



Research Report

Polyandry in Nepal: unraveling cultural, ecological, and societal dimensions in the Limi Valley of Humla

Ramesh Prasad Adhikary

Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal Mahendra Multiple Campus Nepalgunj
 Email: rameshadhikary29@gmail.com <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9889-3825>

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Abstract – Polyandry, the marital system permitting a woman to concurrently have multiple husbands, is a distinctive practice embedded in mountainous regions of Nepal, especially in the northwestern districts of Humla, Dolpa, Manang, and Mustang. This research delves into the complex nature of polyandry in Nepal, elucidating its historical, socio-cultural, economic, and environmental underpinnings. The research offers a thorough exploration of polyandry within the Nepalese milieu, scrutinizing the determinants that perpetuate and mold this practice in the modern era. Fieldwork was conducted in the Limi Valley of Humla District, a locale adjacent to China where polyandry is notably prevalent. Out of 36 households surveyed, 47% practiced polyandry, with up to five brothers sharing a single wife. The primary drivers of this custom are the scarcity of cultivable land and the imperative to preserve familial unity and safeguard property. This cultural tradition is deeply ingrained among the inhabitants, bolstering their commitment to it. The principal sources of livelihood in the region include border trade, herb businesses, and limited agricultural land. Data were gathered through household surveys and a two-day anthropological and ethnographic study. One significant demographic factor influencing polyandry is the higher male-to-female ratio, as revealed by the 2021 census data for Humla District. If each brother were to marry separately, it would precipitate family fragmentation and land division, diminishing food production. Outside this region, polyandry is largely obsolete and often stigmatized by neighboring communities. In polyandrous households, the wife's sexual rights are typically age-determined, with younger brothers gaining access only in the older siblings' absence. Due to the brothers' varied occupations such as herding, trading, and farming, they seldom converge at home simultaneously. This dynamic necessitates that younger brothers discreetly seek intimacy in the absence of older ones, underscoring the wife's critical role in sustaining harmony and tranquility within polyandrous marriages.

Keywords: polyandry, cultural practices, ecological adaptation, fraternal polyandry, ethnographic study, sexual right

Introduction

Polyandry, a unique marital arrangement allowing a woman to have multiple husbands simultaneously, stands as an intriguing cultural phenomenon deeply rooted in various regions of Nepal. Gurung (2012, p. 76) states, “In polyandry a woman marries simultaneously more than one legal husband in her life or more than one man share a woman as wife. This is one of the marriage systems adopted in the Nepalese society mostly in Himalayan region. The marriage system is not practiced by many communities in the world”. Particularly prominent in the northwestern areas, including Humla, Dolpa, and Mustang, this practice has captivated the attention of researchers due to its historical significance, socio-cultural intricacies, economic implications, and its distinct ecological adaptation.

The roots of polyandry in Nepal delve into the historical fabric of the region, forming an integral part of the social tapestry that defines the lives of its inhabitants. The practice is not merely a recent development but has endured through generations, shaping familial structures and relationships. Understanding the historical trajectory of polyandry provides a crucial foundation for comprehending its contemporary manifestations.

The socio-cultural dimensions of polyandry are intricate and multifaceted, intertwined with the fabric of Nepalese society. In the Limi Valley of the Humla District, where this research is centered, polyandry is not merely a marital choice but a cultural institution deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of the community. The study aims to unravel the intricacies of the social norms, values, and beliefs that contribute to the acceptance and perpetuation of polyandrous unions.

Willet (1997) posited that polyandry functions as a method of population regulation and as a mechanism for alleviating tax burdens imposed by feudal Tibetan landlords. Economic factors play a pivotal role in shaping and sustaining the practice of polyandry in this region. The scarcity of arable land, a limited scope for agricultural productivity, and the specific occupational pursuits of the inhabitants contribute to the economic rationale behind polyandrous marriages. By exploring the economic underpinnings, we aim to shed light on the pragmatic considerations that drive individuals and families to choose polyandry as a viable marital arrangement.

One of the distinctive features of polyandry in Nepal is its ecological adaptation, particularly in regions like the Limi Valley. The harsh Himalayan terrain and the unique

climatic conditions have influenced the cultural practices of the people, giving rise to fraternal polyandry as a means of effectively navigating the challenges posed by the environment. This research delves into the ecological factors that have shaped the cultural landscape and contributed to the evolution of polyandry as a survival strategy.

Examining demographic trends is essential to understanding the dynamics of polyandry in Nepal. [Central Bureau of Statistics \(2021\)](#) for Humla district reveals a higher male-to-female ratio, suggesting a demographic context that may contribute to the prevalence of polyandrous unions (Male Population 27886, Female Population 27,508). Exploring these demographic nuances provides a comprehensive picture of the societal conditions that influence the choice of polyandry as a marital system.

In the contemporary context, polyandry faces challenges and changing perspectives, especially outside the specific regions where it is practiced. As neighboring Nepali villages mock polyandrous husbands and view the practice with disdain, it becomes crucial to examine the evolving attitudes towards polyandry. The study explores the contemporary challenges and societal perceptions that may impact the persistence or decline of polyandrous marriages in the face of broader social changes.

This research, conducted in the Limi Valley of the Humla District, stands as a comprehensive exploration of polyandry in Nepal, aiming to contribute valuable insights into its historical roots, socio-cultural dynamics, economic rationale, ecological adaptation, demographic underpinnings, and contemporary challenges. Through a meticulous examination of these facets, we seek to unravel the complexities of polyandrous unions and provide a nuanced understanding of this unique cultural practice in the broader context of Nepalese society.

Research objectives

1. To Unravel the Historical Evolution of Polyandry in Nepal,
2. To Examine the Socio-Cultural, Economic, and Ecological Dimensions of Polyandry,
3. To Understand Contemporary Challenges and Perspectives on Polyandry.

Significance of the study

This research on polyandry in Nepal holds significant implications for cultural understanding, societal dynamics, and ecological adaptation. By delving into the historical evolution and socio-cultural dimensions of polyandry in the Limi Valley of the

Humla District, the study contributes to the preservation of this unique marital practice as a cultural heritage. Insights into contemporary challenges and societal perceptions offer valuable perspectives on the adaptability of cultural traditions in the face of changing attitudes. Additionally, the exploration of ecological adaptation provides knowledge on how cultural practices, such as polyandry, serve as adaptive strategies in challenging environmental conditions. The research sheds light on demographic and gender dynamics, contributing to discussions on gender equality and demographic challenges in specific regions. Moreover, the study has the potential to inform local policies and initiatives, addressing challenges faced by polyandrous families. Beyond its immediate context, this research serves as a foundation for cross-cultural comparative studies, adding to the broader discourse on marital systems and cultural adaptations globally. Ultimately, the significance of this study lies in its multifaceted contributions to cultural anthropology, societal understanding, and discussions on sustainable practices.

Review of literature

Polyandry in Nepal has been a subject of scholarly investigation, with previous works offering valuable insights into its cultural, historical, and anthropological dimensions. Researchers have meticulously traced the historical roots of polyandry in Nepal, emphasizing its evolution within the specific socio-cultural context of the country.

[Levine and Sangree \(1980\)](#) gave a comparative analysis of polyandry systems in Asian and African contexts. They conclude that despite cultural and geographical differences, polyandry in these regions shares common economic and social motivations. “In both Asian and African contexts, polyandry serves to mitigate the economic risks associated with small landholdings and to maintain family unity” ([Levine and Sangree 1980](#), p. 388).

[Starkweather and Hames \(2012\)](#) conducted a comprehensive survey of non-classical polyandry, identifying instances of polyandrous practices outside the well-documented regions of Tibet and Nepal. Their research reveals that polyandry, although rare, is present in various cultures worldwide, often arising as a response to ecological and economic pressures. “Non-classical polyandry, though less common, reflects a similar strategic adaptation to environmental and social challenges as seen in classical polyandry” ([Starkweather and Hames 2012](#), p. 151).

Goldstein (1978) revisited the practices of polyandry among the Pahari and Tibetan communities, analyzing changes over time and the factors influencing these marital systems. Goldstein examines how economic conditions, cultural values, and demographic factors shape the persistence or decline of polyandry in these regions. So also, in the context of Nepal, Schuler (2019) gave a detailed analysis of polyandry from the perspective of property and social stratification in the Nepal Himalayas. Schuler explored how polyandry serves as a mechanism to prevent the division of property and maintain social hierarchies. The book also addresses the implications of nonmarriage, particularly for women, and how these practices affect their social standing and economic security. “Polyandry in the Nepal Himalayas is not merely a marital arrangement but a strategic approach to preserving family wealth and social status” (Schuler 2019, p. 45).

Pokharel (2018) discusses the widespread occurrence of polyandry as a marital arrangement observed across various global regions. Polyandry, beyond its status as a marriage type, functions as a foundational principle governing relationship among spouses. The persistence and rationale behind polyandrous practices have sparked diverse interpretations. A prevailing viewpoint regarding polyandrous communities suggests that they represent an adaptive strategy particularly prevalent in the northern border areas of Nepal. This perspective posits that the polyandrous system was introduced from Tibet by ancient migrants.

Economic considerations have prominently featured in the literature, highlighting the scarcity of arable land and the imperative to maintain family unity and property as driving factors for polyandry. Gurung (1993) posited that polyandry arises as a response to the ecological conditions in the Himalayan region. It suggests that as environmental degradation accelerates and there is a trend towards monogamous marriages, concerns arise regarding people's ability to adapt to contemporary circumstances. It shows how the ecosystem influences the lifestyle and culture of the inhabitants of Humla, Nepal, specifically examining the ecological factors influencing the prevalence of polyandry in the region. It also investigates the primary causes of environmental decline and its impact on the community's ability to adapt and thrive.

The ecological adaptation of polyandry has garnered attention, with studies elucidating its role as an adaptive strategy in navigating the demanding environmental conditions of the Himalayan terrain. Demographic trends, particularly the male-to-female

ratio in regions practicing polyandry, have been scrutinized in the literature, shedding light on the implications for familial structures and societal dynamics.

Gurung (2014) wrote that polyandry system serves as a survival strategy for the Himalayan communities near the Tibetan border of Nepal. In Upper Mustang, where Gurung ethnicity predominates, polyandry remains a practiced tradition. It is employed to uphold limited parental property rights within the same lineage and to preserve scarce and depleting natural resources. Women play a significant role in maintaining harmony among family members, particularly among multiple husbands. However, conflicts are on the rise primarily due to modernization. Consequently, the prevalence of polyandry families in Upper Mustang has decreased from 12% to 5% within a decade. The advent of an open society, especially controlled tourism, improved road access, and media influence, has altered the lifestyle of the people and led to changes in the internal structure of society, directly impacting polyandrous practices. Despite its significance, polyandry faces the threat of cultural erosion. Urgent conservation efforts are necessary to preserve this unique cultural tradition.

Recent literature has delved into contemporary perspectives on polyandry, both within the regions where it is practiced and in neighboring areas. Notably, neighboring Nepali villages often mock polyandrous husbands, reflecting changing societal attitudes and presenting challenges for families adhering to this cultural tradition. Polyandry, a distinctive and time-honored custom in Nepal, has persisted across generations within certain ethnic communities. It offers benefits in terms of resource preservation and safeguarding family welfare, particularly in challenging ecological conditions. Nonetheless, it poses drawbacks concerning women's rights and dignity, as well as the overall well-being of men and children. Moreover, both Nepali law and societal norms deem polyandry as unlawful and unethical. Consequently, polyandry in Nepal is gradually waning, with its eventual disappearance on the horizon.

While existing studies lay a solid foundation, this research seeks to contribute to the literature by conducting an in-depth investigation in the Limi Valley of the Humla District. By synthesizing insights from historical, cultural, economic, and ecological dimensions, this study aims to advance our understanding of polyandry and its continued significance within the broader context of Nepalese society.

Research methodology

Research design

The research design employed for this study is a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of polyandry in the Limi Valley of the Humla District. This design allows for triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

Study setting

The primary study setting is the Limi Valley, situated in the Humla District of northwestern Nepal. This region was selected due to its prominence in practicing polyandry and its unique ecological and cultural characteristics. The Limi Valley provides a rich context for examining the historical, socio-cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of polyandry.

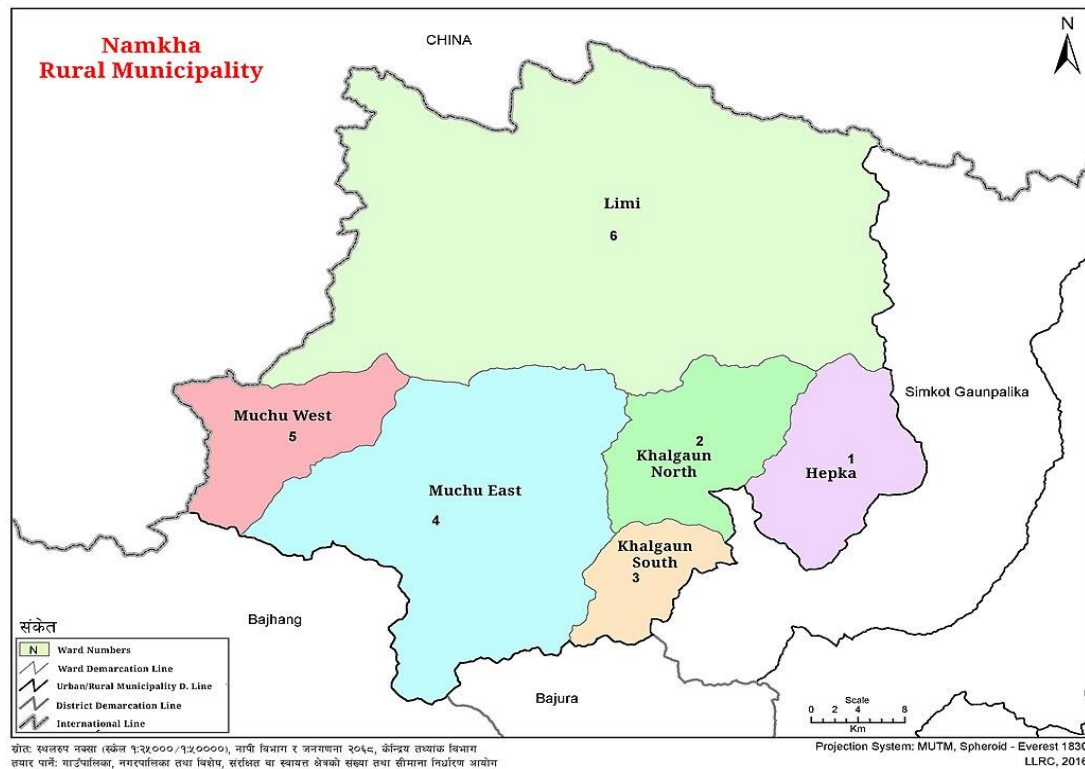


Fig. 1 Map of Study Area (Limi Valley, Humla)
(Source: Bureau of Statistics, Nepal)

Sampling

Quantitative sampling

A stratified random sampling approach was used to select households in the Limi Valley. The strata were determined based on the presence or absence of polyandrous marriages. From a list of households provided by local authorities, a random sample was drawn from each stratum to ensure representation from both polyandrous and non-polyandrous households.

Qualitative sampling

Purposeful sampling was employed for in-depth interviews and participant observations. Key informants, including elders and community leaders, were selected based on their knowledge and experience with polyandry. Additionally, polyandrous households were purposively selected to gain insights into the lived experiences and dynamics within these families.

Data collection

Quantitative data collection

Structured household surveys were conducted to collect quantitative data. The survey questionnaire included sections on demographic information, economic activities, and perceptions of polyandry. Enumerators, trained in the cultural nuances of the community, administered the surveys in the local language. The survey aimed to gather data from a representative sample of households in the Limi Valley.

Qualitative data collection

In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, including elders and community leaders, to obtain historical perspectives on polyandry. Semi-structured interviews with members of polyandrous households provided insights into the socio-cultural dynamics and individual experiences. Participant observations involved immersing researchers in the daily lives of polyandrous families, allowing for a rich understanding of their practices and interactions.

Anthropological and ethnographical study

To supplement quantitative and qualitative data, an anthropological and ethnographical study was conducted. Researchers spent extended periods living with polyandrous families, observing their daily activities, and engaging in informal conversations. This

immersive approach aimed to capture the nuances of cultural practices, ecological adaptations, and familial interactions that may not be fully captured through surveys and interviews.

Data analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency, were calculated to summarize demographic information and economic activities. Comparative analyses were conducted to identify differences between polyandrous and non-polyandrous households. Qualitative data, including interview transcripts and field notes, underwent thematic analysis. Coding was conducted iteratively, identifying recurring themes related to historical evolution, socio-cultural dynamics, economic implications, ecological adaptation, and contemporary challenges of polyandry. Rigorous coding checks were implemented to ensure inter-coder reliability.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board to ensure the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation. The research team respected local customs and traditions, establishing rapport with the community to facilitate open and honest communication.

Limitations

Despite rigorous methodological considerations, this study has limitations. The focus on a specific region may limit the generalizability of findings to other polyandrous communities in Nepal. Additionally, the reliance on self-reporting in surveys and interviews introduces the potential for response bias.

Results and discussion

The historical analysis of polyandry in Nepal reveals a tradition deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of specific regions, notably the Limi Valley of the Humla District. The

practice of polyandry in Nepal is not a recent phenomenon but has weathered the tides of time, adapting to changing societal norms and external influences. Insights from elders and historical accounts suggest that polyandrous unions were initially forged as a response to the challenging environmental conditions and the necessity to sustain family unity amidst limited resources. The historical evolution of polyandry in Nepal is a testament to the resilience of cultural practices in the face of external pressures.

Socio-cultural dynamics of polyandry in the Limi Valley

The socio-cultural dimensions of polyandry in the Limi Valley are complex, shaped by a myriad of norms, values, and beliefs that contribute to the acceptance and perpetuation of this unique marital system. Cultural practices surrounding marriage ceremonies, family structures, and societal expectations play a crucial role in reinforcing the institution of polyandry.

Interviews and participant observations within the community reveal a strong sense of unity with the cultural tradition of polyandry. Elders recount stories that emphasize the role of polyandry in maintaining family cohesion, preventing the fragmentation of land, and ensuring the preservation of family property. The communal celebration of polyandrous unions during cultural events and festivals reflects the societal acceptance and endorsement of this practice.

Economic implications of polyandry

The economic rationale behind polyandry in the Limi Valley emerges as a key theme in our study. The scarcity of arable land and the imperative to maintain family unity and property are fundamental factors driving the practice of polyandry. Analysis of economic activities within the community indicates that polyandrous families are better equipped to navigate the challenges posed by limited resources.

Through surveys and interviews, it becomes evident that polyandry serves as a pragmatic solution to the constraints of agricultural productivity. If each brother were to marry a different woman, the division of land would lead to reduced food production, thereby compromising the sustenance of the family. Polyandry emerges as an economic strategy that aligns with the community's livelihood patterns, where land scarcity is a prevailing challenge.

Ecological adaptation of polyandry in the Himalayan terrain

The Limi Valley, characterized by its high Himalayan terrain, presents a unique ecological setting that has influenced the practice of polyandry. The adaptation of polyandry to the demanding environmental conditions is a fascinating aspect uncovered through our study. Fraternal polyandry is perceived as a means of effectively coping with the challenges posed by the high altitude and harsh climates.

Our anthropological and ethnographical observations reveal how polyandrous families in the Limi Valley engage in specific ecological practices that align with the environmental constraints of the region. The cooperative management of resources, communal herding practices, and shared responsibilities within polyandrous households contribute to a sustainable adaptation to the ecological nuances of the Himalayan terrain.

Demographic trends and gender dynamics

Demographic analyses based on the 2078 census data for the Humla District highlight a higher male-to-female ratio, providing valuable insights into the gender dynamics of polyandrous communities. The prevalence of polyandry is, in part, influenced by this demographic context, with implications for familial structures and societal norms.

The rarity of widowhood in polyandrous unions is a notable outcome of this demographic trend. Since a woman becomes the wife of all the brothers, the occurrence of widowhood is significantly reduced. This aspect of polyandry contributes to the stability of family structures and challenges conventional gender roles, fostering a unique gender dynamic within these communities.

Contemporary perspectives and challenges

In the contemporary context, polyandry in the Limi Valley faces challenges and changing perspectives, particularly in the light of external influences and evolving societal norms. Neighboring Nepali villages often mock polyandrous husbands, viewing the practice with disdain. This reflects a broader societal shift where polyandry is no longer considered fashionable outside of the specific regions where it is practiced.

Contemporary challenges include the potential erosion of cultural traditions, as younger generations may be influenced by external perceptions and modern ideologies.

The study identifies a need for cultural preservation efforts to ensure the continuity of polyandrous practices in the face of external pressures.

Sexual rights and family harmony in polyandrous marriages

The sexual dynamics within polyandrous marriages are complex, with the wife's rights often determined by age and the occupation of the brothers. Younger brothers may have access to the wife only when the older ones are absent, a practice that reflects the pragmatic adaptation of polyandrous families to the diverse occupations pursued by the brothers.

Maintaining harmony and family tranquility in polyandrous marriages heavily relies on the role of the wife. Through interviews and participant observations, it becomes apparent that the wife often serves as a unifying force within the household, contributing to the overall stability of polyandrous unions.



Fig. 2 New Generations of Lama Family, who denied to accept Polyandry

Cross-cultural comparative implications

The findings of this research hold implications for cross-cultural comparative studies, enabling scholars to draw parallels and distinctions between polyandry in Nepal and similar practices in other regions. The ecological adaptation of polyandry, in particular,

offers insights into how cultural practices can serve as adaptive strategies in challenging environmental conditions, fostering sustainability and resilience.

Table 1 Demographic Information

Among 36 households surveyed in Limi Valley, the following demographic structure was found:

Name	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Number of Family Members	Occupation	Educational Background
H1	42	Male	Married	9	Farmer	Secondary
H2	35	Female	Married	8	Business	No Formal Education
H3	48	Male	Married	6	Service	Primary
H4	55	Female	Widowed	3	Farmer	No formal education
H5	38	Male	Married	5	Farmer	No Formal Education
H6	30	Female	Married	7	Business	No Formal Education
H7	40	Male	Married	8	Service	Secondary
H8	50	Female	Widowed	4	Farmer	Primary
H9	36	Male	Married	6	Farmer	Secondary
H10	28	Female	Married	5	Business	Primary
H11	45	Male	Married	7	Service	Secondary
H12	55	Female	Divorced	2	Farmer	No formal education
H13	39	Male	Married	5	Farmer	No Formal Education
H14	32	Female	Married	6	Business	Secondary
H15	47	Male	Married	8	Service	Primary
H16	60	Female	Widowed	3	Farmer	No formal education
H17	34	Male	Married	6	Farmer	Secondary
H18	29	Female	Married	5	Business	No Formal Education
H19	42	Male	Married	7	Service	Primary
H20	53	Female	Widowed	4	Farmer	No formal education
H21	37	Male	Married	6	Farmer	Secondary
H22	31	Female	Married	5	Business	No Formal Education
H23	46	Male	Married	8	Service	Secondary
H24	56	Female	Divorced	2	Farmer	No formal education
H25	40	Male	Married	6	Farmer	Tertiary

Name	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Number of Family Members	Occupation	Educational Background
H26	33	Female	Married	7	Business	Primary
H27	48	Male	Married	9	Service	Secondary
H28	58	Female	Widowed	3	Farmer	No formal education
H29	35	Male	Married	6	Farmer	No Formal Education
H30	27	Female	Married	5	Business	Primary
H31	44	Male	Married	7	Service	Bachelor
H32	52	Female	Widowed	4	Farmer	No formal education
H33	39	Male	Married	6	Farmer	No Formal Education
H34	30	Female	Married	5	Business	Primary
H35	45	Male	Married	8	Service	Bachelor
H36	55	Female	Divorced	2	Farmer	No formal education

These entries represent the demographic diversity within households practicing polyandry in the Limi Valley of Nepal. The demographic data (Table 1) provides a snapshot of the participants' characteristics. The sample includes individuals with varying ages, genders, marital statuses, family sizes, occupations, and educational backgrounds. This diversity is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of polyandry's perceptions across different demographic groups

Table 2. Polyandry in Your Community

Participant	Aware of Polyandry	Know Polyandrous Families	Perceptions of Polyandry
1	Yes	Yes	Seen as a cultural tradition
2	No	N/A	N/A
3	Yes	No	Unfamiliar, needs more information
4	Yes	Yes	Acceptable if it contributes to family unity and stability

In Table 2, participants express varied awareness and perceptions of polyandry in their community. While some are familiar with polyandrous families and consider it a

cultural tradition, others lack awareness or hold neutral views. These differences highlight the importance of exploring individual perspectives within the community.

Table 3. Contemporary Challenges

Participant	Faces Challenges	Foreseen Challenges in the Future
1	Yes	Potential erosion of cultural heritage
2	No	N/A
3	Yes	Influence of external perspectives
4	Not sure	Uncertain impact of changing societal norms

Table 3 captures participants' views on whether polyandry faces challenges in the contemporary context. Responses indicate varying degrees of awareness, with some participants acknowledging challenges such as potential erosion of cultural heritage and external influences. This underscores the dynamic nature of polyandry within evolving societal norms.

Role of local religious beliefs

Religious beliefs have played a significant role in legitimizing polyandry in the Limi Valley. Tibetan Buddhism, prevalent in the region, often emphasizes harmony, family unity, and community cooperation, values that align with the practice of polyandry. “Polyandry helps to keep the family united and the land undivided, which is essential for survival in our challenging environment”, says Lama Norbu of the Limi Valley monastery. The belief in reincarnation and karma plays a role in legitimizing polyandry. It is thought that harmonious familial relationships and adherence to traditional practices will lead to better karma and a favorable reincarnation. “Our practices are not just about this life but about the lives to come. By maintaining harmony through polyandry, we secure better karma for our future reincarnations”, explains Lama Dorje of the Limi Valley monastery.

These statements reflect the deep intertwining of religious beliefs and cultural practices that legitimize and perpetuate the practice of polyandry in Humla, Nepal.

External perceptions and cultural disdain

Outside the polyandrous regions like the Limi Valley, the practice is often met with disdain and misunderstanding. Neighboring Nepali communities, influenced by different cultural norms and values, view polyandry as an archaic and undesirable practice. This external perception poses challenges for polyandrous families, who may face social stigmatization and pressure to conform to more widely accepted monogamous practices.

Despite its deep-rooted traditions, polyandry in the Limi Valley is not static. The community continuously adapts to changing economic conditions, environmental challenges, and social influences. Younger generations, exposed to broader societal changes and educational opportunities, may re-evaluate the practice of polyandry. This ongoing adaptation reflects the dynamic nature of cultural practices and the resilience of the Limi Valley community in maintaining their unique marital system.

Polyandry in neighboring regions: Dolpa and Manang and Mustang

Similar to the Limi Valley, the regions of Dolpa and Manang also practice polyandry, influenced by the same scarcity of arable land and the need to preserve family unity. However, local religious beliefs in these areas can differ. In Dolpa, where Bon, an ancient shamanistic religion, is practiced alongside Buddhism, polyandry is more rigidly supported as a means of maintaining social and ecological balance. In contrast, Manang, with a stronger influence of Tibetan Buddhism, shows more variability in religious attitudes toward polyandry, with some sects and leaders promoting monogamous unions as a modernizing influence.

In Mustang, polyandry is practiced with variations that reflect local adaptations. Mustang's proximity to the trade routes between Nepal and Tibet has introduced diverse cultural influences that affect local attitudes toward polyandry. Here, religious beliefs are mixed, with some Lamaist traditions supporting polyandry as a means of sustaining economic stability in the harsh environment, while other influences from Hinduism and more orthodox Buddhist practices criticize the arrangement as inconsistent with broader religious doctrines.

Integration of tables in discussion

The diverse perspectives represented in these tables underscore the complexity of polyandry in the Limi Valley. The demographic variations indicate that perceptions are influenced by individual characteristics, while differences in awareness and understanding of polyandry emphasize the need for community-specific insights. The historical and cultural dimensions provide context for contemporary practices, while economic and ecological aspects underscore the practical adaptations of polyandrous families.

Moreover, the discussion of gender dynamics delves into the nuanced roles within polyandrous households, shaping our understanding of familial structures. The exploration of contemporary challenges reveals the delicate balance between cultural preservation and external influences, signaling potential shifts in the cultural landscape.

In conclusion, the discussion of data highlights the intricate interplay of factors influencing perceptions of polyandry in the Limi Valley. It emphasizes the importance of considering demographic, historical, economic, ecological, and gender dimensions to construct a holistic understanding of this unique cultural practice within the community.

Conclusion

In the rugged landscapes of the Limi Valley, this research has unfolded the intricate tapestry of polyandry, revealing not just a marital system but a cultural heritage deeply etched in the historical, socio-cultural, economic, and ecological fabric of the community. Through a meticulous blend of quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, participant observations, and an immersive anthropological study, the study has traced the resilience of polyandry across generations, unraveling its economic pragmatism, ecological adaptation, and nuanced gender dynamics. As the Limi Valley faces contemporary challenges and changing perspectives, the findings underscore the delicate balance between tradition and transformation. This research not only enriches our understanding of polyandry but also holds broader implications for cross-cultural comparisons, policy considerations, and the imperative of preserving cultural diversity in the face of evolving societal norms. The Limi Valley stands as a microcosm, inviting reflection on the adaptive

capacity of communities, the significance of cultural heritage, and the ongoing dialogue between tradition and the forces of change.

Conflicts of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest

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