

Experiences of Women in Polygynous Unions in Hammarsdale, South Africa

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KEYWORDS Culture. Economics. Marriage. Rural. Urban

ABSTRACT Traditionally, polygyny has been excused on three major points- economics, culture and morals. Economics used to be a viable reason for a man to be in a polygynous marriage because during the industrial revolution, many men from rural areas had to leave their homes and wives, and go to the cities to work and live there for months. Many polygynous unions now are not separated by distance because the man makes his two wives live in close proximity to each other so he can see them, and this discredits the economic excuse. In this study, the researcher seeks to understand why independent, educated, 'modern' working women in particular, should choose to enter into such relationships. The aim and overall objective of the research is to find the views of peri-urban women on polygyny. The research is based on case studies and is narrative in nature because the participants shared their experiences through stories.