the behavior. Furthermore, legislators ought to think about how updating property and marriage laws might be able to aid with some of the real-world issues polyandrous households confront, like child custody and equitable land division.

- **Explore Economic Alternatives and Support for Rural Communities**

Shillai polyandry has always been motivated by economic factors, particularly the desire to prevent the division of family land. Future research should look at how marital rituals are being impacted by shifting economic conditions, such as increased migration, easier access to employment opportunities abroad, and education. It is imperative to investigate whether alternative economic models, such as land reform, job creation, or more convenient access to credit and financial services, can offer solutions that reduce the financial arguments for polyandry. If financial stability and better rural livelihoods are offered, polyandrous families might find it easier to adapt to contemporary marriage customs while preserving their cultural history.

- **Focus on Internal Family Dynamics and Emotional Aspects**

Future research should concentrate on internal family dynamics in addition to the exterior socio-economic reasons that are driving the shift away from polyandry, as the current study highlights. This would involve examining the emotional and psychological experiences of individuals in polyandrous marriages, the nature of interpersonal relationships between co-husbands, and how conflict is managed within the family. Research could explore how family members navigate challenges like jealousy, division of labor, and decision-making in polyandrous households. Understanding these internal dynamics would offer a more holistic view of the factors that sustain or challenge the practice and provide insights into how families are adapting to changing socio-cultural conditions.

- **Analyze the Impact of Modern Media and Education on Attitudes**

It is important to investigate how ideas regarding marriage customs are shaped by contemporary education and media. In contrast to the polyandrous tradition, younger generations in Shillai are being exposed to monogamous, nuclear family patterns as the social norm due to increased availability of education and worldwide media. Future studies should examine the ways in which younger people's attitudes toward polyandry are influenced by their exposure to contemporary media, social media platforms, and educational content. Comprehending this dynamic will aid in elucidating the generational departure from customary practices and offer direction on how cultural legacy can be conserved while honoring personal autonomy and contemporary principles.

- **Promote Community-Led Dialogue and Cultural Preservation**

Any efforts to resolve the shift should involve community engagement because polyandry is ingrained in Shillai society and culture. It is important to urge local stakeholders to have conversations about the practice's future in order to strike a balance between cultural preservation and contemporary demands and ideals. Documenting and conserving the historical and

cultural relevance of polyandry through community-led initiatives may prove advantageous. Oral histories, cultural events, or educational campaigns to promote knowledge of the historical significance of the custom could all be part of these endeavors. In a society that is modernizing quickly, this would assist communities in maintaining their sense of self while making educated decisions about changing their marital customs.

- **Research the Role of Religion and Spirituality in Sustaining or Adapting Polyandry**

Attitudes on polyandry may also be influenced by spirituality and religion. Although economic considerations have always played a major role in polyandry, attitudes on the practice may now be influenced by spiritual and religious principles. Future studies should examine the extent to which local religious views encourage or oppose polyandry, as well as whether religious leaders have influenced the development of marriage customs. Researchers and policymakers may be able to develop more culturally sensitive ways to interact with these groups and facilitate the transition in a way that respects both contemporary standards and traditional values if they have a better understanding of the spiritual foundations of polyandrous relationships.

- **Engage with Youth and Migration Trends**

Lastly, the effect of youth migration on polyandry should be the main topic of future study. There's a widening gap between modern metropolitan lifestyles and ancient rural customs like polyandry as younger generations go to urban regions more and more for school and work possibilities. Studies on the perspectives of youth who have moved from Shillai to the city should look at how migration affects their perceptions of polyandry and whether they experience a sense of cultural alienation. Comprehending this dynamic will offer valuable perspectives on the enduring viability of polyandry in rural regions and underscore the necessity for policies that

tackle the obstacles encountered by both urban and rural communities in preserving cultural heritage.

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INTERVIEW-GUIDE

Transition in Polyandrous Marriage Tradition: A Study in Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh

The purpose of this interview Schedule is to ensure consistency and reliability of the study by providing the researcher guidelines for interviewing the participants. The searcher is exploring **Transition in Polyandrous Marriage Tradition: A Study in Shillai Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh**. I will introduce myself to the participants as of Lovely Professional University, Punjab a Doctoral student, explain the purpose of the interview and express my thankfulness to the participants for the interview. I will show candidacy letter if needed. I will present that the participant's details will not be disclosed to any one and the responses will be solely used for research purpose only.

Yours sincerely,
Shiv Kumar (42000464)
Research Scholar LPU

(1) Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

1.1 Name of the Village :

1.2 Name of the Panchayat :

1.3 Name of the Respondent :

1.4 Language you speak :

1.5 Religion :

1.6 Caste / Sub caste :

- a). Cultural or religious beliefs
- b). Economic considerations
- c). Personal and emotional fulfillment
- d). All above mentioned
- e). Any Other (please specify) -----

2.2. Are there any specific cultural or religious contexts in which polyandry is more prevalent?

- a). Yes, please specify-----
- b). No
- c). Don't know

2.3. In your opinion, what are some potential advantages of polyandry?

- a). Increased emotional support
- b). Shared responsibilities and workload
- c). Variety in intimate relationships
- d). All above mentioned
- e). Any other (please specify)

2.4. How did you become involved in a polyandrous relationship?

- a). Personal choice
- b). Cultural or religious reasons
- c). Open communication with partners
- d). All above mentioned
- e). Others (please specify) -----

2.5. Would you consider being in a polyandrous relationship?

- a). Yes, I would be open to it
- b). No, I'm not interested
- c). Maybe, it depends on the circumstances
- d). Not sure

2.6. How do you think religion and cultural beliefs influence the acceptance of Polyandry?

- a). They strongly oppose polyandry
- b). They are neutral and can vary depending on the specific religion/culture
- c). They accept and support polyandry
- d). All above mentioned
- e). Not sure
- f). Other (please specify) -----

2.7. Can you describe the historical and cultural roots of polyandry within your community or the society?

2.8. Are there specific rituals, ceremonies, or norms associated with polyandry that emphasizes its significance within the community? (Yes or No)

If yes, please describe in detail: -----

2.9 . Do you believe polyandry is something which helps to keep the family property and income intact?(Yes or No)

If yes, please describe in detail: -----

2.10. In your experience, what are the common motivations or driving forces that lead individuals or families to choose polyandrous relationships?

2.11. How does the practice of polyandry impact family dynamics, inheritance, or child-rearing practices within these societies?

(3) Status of men and women in Polyandrous tradition

3.1. Do you think polyandry challenges traditional gender roles and expectations?

- a). Yes, it promotes gender equality
- b). No, it reinforces traditional gender roles
- c). It depends on the specific dynamics of the relationship
- d). I don't know

3.2. How do you perceive the power dynamics in a polyandrous relationship?

- a). Equal - All partners have equal power and agency.
- b). Unequal - There is likely to be a power imbalance.
- c). It varies depending on the specific relationship.
- d). I'm not sure about the power dynamics in polyandry.

3.3. Are the gender roles of men and women clearly outlined or flexible in polyandry?

(Yes / NO)

If yes, are you satisfied with role allocated by society/family? Yes/No

If not, give reason (s): -----

3.4. Do both men and women work for livelihood?

- a). Yes
- b). NO

If No, who works mostly? -----

3.5. Who has the authority/ power to take decisions? -----

3.6. How do gender roles and responsibilities typically manifest within polyandrous marriages? Are there distinct roles assigned to women and men?

3.7. How conflicts or disagreements are typically resolved within polyandrous households, and do these processes differ for women and men?

3.8. How do economic contributions or responsibilities shape the status of men and women in polyandrous households?

(4) Changes in polyandrous tradition

4.1. What potential challenges do you foresee in polyandrous relationships?

- a). Balancing time and attention among multiple partners
- b). Managing potential conflicts and jealousy
- c). Navigating societal stigma and judgments

4.2. What are the factors that might influence changes in the polyandrous system?

- a). Education
- b). Interaction with media and social media
- c). Infrastructural development like roads; medical and health facilities

- d). Interaction with other society
- e). Employment
- f). All above mentioned

4.3. Have you observed any changes or shifts in the perception of polyandry among younger generations compared to older generations? Yes/ No

If yes then explain

4.4 .What is the trends in societal attitudes towards polyandry over recent years, and what factors contribute to these changes?

4.5.What is the impact of education, employment, development, access to information, and exposure to diverse cultural influences on the persistence or evolution of polyandrous relationships in contemporary society?

4.6. Have there been instances of resistance or advocacy against polyandry within communities or societies?

4.7. How are younger generations engaging with or redefining the concept of polyandry in the face of changing societal norms, individual freedoms, and gender equality movements?

4.8. Are there any legal challenges that have affected or may affect polyandrous relationships?

Yes/ No

If yes, what may be those changes? Explain _____

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APPENDIX II**LIST OF PUBLICATION**

S. No	Name of Research Paper	Journal Name	eISSN, pISSN	Journal Link
1	Determinants of Polyandry: An Analysis of Polyandrous Families in Shillai Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh	Journal of Neonatal Surgery	ISSN (Online): 2226-0439 Vol. 14, Issue 10s (2025)	https://www.jneonatalurg.com





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International Conference

on

Resilient Futures : Adapting to Climate Variabilities in Agriculture, Economy, and Environment

Dec. 29, 2023

Organized by

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Certificate

This certificate is awarded to Prof./Dr./Mr./Ms. Shiv Kumar

University/College/Institution Ch. LPU Jalandhar

for delivering a Keynote Address /Invited Talk/Chairing a Session/Paper Presentation/Poster Presentation/Participation in

International Conference on the topic Changing lifestyles and Health in a

Polyandrous Society: A Contemporary Analysis

This International Conference was conducted in hybrid mode.


Convener


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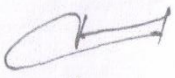


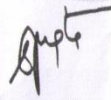
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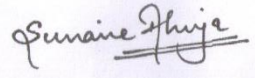
Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that **Mr. Shiv Kumar S/o Sh. Pishori Lal Sharma** participated in **Short Term Course on Transnational Migration and Social Development** organized by Lovely Professional University w.e.f. **June 27, 2022 to July 02, 2022** and obtained **"B"** Grade.

Date of Issue: 02-07-2022
Place : Phagwara (Punjab), India


Prepared by
(Administrative Officer-Records)


Checked By
Program Coordinator


Head
Human Resource Development Center





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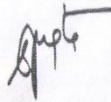
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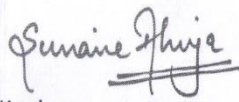
Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that **Mr. Shiv Kumar S/o Sh. Pishori Lal Sharma** participated in **Short Term Course on Environmental and Social Impact Assessment** organized by Lovely Professional University w.e.f. **April 23, 2024 to April 29, 2024** and obtained **"B"** Grade.

Date of Issue : 20-05-2024
Place : Phagwara (Punjab), India


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