

THE PERSISTENCE OF POLYGyny IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,
DIOCESE OF KISII, KENYA: A CASE OF ICHUNI PARISH.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the reasons for the persistence of polygyny in Ichuni Parish Roman Catholic Diocese of Kisii, Kenya. The objectives of the study were: to find out the factors that made people to marry more than one wife in the traditional African Society, to find out the position of the Roman Catholic Church concerning polygynous marriage in Ichuni Parish, to establish reasons why Christians in Ichuni Parish continue with the practice of polygyny and to come up with recommendations on how the issue of polygyny can be addressed in the Roman Catholic Church. The study focused on 16 Roman Catholic Church centers found in Ichuni Parish of the Diocese of Kisii. The theoretical frame work of the study was based on the cultural lag theory of William F. Ogburn. Simple random sampling was used to get the sample size for the study. This study was conducted through a descriptive survey where both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used. Data was collected using questionnaires from 10 Catechists and 132 respondents who were Church members, using simple random sampling from the accessible population of 200. This study targeted Catechists and Church members who were given questionnaires to fill which were self administered and they were picked after one week. Testing of validity and reliability of the research was done in the neighbouring Nyansiongo Parish which served as pilot area in the pre-testing. Data analysis was done using both qualitative and quantitative technique. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of simple descriptive statistics that is in tables, frequencies and percentages while qualitative data was analyzed and reported in narrative form. The study was significant because it provided understanding in the persistence of polygyny among the Church members in the Roman Catholic Church and provided ways of reducing the cultural practices of polygyny. The study recommended that the Church should look for ways of teaching married couples on the best way to live in a Christian way. This can be done through workshops or seminars on the advantages of monogamous marriage, withdraw of church responsibility from the polygynous couples, encouraging faithfulness among couples and giving of incentives to monogamous marriages. The study also recommended further research to be done on reasons for persistence of polygyny from other Parishes in the Diocese of Kisii, from other Christian denominations in Kenya and the impact of polygyny on the economy.