

ENDOGAMY AND MARITAL ALLIANCES: ANTHROPOLOGY OF INDIGENOUS MARRIAGE PATTERNS

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ABSTRACT: *Endogamy is one of the attributes of traditional societies in which preference is given to marry within caste, social class and kin group as it is thought to be the mode of creating bonds and alliances in families. The research was conducted to study the females' perception and preference regarding endogamous marriages and to analyze the role of endogamous marriages in strengthening the marital alliances. The data were collected from 100 female respondents from a Public University in Rawalpindi City by adopting qualitative research technique and semi structured questionnaire. It has been found through this study that 61% of female respondents prefer to practice endogamy. During the study it was also revealed that endogamous marriages were less effective in strengthening the marital alliances. Due to the Social change contracted by Pakistani society endogamous marriages were being diminished due to social changes that seem to appear.*

Keywords: *Endogamy, Marital Alliances, Caste, Kin group, Social class*

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the important social institutions which prevails in almost every society. The concept of family is dependent upon marriage. Marriage is a bond between a female and a male who start living together, having sexual, social and cultural intimacy and share livelihood to live a life. "Anthropologically marriage is a group of two or more people related by blood, marriage or adoption." [1]. Marriage is the institution in which different marriage patterns are practiced of which endogamy is one of them. Endogamy is one of the most prevailing marriage patterns in the world. The word endogamy is originated from the two Greek words 'endon' which means within and 'gamous' means marriage, so endogamous means marriage within one's own caste, social or ethnic group, religion and sect. Endogamous marriage is also called inter marriages. "In Anthropology endogamy basically refers to a marriage systems in which custom requires a person to marry within a prescribed local, social or kinship group" [2].

The roots of Endogamy can be traced from Mesopotamian time. In the Neo Babylonian period the consanguineous endogamy in Mesopotamia can be seen [2], so endogamy is included in one of the indigenous and ancient marriage pattern. Endogamous marriages are common among South Asian countries specially India, Bangladesh and Pakistan[3]. These countries are basically family oriented countries in which endogamous marriages strengthen the family and marital alliances. In anthropology the terms endogamy and exogamy was introduced by John Ferguson McLennan[4].

Endogamous marriages are practiced in Pakistan specifically on the basis of social groups and castes. "Caste basically refers to a social class separated from others by distinctions of hereditary rank, profession, or wealth "[3]. The status of people in caste group is ascribed in its nature. Some Endogamous marriages are basically performed within own caste group as it protects the purity of blood [5]. Caste based endogamous marriages are common in "Syed Caste" in sub-continent which draw its lineage from Prophet (P.B.U.H). They are prohibited to marry outside their caste group due to the fear of impurity in their blood. In the

province of Punjab the village children learn caste based endogamy since their childhood socialization[6].

Endogamy by social class is also performed in our society in which individuals decided to marry within their same class. The social endogamy is also called social homogamy [7]. People prefer to practice endogamous marriages because it maintains social ties. The intimate relationship is also maintained through practicing endogamous marriages beside sense of identity. People prefer to marry within their caste and family because they are familiar with their customs, traditions, family values and backgrounds. Mostly in traditional societies through endogamy people secure and grasp the property within their same class group which also give financial surety for their children.

Marriage with the people, belonging to the same kin group helps in strengthening and solidifying the relationship between social groups[3]. The endogamous marriage within family, caste and social group maintain the group identity and social cohesion. Endogamous marriages strengthen the marital alliances and maintain identity associated with it. Endogamous marriage is the only way in which generations recognize their fore fathers and shared and transfer their identity to the coming generations [8]. Marriage outside the kin group, caste and social class is threat to the social solidarity and identity of group cohesion.

The decision of mate selection is in the hands of parents in endogamous marriage patterns. Mostly parents prefer to get married their daughters within their own caste, social class and family because they are familiar with their group norms, values and family backgrounds. They think that this will strengthen the marital alliance and bring close bonds and group solidarity. The decision of marital partner is in the hands of parents [9] due to which females are also forced to marry within their own caste, kin and social group for the sake of land, property, honor and social identity. Endogamy is also practiced because females never get a suitable proposal from outside kin and caste group so parents are forced to get their daughters married within their own caste, kin group and family.

The endogamous marriages are practiced to secure the honors of marital alliances as they are built when family of

orientation and family of procreation interact with each other. Endogamous marriages provide a platform in which both the families interact with each other, share their identity and values and strengthen the marital alliances. It maintains the social ties in the society. For many families and groups, endogamy is a mode through which marital alliances are strengthened. The sense of belonging in marital alliances is also preserved through endogamous marriages. Cross and parallel marriage alliances are believed to be far more reliable and dependable in contrast to the outsider's reference. In our society, people prefer endogamous marriages because these marriages have a tendency which helps to resolve the conflicts which arise in marital alliances.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the current study, data was collected by using a simple random sampling technique to draw a sample of 100 female respondents. The study was conducted in PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi. The data collection lasted for three weeks. The semi-structured questionnaire was designed. The same tool was pre-tested before the ultimate treatment and collection of information from the respective respondents. The collected information was edited rigorously and eventually the data were cleaned as required. The information gathered via the main tool of research was converted on a tally sheet carefully designed in SPSS program (16th version) for the same purpose. The information was elaborated through the simple frequency and percentile method to make the logics of research more legible.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Percentile Table#1: Marriage with own Family

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	34%
No	66	66%
Total	100	100%

you want to marry in your own family? "34% respondents were of the view that they don't want to marry within their own family. 66% respondents show the strong tendency that females don't want to marry within their own family which clearly shows that endogamy which is practiced in terms of marriage within own family is not prevailing in current societal setup. Due to the social change, the girls are more aware of the consequences of intra-marriages which lead to conflicts and disputes in family. According to the conflict perspective, society is frequently in conflict which drives social change so due to conflicts are mostly managed within family where the issue increases and creates epic disturbance in the family [10] as this observable phenomenon, girls don't want to marry within own family.

The Table 1 shows the result of "Do

Percentile Table #2: Marriage within Own Caste

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	61	61%
No	39	39%
Total	100	100%

The table # 2 shows the results regarding the question that "Do you want to marry in your own caste?" 61 % respondents gave the positive answer that they want to marry in their own caste. The result indicates that endogamy on caste base is highly practiced in our society because people want to maintain their identity, solidarity and their social status. The result proves the argument as well that marriage within own caste group protects the purity of blood [5]. In Pakistan, caste system is the major source which secures the identity of people [10]. 39 % respondents were of the view that they don't want to practice endogamy by marrying within their own caste. The education and negative outcomes of the endogamous marriages broadened their mind to not marry within own caste.

Percentile Table#3: Preference for Endogamous Marriage Pattern

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	43	43%
No	57	57%
Total	100	100%

The table # 3 reveals the results regarding the question that "Do you prefer endogamous marriage pattern?" 43 % people answered that they want to practice endogamous marriage pattern whereas 57 % respondents were of the view that they don't want to practice endogamy. This indicates that in our society, women don't want to marry within their social group, family and caste but are forced to marry because the decision of marital partner is in the hands of parents [8]. The parents' final decision forces females to go for endogamy otherwise they don't want to marry within their own kin group and social class group. Females also want to practice hypergamy to avoid the endogamous marriages. The above table clearly indicates the female preference for exogamous rather than endogamous marriages but the society's norms, lack of suitable proposal outside the group are major pressures due to which females unwillingly have to practice endogamy.

Percentile Table#4: Endogamous Marriage Patterns Strengthen the Marital Alliances

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	49%
No	51	51%
Total	100	100%

The table # 4 indicates the result of question "Do you think that endogamous marriage patterns strengthen the marital alliances?" 49 % respondents were in the favor that endogamous marriages strengthen the marital alliances by maintaining strong bonds among family of orientation and family of procreation because they have similar family values and norms. 51 % respondents however were of the view that endogamy never strengthen the marital alliances rather causes more conflict as marriage within family and social group creates tensions and disputes[10]. The endogamous marriages are increasing the disputes for the land and property due to which marital alliances are on way to dissolution. Even these disputes not only affect the relationship among family of orientation and family of procreation but also lead to divorce among spouse. So the de-generational view of cyclical theory fits here that the institution of marriage is degenerated as endogamous marriages weakened the relationship by developing conflicts among spouses.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to see the females' perception and preferences regarding endogamous marriages and to observe the role of endogamous marriages in strengthening marital alliances. The study revealed that females preferred endogamy only on the basis of caste to preserve their identity and lineage but they did not want to practice endogamy in terms of social class and family. Respondents did not prefer to marry within their own social class and kin group because they wanted to practice hypergamy to raise their standards on social ladder and also to avoid biological complications after marriage which usually occur due to marrying with parallel cousins. The endogamous marital alliances are getting weaker due to which it was seen that endogamy played its negative role by creating conflicts, tensions and disputes in marital alliances.

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