

This paper draws attention to the crucial distinction that exists between affluent polygamy and interventive polygamy as practiced in sub-Saharan Africa. It highlights the therapeutic value of interventive polygamy in two regions of Africa. The cultural and causative factors in the conditioning of people's consciousness to interventive polygamy as gleaned from ethnographic data drawn from studies incorporating four sub-Saharan African ethnic groups and conducted over a twenty-year period were identified and examined. A number of theoretical and philosophical assumptions on the nature of African traditional marriage system as well as feminist perspectives on the theme of polygamy in modern Africa were reviewed and formed the background for the entire study. The paper concludes that the African endurance of conviction in the value of the practice of interventive polygamy is explainable from the fact that the strategic role it plays for distressed couples in monogamous African marriages is yet to be surpassed by the presence of such alternative institutions like adoption and divorce, adapted from contemporary Western family practice.