

## A Demographic Approach to the Family Structure in Asia and Africa

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**ABSTRACT** Family demography is the study of family structure. Family formations have resemblance in Asia and Africa, for instance most of the marriages practices in these two countries have been of the form of arranged marriages. The objective of this study is to investigate the family structure between sub-Saharan Africa and Asian continents. Secondary information (data) from different literature reviews was used. The information will be qualitative investigations done during different years by different countries. The causes of child marriage in Africa are due to poverty, tradition, protecting family honor and gender inequalities. In South Asian countries the highest number of nuclear household families is found in India. Policymakers, researchers and government and non-governmental organizations will get a better understanding of family issues within the households of those countries.

### INTRODUCTION

Social scientists investigate family demography as macro perspectives. A macro perspective is where family demography is the study of family and kinship structures, such as co-residence, timing of marriage, divorce, parenthood and spacing of children. The outcomes or predictors of macro studies include polygynous versus monogamous marriage, single parent versus two-parent family and inter-generational exchange (co-residence of parents and adult children, extended versus nuclear households). Health researchers take a macro perspective when they use family structure as predictors of health outcomes (Astone 2009).

The objective of this study is to investigate the family structures of the sub-Saharan Africa and Asian continents. In previous times the study of family demography was scarce and it seems most researchers were not focused enough on this issue.

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### METHODOLOGY

#### Data

The study focused on selected countries from sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The data used in the study is secondary information from different literature reviews. Qualitative investigations were adopted to compare different countries and different years.

#### Method

In this section the findings of the qualitative investigation using literature review and quantitative investigation using descriptive statistics will be given.

#### Selected Variables and Operational Definitions

Specifically, family demography looks at the connection between the family and the household members. It broadly looks at marriage, divorce, child marriage, remarriage, cohabitation, teenage pregnancy, joint family, kinship family, extended family, nuclear family, child-headed households, one-person households, female-headed households and division of labor in households.

**Marriage:** Marriage is the union of a man and a woman who make a permanent and exclusive commitment to each other of the type that is naturally (inherently) fulfilled by bearing and rearing children together. The spouses seal (consummate) and renew their union by conjugal acts that constitute to be a behavioral part of the process of reproduction, thus uniting them as a reproductive unit. Marriage is valuable in itself, but its inherent orientation to the bearing and rearing of children contributes to its distinctive structure, including norms of monogamy and fidelity. This link to the welfare of children also helps explain why marriage is important for the common good and why the state should recognize and regulate it (Girgis et al. 2010).

**Divorce:** A final legal dissolution of a marriage, that is, that separation of husband and wife, which confers on the parties the right to remarry under civil, religious and/or other provisions, according to the laws of each country.

**Child Marriage:** Child marriage, defined as marriage of a child below 18 years of age, is an ancient, worldwide custom. Other terms applied to child marriage include “early marriage” and “child brides”. Early marriage is vague and does not necessarily refer to children (Nour 2009).

**Remarriage:** Is a marriage that takes place after an earlier marital union has been annulled, as the result of divorce or widowhood.

**Cohabitation:** Is arrangements where two people who are not married live together in a sexually intimate relationship on a long-term or permanent basis. “Cohabitation” usually refers to unmarried couples that live together without formally registering their relation as a marriage.

**Child-headed Households:** Child-headed households are commonly defined as households where all members are under 18 years of age (Meintjes et al. 2009). Richter and Desmond (2008) defined a child-headed household in which no adults are living. Skip-generation households refer to those in which children are in the care of a person, usually a grandparent over the age of 60 years, with no younger adults in the household. There are, of course, instances where the grandparent is younger than 60 years, but these are not included as the focus is on households that do not contain any adults of working age. The retirement age for women in South Africa is 60 years and hence this was selected as the cut off (Richter and Desmond 2008).

**Joint Family:** This family form is common among the Hindu in India. It is a structure where all members of a family live together, including brothers and their wives and children, and have a communal kitchen, income, property and other resources with the patriarch as the head of the family and commander of the unit. Some, but not all, extended families are joint families (Okon 2012).

**Kinship Family:** A principle of social organization based on a network of relations created by genealogical connections and social ties modeled on the “natural” relations of genealogical parenthood (sex and reproduction), however those may be defined and have meaning within a given cultural context.

**Extended Family:** May be made up of polygamous families, monogamous nuclear families or a combination of both. The typical structure of an extended family includes parents, unwed and married children with their spouses and offspring, and even grandparents. There may also be great-grandparents living in the same house with their children, and grandchildren and great-grandchildren (Okon 2012).

**Nuclear Family:** It consists only of a heterosexually married couple (from different families) to the exclusion of any other person and their unwed children (biological or adoptive) (Okon 2012).

**One-person Households:** Proportion of households that have only one household member.

**Female-headed Households:** Proportion of households where the household head is female.

**Nuclear Households:** Proportion of households where the only members are head, spouses and children.

**Division of Labor in Households:** It is the separation of work processes in the household into a number of tasks, with each task performed by a separate person or group.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

### Marriage

In many African countries like in Ethiopian culture, marriage has played a significant role in the family formation (Augustyniak 2009). Gossaye and Yegomawork (2003) have found that marriage in Ethiopia is not just a distinct deed, but it has also the part of bonding two different families or communities. Thus, individual choice

making both for the young groom and bride is quite restricted. As a result, about 80 different ethnic groups live in Ethiopia, and marriage practices vary greatly (EGLDAM 2008). Overall, most marriages are arranged by families (EGLDAM 2008; Tilson and Larson 2000). Most importantly, besides the diversity of customs, elders from the prospective groom's family approach the father of the prospective bride to propose a marriage. If the union is acceptable, the families negotiate marital exchanges and set a wedding date. In most cases, the gifts in marital exchanges are given by the groom's family to the bride's or (among the Amhara people) are given to the new couple by both sides of the family (EGLDAM 2008; Boyden et al. 2012). Arranged marriages in Ethiopia, which often take the form of early marriage of girls, have been the main for first union formation. These marriages may take the form of *promissory marriage (sirat)*, when the two kin make oral promises for the marriage of their son or daughter, right after or before the birth of the children. The marriage may also be arranged for the girls below the age of 10, mostly denoted as *child marriage* (Assefa et al. 2013). In this regard, after the marriage, the girl is kept away from the groom, but generally in guardianship of in-laws until she reaches the age of puberty. Basically a traditional ceremony is going for this from though legitimacy of these marriages do not necessitate legality (Augustyniak 2009).

Even though arranged marriages have been common in all of Ethiopia, due to the multi-ethnic distinctive of the society having different religions and ethnic groups, many regions have different customs and motives for early marriages. Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2005) examined that the union formation in agro-ecological rural Ethiopia are formed more likely to the groups of the economic drive, in which poor families are matched with other poor families, and rich with other rich families to marry their children. They have found that in the rural Ethiopia, what a newlywed couple receives as intergenerational transfers and wedding gifts determine the welfare of that household in the future, even though there is a possibility of improving the conditions (Fafchamps and Quisumbing 2005). Thus, there is a strong economic motive in the matching process.

Moreover, in a traditional patriarchal society such as Ethiopia, where arranged marriages are

common, parents' negotiation power for dowry or bride price depends on the gendered structures, and economically driven family formation processes that affect men and women in a different way. For instance, the family of the bride is more privileged to secure a bride price, if the girl is a virgin. On the other hand, the importance given to virginity and childbearing leads to early marriage of girls. As the result, a girl is valued more, if she is virgin prior to marriage as well as younger, thus, promising more offspring (Assefa et al. 2013; Kifetew 2006; Mekonnen and Aspen 2009; Boyden et al. 2012). Hence, families in rural areas prefer to marry their daughters earlier to secure the girl's virginity, and therefore to secure a better match and an economically better future both for themselves and for their children (Dejene and Birhanerselase 2006). On the other hand, marriage by abduction is also practiced in Ethiopia, which is mainly in the country's southern regions. In most of these cases, the kidnapper, with the support of friends and family members, kidnaps a young woman while she is carrying out normal activities, such as fetching water or collecting firewood. The young woman is then raped by her abductor or gang raped, after which she and her family feel they have no choice but to agree to a marriage because the victim's perceived marriageability is severely compromised.

The socially produced gender roles in Ethiopia put girls at a lower position than boys in terms of personal development early in life, through reduced opportunity for empowerment of girls in terms of educational attainment, access to health service especially in rural areas, and freedom of choice (UNFPA 2008). Moreover, Camfield and Tafere (2011) note that, childhood experiences of girls and boys differ in rural and urban areas. In the countryside girls are more advantaged in their early childhood period, having higher primary school enrolment rates compared to their peers in urban areas. It is the opposite for boys who are living in rural areas because of their responsibilities, such as herding and farming (Camfield and Tafere 2011). This unequal power structure is also transferred to family and labor markets at later stages in the lives of both genders. Although, women contribute to the household economy through labor market involvement and through household farming, childcare, housework and other works related with household care are considered wom-

en's responsibility. Furthermore, men are anticipated to contribute to the marriage economically, which in turn may lead to a delay of marriage for men who needs to collect the bride price prior to marriage, especially for grooms who are poor (Fafchamps and Quisumbing 2005).

### Polygynous and Monogamous

Polygamy and polygyny will be used interchangeably because the literature and the wider community use the term polygamy more often. The term polygamy comes from the Greek, literally meaning "many marriages." In social anthropology, polygamy is understood as a condition or practice of marriage to more than one spouse (wife or husband) simultaneously, as opposed to monogamy where each person has only one spouse at a time. Like monogamy, the term "polygamy" is often used in a de facto sense, applying regardless of whether the relationships are recognized by the state or not. The word "polygyny" refers to the relationship of a man who is married to or involved in a stable sexual relationship with a number of different females at one time. This is by far the more common form of polygamy (Lyimo 2011). Similarly, the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines polygyny as "the state or practice of having more than one wife or female mate at one time". Polygamy is when an individual has more than one spouse, either wife or husband.

### Child Marriage

The highest rates of child marriage are found in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Mali is known by the highest percentage of girls' child marriage among sub-Saharan Africa, which is sixty-one percent, followed by Central Africa, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso at sixty percent, fifty-eight percent and fifty-two percent, respectively (Gobster and Xiang 2012). On the other hand, in South Asia, forty-eight percent of women aged 15-24 are married before 18 years. In India and Bangladesh, nearly half of all women are married before 18 years of age (Chowdhury 2004). By 1990, the average age at marriage for women was 25 years. Child marriage is sustained by factors such as concerns over young girls' chastity and a lower social value of daughters than sons that results in less education and labor force employment for girls compared to boys (Mathur et al.

2001; Amin 2008; Amin et al. 2016). The practice of child marriage is most common in South Asia, west and central Africa, east and southern Africa as well as Latin America and the Caribbean, where fifty-six percent, forty-six percent, thirty-eight percent and thirty percent of women respectively, aged 20-49 marry before the age of 18 (Gobster and Xiang 2012). Nepal, Bangladesh and India are most common when practicing early marriage in south Asia, where seventy-seven percent, seventy-four percent and fifty-eight percent of women respectively, aged 20-49 marry before the age of 18.

The causes of child marriage are common across Africa. Below are some reasons for child marriage:

- ♦ **Poverty:** In the family where poverty is severe, parents may feel that giving a daughter in marriage will reduce family expenses, or even temporarily increase their income, in cases where a bride's parents are paid a bride price.
- ♦ **Tradition:** In many areas, child marriages continue as it has happened for generation and go apart from tradition is seen as prohibiting from the community.
- ♦ **Control over Sexuality and Protecting Family honor:** Predominantly marrying off a girl as a child is considered as a way to ensure her safety, especially in areas where girls are at high risk of physical or sexual assault. Cultural and religious notions of a girl's virginity and chastity in many societies are directly linked to the honor and status of a family or clan.
- ♦ **Gender Inequality:** Importantly, gender inequalities across Africa also drive child marriage. In many communities where child marriage is practiced, girls are not valued as much as boys, as they are considered to be a burden or a commodity (IPPF 2006).

Table 1 refers to authors who have studied child marriage in South Asia. The authors in the Table are not an exhaustive list, and present is a list of their methods they applied to their study.

Table 2 refers to authors who have done studies on sub-Saharan and the methods that they applied to their study.

### Why is Girl Child Marriage Prevalent in Africa?

According to Nour (2009), there are three main reasons behind the practice of early mar-

**Table 1: The common reason for girl child marriage in South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal)**

| <i>Author's name, year and title</i>  | <i>Method</i>  | <i>Common reason for early marriage</i>             | <i>Remarks</i>   |
|---|--|---|--|
| (1) Ferdousi 2014. Child marriage in Bangladesh: Socio-legal analysis.                                    | (1) Qualitative method: Using socio-legal analysis.  | Social barriers, financial problem, illicit sex     | Majority of the parents feel their daughters will be better off financially and safer from sexual abuse or illegitimate sexual contact if they are married.<br>Keeping girls from shame is a factor that is often included among the causes of child marriage.<br>Girl's virginity and innocence in many societies are directly associated to the honor and status of a family or clan.<br>As the result of this, there is a great pressure on parents to marry off girls early to preserve family honor and minimize the risk of improper sexual conduct.<br>- In Pakistan by quoting what the societies says: "if a girl is too old, no parents would like their son to marry that girl because she would not look pretty and smart, having at that time a face no longer attractive".<br>- On the other hand, Pakistan society believed that "The parents of those having heavy age girls cannot expect good 'Rishta' (suitable husbands) for their daughters."<br>- In Pakistan, if parents intentionally delay marriage of their daughters, they deviate from their religion. |
| (2) Sagade 2005. Child Marriage in India: Socio-legal and Human Rights Dimension.                         | (2) Socio-legal and Human Rights Dimension.  | Keeping girls from shame (keeping girls virginity). |  |
| (3) Zafar et al. 2003. Qualitative Analysis of Marriage Pattern and Family Size: A Study of Urban Punjab. | (3) Qualitative method: using focus group discussions (FGDs).  | Fear of becoming old.                               |  |
| (4) Das Gupta and Pande 2008. Knot Ready: Documenting Initiatives to Delay Early Marriage: Update 1.      | (4) Method of analysis using:<br>- National Family Health Survey (NFHS) analysis.- Broad program assessment.<br>- Detailed program assessment.     | Religion.<br>Principles and commit a sin.           |  |
| (5) World Vision International Nepal 2012. Child marriage in Nepal.                                       | (5) Both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used: using secondary literature, household survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs). |   |  |

riage. These are economic hardship, tradition and the need to reinforce and establish social ties, and the belief that it offers protection and security. On the other hand, fear of rape and sexual violence, of unwanted pregnancies out-

side marriage, of family shame and dishonor, of homelessness and hunger or starvation were all reported by parents and children as legitimate reasons for early marriage in Somaliland, Bangladesh and Niger (World Vision International

**Table 2: The common reason for girl child marriage in Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa are**

| <i>Authors(s) name, year and title</i>  | <i>Outcome variables(dependent variables )and method</i>   | <i>The common reason for child marriage in Asia and Africa</i>  | <i>Remarks</i>  |
|---|--|---|---|
| (1) International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) 2006. Ending child marriage: A guide for global policy action. | (1) Method of data analysis: Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used.- Qualitative (using Literature findings as well as policies).- Quantitative (using descriptive analysis).  | (1) Family ties.<br>(2) Poverty and economic survival strategies.<br>(3) Control over sexuality and protecting family honour. | (1) The marriage or betrothal of children in parts of Africa and Asia is valued as a means of consolidating powerful relations between families, for sealing deals over land or other property, or even for settling disputes.  |
| (2) Raj et al. 2012. Changes in Prevalence of Girl Child Marriage in South Asia                                       | (2) Depended variable: girls child marriage Method of data analysis: Cochran-Armitage tests were used to test linear time-trend data by country; and $\chi^2$ tests were used for non-linear trends with tests adjusted for complex survey design. | (4) Tradition and culture.<br>(5) Insecurity.   | (2) Child marriage is valued as an economic coping strategy which reduces the costs of raising daughters. Poor families tend to marry off girls at the same time to help reduce the burden of high marriage ceremony expenses (South Asia). Families in parts of sub-Saharan Africa affected by poverty and other disasters often resort to marrying off their daughters early so as to benefit from bride price or acquire additional help in the family.  |
| (3) Verma et al. 2013. Asia Child Marriage Initiative: Summary of Research in Bangladesh, India and Nepal             | (3) Depended variable: girls child marriage .Methodology Primary qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions with girls and boys, parents, community leaders, and government officials.                         |   | (3) Their worry stems from both fear of sexual assault and girls choosing to begin sexual activity. Cultural and religious notions of a girl's virginity and chastity in many societies are directly linked to the honour and status of a family or clan.<br>(4) In communities where child marriage is prevalent there is strong social pressure on families to conform. Failure to conform can often result in ridicule, disapproval or family shame.<br>(5) Situations of insecurity and acute poverty, particularly during disasters such as war, famine or the HIV and AIDS epidemic, can prompt parents or carers to resort to child marriage as a protective mechanism or survival strategy. |

Nepal 2012). In Ethiopia the most important reasons recounted for the practice of early marriage related to keeping family status in the community by creating a bond with the bridegroom's family, as well as ensuring the girl marries while she has her virginity. Moreover, parents promote child marriage to ensure their daughter's financial security and to reduce the economic burden placed on the family (Nour 2009). A daughter's marriage represents her success. In previous times traditional belief was that when a girl will become aged for marriage, she is no longer desirable as a wife ("QomaQerech"). On the other hand, traditional societies believe that once girls are married, they will be safe from rape, premarital sexual activity, and sexually transmitted infections (Nour 2009).

### **Child Bearing**

Childbearing is of great importance in most parts of the world. It assumes even greater importance in traditional African communities where it is an 'expected return' from marriage. Motherhood comes with high social status and relationship security, not to mention extra hands to help in the fields (Chakare 2013).

The concept of woman's destiny, which lies mostly in her early reproduction, is also achieved. A woman also ensures her marital permanence and reduces the fear of divorce by producing children as early as possible. Early childbearing stops the fear of permanent infertility, which is very dangerous for a woman in Pakistan (Zafar et al. 2003). Children guarantee continuation of ethnic descent and offer hope for future economic liberation. Childlessness is often met with social stigmatization, isolation, financial deprivation and even violence (Akande 2008; Whittaker 2015; Purvis 2015). A barren woman is sympathized and her future forecasts are considered dark and bleak. Early childbearing is not only a woman's desire, but also that of her husband. This safeguards the husband's self-image as a complete man in the society. A childless man is often seen as symbolic that he lacks masculinity and could become the object of pity and mock (Zafar et al. 2003).

### **Multi-partner Fertility**

Polygyny is very widespread in sub-Saharan Africa. Polygyny in many sub-Saharan Afri-

can countries is much more extensive, with up to fifty percent of the male population in polygynous unions. For instance, in Cameroon more than fifty percent of all men have multiple wives. In fact, United Nations data shows that 28 countries within this region have polygyny rates of more than ten percent (Tertilt 2005). On the other hand, twelve percent of Ethiopian women are married to a man who has more than one wife. In rural areas the average is thirteen percent, compared to seven percent in urban areas. Only three percent of married women with a secondary or higher education live in a polygynous marriage. In Table 3 Asian and African studies are compared.

### **Polygyny in Connection with Economic Development and Fertility**

Several studies have shown that there is a link between polygyny and economic development. Tertilt (2005) shows polygyny can have significant quantitative effects on development outcomes. Sub-Saharan African countries with a high degree of polygyny are also the poorest countries in the world. Their per capita GDP is thirty-eight percent lower than GDP in other sub-Saharan African countries, and only thirty-five percent of per capita GDP in monogamous countries that are located in the same latitude range (Tertilt 2005). Thus, among similar countries, polygynous countries are poorer than non-polygynous countries. Polygynous countries have higher fertility and lower savings. The calibrated model by Tertilt (2005) suggests banning polygyny decreases fertility by forty percent, increases savings by seventy percent, and increases GDP per capita by one hundred and seventy percent. Schoellman and Tertilt (2006) document gender inequality as being more severe in polygynous countries. Women living in polygynous countries face larger literacy gaps, live under more limiting abortion laws, and have less power in national politics. Schoellman and Tertilt (2006) find that granting women more control over their marriage decisions has a similar impact on economic outcomes, like GDP per capita, as banning polygyny outright. Such policy changes may be difficult to enforce. Schoellman and Tertilt (2006), an extension of Tertilt (2005), find prohibiting polygyny in an infinite horizon, overlapping-generations model creates winners and losers, which provides a theoretical basis

**Table 3: Findings on girl child marriage among Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa**

| <i>Characteristics</i>  | <i>Asia and Africa</i>  | <i>Studies</i>   |
|---|---|--|
| <p><i>UN Declaration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that individuals must enter marriage freely with full consent and must be at full age. -In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women stated that child marriage is illegal.</li> <li>- In 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child defined <i>children</i> as persons under the age of 18 years.</li> </ul> <p>Approximate number of girls child marriage and percentage of girls child marriage</p> <p>Legal age at marriage</p> <p>Program strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Empowering girls with information, skills, and support networks</li> <li>2. Educating and mobilizing parents and community members</li> <li>3. Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls</li> <li>4. Offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families</li> <li>5. Fostering an enabling legal and policy framework</li> </ol> | <p>The Convention is the most widely accepted international human rights instrument, ratified by 192 countries. It has helped shape the policies and views of almost every part of society, from schools to social agencies, from labor unions to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), from private corporations to professional groups and cultural associations.</p> <p>-Approximately 31 million in South Asia, 14 million in sub-Saharan Africa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each day, 25,000 girls are married and an anticipated 100 million girls will be married in 2012.</li> <li>- Percentage of women 20–24 years old who were married or in union before age 18, by region</li> </ul> <p>South Asia: <b>46</b><br/>West and Central Africa: <b>43</b><br/>Sub-Saharan Africa: <b>39</b><br/>Eastern and southern Africa: <b>36</b><br/>East Asia and Pacific (excluding China): <b>19</b></p> <p>Bangladesh (18), India (18), Ethiopia (18), Mali (18), Cameroon (21), Mozambique (18), Uganda (19.)</p> <p>List of counties that have applied for the five program interventions correspondingly</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Egypt.</li> <li>(2) Ethiopia, Bangladesh, India, Yemen, Senegal</li> <li>(3) Ethiopia), Egypt, Kenya, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan.</li> <li>(4) Yemen, Bangladesh, Malawi), Kenya), India.</li> <li>(5) Indonesia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Yemen.</li> </ol> | <p>David 2004. Human Rights in Youth Sport: A critical review of children's rights in competitive sport. Routledge.</p> <p>Mathur et al. 2003. Too Young to Wed: The Lives, Rights and Health of Young Married Girls. International Center for Research on Women. Washington, DC.</p> <p>Method:<br/>-Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 2000–2007.</p> <p>Nour 2009. Child Marriage: A Silent Health and Human Rights Issue. Method: Descriptive statistics - DHS data since 1990, UN, 1989; Cornell University 2003</p> <p>Malhotra et al. 2011. Solutions to End Child Marriage. International Center for Research on Women. Washington, DC.</p> <p>Methodology:<br/>-systematic review of 23 evaluated programs</p> |

for why banning polygyny may be difficult to enforce. The findings of this literature recommend the slave trades could have affected current economic performance in Africa through the additional channel of polygyny, that is, in addition to the trust channel found in (Nunn 2010).

Polygyny, the practice of having more than one wife, can change fertility rates by affecting the frequency of sexual activity. Tertilt (2005) found that the total fertility rate in 1980 was 6.8 on average in polygynous countries, compared to only 4.6 in monogamous countries. Several

studies found that women in polygynous marriages show reduced fertility compared with those in monogamous marriages (Sellen et al. 2000; Lardoux and Van de Walle 2003; Sueyoshi and Ohtsuka 2003; Sear et al. 2003). On the other hand, Tertilt (2005) studied that polygyny leads to high fertility and results in high population growth. In addition to this, polygamy reduces individual fertility of married women but increases average fertility both directly and through the nuptial effect (Cahu and Fall 2011).



### Single Parent versus Two-parent Families

Single-parenthood can be defined as when one out of two people who is responsible for the nurturing and child rearing is not available and the work meant for two people is now carried out by only one person. According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, single parenting has been defined as a mother or father who looks after children on his or her own without the other partner.

### Causes of Single Parents

Single-parent families are a concept that defines families in which either the father or mother is absent because of divorce, marital separation, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, or death (Greenberg 2002). Some reasons that affect the family's normal structure that is being father, mother and siblings togetherness, which constitutes cell family such as divorce, separation and death. This is named as a single family (Senturk 2006). Divorce is a normal process in which either two parts or one part with his or her desire ends the marriage togetherness according to the society's valid norms or traditions (Ozkalp 2003). According to Olson and DeFrain (2000), a family can be defined as two or more people who are committed to each other and who share intimacy, resources, decision-making responsibilities and values. Family is the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state. Family operates as a group or family system. Therefore, everything that happens to any family member has an impact on everyone else in the family because the members are interconnected. Divorce is one of the major troubles that affect the family system. The effect could be with varying degree.

### Divorce

The trend of divorce shows that the situation is getting worse worldwide. According to Olson and DeFrain (2000), the statistical trend in the United States shows that in 1996 approximately 1.9 million marriages and 1 million divorces were recorded. In this same document, divorce is higher in lower income couples, higher among blacks than whites, higher among people who marry at a younger age and higher among religiously mixed marriages. Among these, the high-

est rates of divorce (60% to 80%) are among women who marry in their teens, are of lower socioeconomic status, dropout of high school and are pregnant when they marry. According to Tilson and Larson (as cited by Serkalem 2006a), forty-five percent of first marriages in Ethiopia end in divorce within 30 years. Similarly, according to the 1994 population and housing census in Addis Ababa (Serkalem 2006b), there were 1,722,391 individuals, and among these married were 506,852 while divorced were 97,147.

### Divorce Causes and Consequences in Ethiopia

Amato and Boyd's (2013) extensive research into marriage and divorce includes studying the reasons why people divorce. He found that infidelity is the number one reason for divorce and that serious problems (infidelity, drinking or drug use, physical or mental abuse and not meeting family obligations) accounted for forty-one percent of divorces (Amato and Previti 2003). The majority of divorces (59%) were caused by non-serious issues such as incompatibilities, growing apart, lack of communication and loss of love (Amato and Previti 2003). Besides, according to Zartler et al. (2002), the reasons for the breakdown of the partnership are (in the perspectives of the former couple) unfulfilled emotional needs, communication problems, absence of dyadic coping and conflict solving strategies, different priorities regarding spare time and family time, strong professional engagement and long workdays of men. From the female perspective, alcohol abuse was problematic, whereas men estimate sexual problems as a source of conflict. Table 4 gives the cause of divorce in Ethiopia compared to Table 5 that gives the sub-Saharan cause of divorce.

### Consequences: Who are Affected and How?

Divorce affects all family members but usually economically weak ones and their children suffer economic, social and psychological problems.

### Women and Children

Aster (2015) has reached a conclusion that divorced women are economically weak and are usually engaged in informal sectors like selling homemade products, collecting wood and retailing activities after divorce. This made their lives miserable. These single mothers are usually stressed. They believe themselves to be help-

**Table 4: Causes of divorce in Ethiopia**

| <i>Author's(s') name, year and title</i>  | <i>Method and variables(outcomes variables)</i>  | <i>Conditions that result to divorce</i>   | <i>Remarks</i>   |
|---|--|--|--|
| (1) Serkalem 2006a. Divorce: its causes and impacts on the lives of divorced women and their children.              | (1) Divorce.<br>(2) The Impact of Early Marriage and Childlessness   | - Early marriage.<br>- Barrenness (Childlessness, Sterility.<br>- Alcohol Addiction and Drug Abusing.  | - Both early age at marriage and childlessness have a significant impact on the risk of divorce.   |
| (2) Tilsen and Larson 2000. Divorce in Ethiopia: The Impact of Early Marriage and Childlessness.                    | (1) Instrument: Structured questionnaires incorporated both open and closed end questions. Measurement : Independent Sample Test | - Lack of Communication.<br>- Loss of Love.<br>- Difference in the Socio-economic Status   | Recommendation<br>The government could take part in creating awareness on the divorcing couples through preparing Parent education programs which are programs for divorcing parents that inform about the situation-specific parenting issues that arise during and after divorce with the means of media (causes and costs). |
| (3) Haile 2013. Divorce: Common Causes and Socio-Economic Costs – A Survey of Divorced Individuals in Mekelle City. | (2) Life table analysis and Cox models (3) Method of data analysis: using descriptive statistics.                                | - Wasting money (Not meeting family obligations).<br>- Infidelity/Adultery.<br>- Domestic violence/Abuse.<br>- Interference from Outside.<br>- Lack of Commitment.<br>- Financial Problem. |  |

less to cope with the problems. Though not like long time ago, divorce is still not socially acceptable and the women face social pressures as well. Divorce greatly affects children more than it affects the spouses. Divorce causes short and long term psychological complications in children especially if the divorce happens at their early stages. As most of the children gain custody to their poor mothers, they find it difficult to continue their education due to the demand of earning adequate income. As a result, they quit their education and join their mothers in income generating activities. Being raised by women is usually related to having bad behavior. They are usually labeled as “set yasadegew” (Abera 2008; Hawi 2014; Wubedel 2014; Aster 2015; Efratise 2016).

### Household Forms

Two main forms of households have been identified, namely, the nuclear family and the extended family. With the ‘deconstruction and transformation’ characteristic of the post-modern era, various other household forms exist. These include the joint family, one-parent family, family with adoptive parent(s) and foster parents, child-headed family (households); same-

sex parented family (lesbian or gay family) (Okon 2012).

### Extended Family

In industrial societies, the extended family takes the form of a domestic family plus close relatives (Okon 2012). Extended family structure in African societies is such that a child has many fathers and mothers in his uncles and aunts (Broodryk 2006). So, where the child’s biological parents are not available to care for the child, his or her other parent(s) will assume such responsibility. An advantage of the extended family form is that children learn from a very early age to be tended by a variety of persons, and they are not overly attached to any particular person (Silverman and Auerbach 2005).

### One Parent Family Household

This family form was found among the people of caste (coloreds) in the USA and exists today commonly in South African societies. In some societies, where women are so economically empowered that they have difficulty in finding men that can contribute to their economic security, marriage is rare. Such women some-

**Table 5: Causes of divorce in Sub-Sahara Africa countries**

| <i>Author's(s') name, year and title</i>  | <i>Method and variables(outcome Variables)</i>  | <i>Conditions that result to divorce</i>   | <i>Remarks</i>  |
|---|---|--|---|
| (1) Enwereji 2009.Indigenous Marriage Institutions and Divorce in Nigeria: the case of Abia Stat of Nigeria.                            | Outcome variable is Divorce.<br>(1) Data were analyzed qualitatively.<br>(2) Proportional hazards models. | - Infidelity<br>- Infertility (barrenness).<br>- Incompatibility of sex.<br>- Inability to reproduce male children   | - The practice of divorcing a woman for reason of infertility or inability to reproduce male issues should be discouraged. There are now opportunities for spouses to foster and/or adopt children of their choice.   |
| (2) Reniers 2003.Divorce and remarriage in rural Malawi.  | (3) Data were also analysed using Multiple Regression and Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) Statistics.             | - Lack of commitment in farm and in household activities.<br>- Diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis, epilepsy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV. | - The more stable a marriage, the more women are empowered with education and the less they are tempted to engage in multiple sexes.<br>- In Malawi barrenness is the significant cause of divorce.<br>- Having identified and discussed those factors in relation to divorce rates, it is pertinent to stress two general strategies for responding to the problem of divorce. They are:<br>1. Strategies to prevent divorce and strengthen marriages, and<br>2. Strategy to strengthen post-divorce families. |
| (3) Adegoke 2010.Socio-cultural factors as determinants of divorce rates among women of reproductive age in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. |   |  |   |

times choose single parenthood through adoption, artificial insemination or surrogate motherhood. As a result, most single-parent families are those where the mother is responsible for provision and care for the house. Death of a spouse, through various causes, has also led to the increased number of single-parented families that exist today (Silverman and Auerbach 2005). There are also absent parent(s) families (or non-resident father or mother households) where one or both parents are absent from the household for various reasons. Table 6 gives the consequences of single parenting with respect to the children behavior.

#### **Family with Adoptive Parents and Foster Parents**

Adoption is a legislation-regulated practice, which establishes a child's legal membership in

an adoptive family. It may be carried out domestically or internationally. In most countries, adoption terminates all parental rights that existed between previous parents, biological or otherwise, or caregivers of the child, and the new parents then become adoptive parents for all purposes. Foster care is a form of care for parentless children, children without families or those whose families cannot be identified. It is generally a form of interim care where a child is placed in state managed and supervised care of a family to which the child may not be related (this applies in the United States, some European countries and South Africa). In Western Europe and Scandinavia, foster care is long-term care, like adoption (Williamson and Greenberg 2010). Since placement is intended to last until the child is reunited with his or her parents, attains adulthood or is permanently adopted, the state retains guardianship of the child for the period of

**Table 6: Consequence of single parenting on child behaviour**

| <i>Author's(s')Name and year</i> | <i>Title</i>  | <i>Variables (out comes variable(s) )</i>   | <i>Method</i>  | <i>Remarks</i>   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Carlson and Corcoran 2001.       | Family structure and children's behavioural and cognitive outcomes.   | Behavioural and cognitive outcomes (children cognitive ability)   | Measured by<br>- Behaviour problem index(BPI)<br>- Peabody individual achievement Test (PIAT) respectively | Children who are raised from birth in two-parent families have better cognitive and behavioral outcomes compared with children who have ever lived in single-parent families   |
| Herwig et al. 2004.              | Depression, partnership, social support, and parenting: Interaction of maternal factors with behavioural problems of the child. | Behavioural problems of the children.   | Structural equation modelling<br><br>Quantitative method using house hold survey                           | Most common problems seen in single parent families children are depression, stress, loneliness, aggression, compliance, smoke, alcohol, narcotics''   |
| Park 2008.                       | Effects of single parenthood on educational aspiration and student disengagement in Korea                                       | Educational attainment (related to: educational aspiration and student disengagement)                     | CATS (Children Action Tendency Scale)  |  |
| Usakli 2013.                     | Comparison of Single and Two Parents Children in terms of Behavioral Tendencies   | Behavioural tendencies such as assertiveness, aggressiveness and submissiveness of single parent children |  | -Increasing numbers of children from single-parent families due to parental divorce are vulnerable, facing significant educational and other disadvantages<br><br>Single parent children are less assertive, more aggressive or submissive so they should join social skills training programs |

foster care. Foster parents are compensated by the state for care of the child through foster child grants.

#### **Child-headed Family (Households)**

In some African countries like Ethiopia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, child-headed families (households) are a relatively new phenomenon, which resulted from the high mortality rate of parents and caregivers as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Geoff Foster and John Williamson 2000). Best described in legal terms, a child-headed household is a household where, because 'the parent, guardian or caregiver is terminally ill or has died or has abandoned the chil-

dren in the household', and there is no adult caring for the children, a child above the age of 16 years assumes the role of caregiver for the other (younger) children in the house. Where there is no extended family member or community-based care to turn to, the older children in these households fend for the younger children, sometimes at the cost of their own education (Okon 2012).

#### **Same-Sex Parented Family (Lesbian or Gay Family)**

The union of gay couples has been legalized in the Netherlands, France, South Africa Denmark, the United Kingdom, Canada and some

states within the USA (Okon 2012). Child custody rights are also now accorded to these couples. As a result, same sex families are becoming an accepted family form. These families also come in different forms. One combination that has been found is that of a family with a gay dad and lesbian mothers living in a duplex with the gay dad living downstairs and the lesbian mothers living upstairs. Children in this structure may be biological, adopted or surrogated (Okon 2012).

#### The Common Household Structures Are:

- ♦ One-person households
- ♦ Female-headed households
- ♦ Nuclear households
- ♦ Orphaned due to all causes

For this study the researcher tried to examine the household structure of the selected ten countries from Asia and sub-Sahara Africa countries from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014 database. Table 7 gives the percentages of household for different family structure.

#### Family Matters

**Domestic Violence:** It is also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence and intimate partner violence (IPV). Domestic violence, so defined, has many forms, including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, controlling or domineering, intimidation, stalking, passive/covert and economic deprivation.

**Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):** It is defined as a pattern of abusive behaviors by one

partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family or cohabitation (Siemieniuk et al. 2010). The researcher would like to focus only the prevalence and the effect of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence as well as the legislations that address those issues using the selected countries profile.

In Ethiopia, forty-nine percent of women experience physical violence and fifty-nine percent experience sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Oxfam 2012).

#### Effects

**Physical:** Domestic violence results in chronic health problems such as arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic pain, pelvic pain, ulcers and migraines (Barnett 2001).

**Psychological:** Victims of domestic violence also frequently experience long-term anxiety and fear, and are likely to meet the diagnostic criteria for Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder. The most commonly referenced psychological effect of domestic violence is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Chhikara et al. 2013). The mental health effects included symptoms associated with major depressive disorders, anxiety disorders and posttraumatic stress disorders. Coker et al. (2002) indicated that higher psychological partner violence scores were strongly associated with poor health, depressive symptoms, and chronic physical and mental illness.

**Financial:** This has been shown to be one of the greatest obstacles facing victims of domestic violence, and the strongest factor that can discourage them from leaving their perpetrators (Chhikara et al. 2013).

**Table 7: Household structure of the selected countries from Asia and Africa**

| Countries    | One-person households (Percent) | Female-headed households (Percent) | Nuclear households (Percent) | Orphans (000), due to all causes |
|--------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Burkina Faso | 6 (2003)                        | 9 (2003)                           | 61 (2003)                    | 770 (2009)                       |
| Bangladesh   | 2 (2007)                        | 13 (2007)                          | 55 (2007)                    | 4,800 (2009)                     |
| CAR          | N.A                             | N.A                                | 370 (2009)                   |                                  |
| Chad         | 8 (2004)                        | 20 (2004)                          | 67 (2004)                    | 670 (2009)                       |
| Ethiopia     | 8 (2010)                        | 26 (2010)                          | 63 (2010)                    | N.A                              |
| India        | 5 (2006)                        | 14 (2006)                          | 56 (2006)                    | 31,000 (2009)                    |
| Nepal        | 5 (2011)                        | 28 (2011)                          | 52 (2011)                    | 650 (2009)                       |
| Niger        | 4 (2006)                        | 19 (2006)                          | 65 (2006)                    | 970 (2009)                       |
| Guinea       | 5 (2005)                        | 17 (2005)                          | 55 (2005)                    | 440 (2009)                       |
| Mali         | 5 (2006)                        | 12 (2006)                          | 70 (2006)                    | 690 (2009)                       |

### Quantitative Investigation

#### *Descriptive Statistics of Marital Status, Girl Child Marriage and Median Age at Marriage*

Never married women were higher in Ethiopia (27.1%) whereas, Nepal was recognized by high number of married couples (75.8%). Also, Ethiopia was known by a high divorce rate compared to those two countries.

Bangladesh (77%) and India (74%) were documented by highest child marriage respectively, whereas, Nepal (52%) and Burkina Faso (52%) were indicated by lowest child marriage.

#### *Common Marriage Measures*

The age at first marriage was measured by the median. For this analysis the researcher applied median to measure average age at first marriage.

The age at first marriage in Mali and Burkina Faso was about 18 years whereas, the age at first marriage in Guinea, Central Africa republic and India was approximately 17 years. The age at first marriage in Ethiopia was 16.5 years. The lowest age at first marriage was in Bangladesh 15.5 years.

#### *Household Structure*

Chad (8%) and Ethiopia (8%) were found to have highest number of one-person households. The lowest one-person households were recorded by Bangladesh (2%).

Nepal (28%) was known for the highest female-headed households, whereas in Burkina Faso (9%) was identified by lowest female-headed households.

The highest nuclear households were registered by Mali (70%). In Ethiopia the nuclear households were at sixty-three percent. The lowest nuclear households were found in Nepal (52%).

The prevalence was highest in the African, Eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asia Regions, where approximately thirty-seven percent of ever-partnered women reported having experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence at some point in their lives.

This study clearly shows the family structures in the sub-Saharan Africa and Asian continents. The family demography specifically looks

at the connection between family and household members. It broadly looks at marriage, divorce, child marriage, remarriage, cohabitation, teenage pregnancy, joint family, kinship family, extended family, nuclear family, child-headed households, one-person households, female-headed households and division of labor in households.

### CONCLUSION

This study provided a literature overview describing different family matters from different Asian and African countries. The literature review covers many family issues and significance issues of family demographics in Asia and Africa. There is no doubt, that this family demography approach to family structure will be beneficial for the policymakers, researcher, government and non-governmental organizations, which will give them a better understanding of family issues within the household of these countries. However, in order to implement new scientific methods and different theories, a more in depth study is needed to get more information on family structures in Asia and Africa. Furthermore, in-depth analysis specifically on qualitative investigation is urgently needed.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

There is no doubt that this study will be strongly recommended to the policymakers, planners, program managers to make a specific care about family demography in this juncture.

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