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**THE NEW IBAN BILEK-FAMILY STRUCTURE: A THREAT
OF THE DYNAMICS OF OUR TIME¹**

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the impact of female headed families on the Iban traditional *bilek* family structure. Hence, this study and the field data tend to stipulate that the increasing number of single mothers among the Iban is more likely or inevitably affect [if not] change the traditional structure of the *bilek*-family. In essence, the traditional family was previously absolute patriarchal in nature in terms of the hierarchical position and decision-making have continued to witness dynamic changes in the social realities. Accordingly, the absence of male as head of the family within this new form of *bilek* will further impact the role(s) and responsibilities that some contemporary Iban women are *forced* to shoulder.

Keywords: Iban Traditional family, *bilek*-family, *New* family structure, Single motherhood, Decision-making, Iban women

Introduction

Besides socialization and wellbeing of members, family has always been identified as first and foremost, the fundamental unit of production and reproduction. Essentially, within families, important non-market