

## EXO GAMY & ENDO GAMY MARRIAGE IN DISTRICT JACOBABAD, SINDH: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

*This study explores the marriage patterns in District Jacobabad, Sindh, through a qualitative approach, focusing on exogamy and endogamy. Marriage systems vary across cultures, with exogamy and endogamy representing two contrasting forms. Exogamy refers to marriage outside a specific social, cultural, or kinship group, promoting social integration and diversity. In contrast, endogamy requires individuals to marry within their own group, maintaining cultural, religious, or economic stability. Both practices shape social structures and influence group identity, often guided by historical, religious, and legal factors. The findings reveal that endogamous marriages—within the same caste, tribe, or religious group—are dominant due to strong cultural traditions and social expectations. Exogamous marriages, though less common, are observed among educated individuals and in urban settings but often face societal resistance. The study highlights the role of tradition, religion, and economic factors in shaping these marriage choices. It suggests promoting education, legal protections, and community dialogue to encourage social acceptance of diverse marriage patterns while respecting cultural values.*

### INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a fundamental social institution that varies across cultures and societies. In District Jacobabad, Sindh, marriage customs are deeply influenced by cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and social structures. The two primary forms of marriage—endogamy (marrying within one's own group) and exogamy (marrying outside one's group)—play a crucial role in shaping family and community relationships. Jacobabad, a historically rich and culturally diverse district, predominantly follows endogamous marriage patterns, where individuals marry within their caste, tribe, or religious group (Abbasi & David, 2020). The two major forms of marriage observed in the region are endogamy, where individuals marry within their own caste, tribe, or religious community, and exogamy, where individuals choose partners from outside their social or kinship group (Agha, 2016). This practice is driven

by the desire to preserve family honor, maintain social status, and strengthen kinship ties. However, exogamous marriages are emerging, especially among educated individuals and in urban settings, despite facing social resistance (Raza, 2017). This preference is influenced by several factors, including the desire to maintain family honor, preserve cultural heritage, ensure economic stability, and reinforce social hierarchies. Families and communities encourage marriages within the same group to strengthen kinship ties and sustain inherited traditions (Lyon & Mughal, 2016). Despite the dominance of endogamous practices, exogamous marriages have started to gain limited acceptance, especially among younger generations influenced by education, urbanization, and exposure to modern values (Ibrahim, 2018). Some individuals in Jacobabad choose partners outside their caste or

ethnic group, but such marriages often face resistance from family members and societal disapproval. The consequences of exogamy may include family disputes, social alienation, and economic challenges. Women, in particular, experience stricter restrictions on marrying outside their group due to traditional gender norms. This study adopts a qualitative approach to analyze marriage trends in Jacobabad, exploring the social, religious, and economic factors influencing marriage choices. By examining the dominance of endogamy and the challenges faced by exogamous couples, this research aims to provide insights into the evolving marriage patterns in the region. Additionally, the study suggests measures to promote social acceptance and balance traditional values with individual choice in marriage. The study also aims to highlight the challenges faced by exogamous couples and propose strategies for promoting a more inclusive and accepting society while respecting cultural values. By analyzing the evolving marriage patterns in Jacobabad, this research contributes to a broader understanding of how traditional norms and modern influences intersect in shaping marriage choices. The findings may provide valuable insights for policymakers, social activists, and community leaders working towards social harmony and gender equality in marital practices.

### Literature Review

#### Themes for Exogamy and Endogamy in District Jacobabad, Sindh

A literature review on exogamy and endogamy in Jacobabad, Sindh, explored key themes related to marriage practices, cultural traditions, societal norms, and their impact on individuals and communities. Below are some major themes that can be covered in the literature review.

#### Theoretical Perspective on Marriage

Overview of marriage systems in sociology and anthropology. Theories of structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism in understanding marriage choices. The role of kinship and lineage in shaping endogamous and exogamous practices. The dominance of endogamous marriages in Sindh, particularly in Jacobabad. The role of tribal, caste, and religious affiliations in maintaining

endogamous traditions. Economic and social benefits of endogamy, such as property inheritance, social security, and preservation of family honor (Khatwani, 2016).

#### Endogamy and Social Structure

Endogamous marriage patterns in Jacobabad align with broader trends in Sindh, where caste-based and tribal affiliations play a crucial role in marriage selection. Studies by Shah, 2015 and Ahmed 2019 indicate that endogamous marriages are preferred to maintain family honor (izzat), economic stability, and social cohesion. The preference for cousin marriages consanguinity is also common, as it strengthens family bonds and secures property within the same lineage (Choudhary & Basak, 2020). Islamic teachings allow both endogamous and exogamous marriages but emphasize religious compatibility. However, in Jacobabad, Islamic interpretations are often intertwined with cultural practices that discourage exogamy. In many Sindhi families, religious justifications are used to reinforce caste-based endogamy, even though Islam itself does not mandate such restrictions (Khan, Sultana, & e Siraj, 2011). Men generally have more freedom in choosing a spouse compared to women, who face stricter restrictions. Women in Jacobabad who attempt exogamous marriages often experience (Lyon & Mughal, 2016). Sindh has a strong caste-based system where individuals are expected to marry within their Biradari (clan) or tribe. The Baloch, Sindhi, and other ethnic groups enforce strict marital boundaries to preserve their identity (Shahid, 2017). While Islam allows both endogamous and exogamous marriages, many religious leaders and families in Sindh emphasize same-sect marriages such as families prefer Shia-Shia or Sunni-Sunni marriages, discouraging sectarian mixing (Sindhuja & Choudhary, 2021). Talcott Parsons 1951 argued that endogamy serves as a mechanism for maintaining social stability and cohesion. By marrying within the same kinship group, social bonds remain strong, inheritance stays within families, and cultural values are preserved (Tabassum & Akhter, 2020). This theory is relevant in Jacobabad, where tribal and caste-based endogamy helps sustain power structures and prevent social fragmentation. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 1848 viewed marriage as a tool

used by the dominant classes to maintain wealth and power. Endogamy ensures that land, business ownership, and political influence remain within a select group. In Jacobabad, feudal landlords, religious elites, and tribal leaders use endogamy to reinforce economic and social hierarchies, limiting opportunities for lower-class individuals to intermarry and improve their status (Shahzad, 2017). Herbert Blumer, 1969 emphasized the role of individual agency in shaping marriage choices. As societies evolve, younger generations may challenge traditional norms and seek exogamous marriages based on love, personal compatibility, or modern values. In Sindh, increasing literacy rates and exposure to urban lifestyles are gradually shifting attitudes toward marriage, although social resistance remains strong (Kadyan, 2020). While Islam allows exogamous marriages, especially between different ethnicities and sects, social customs in Sindh strongly favor intra-religious unions. Sunni-Sunni and Shia-Shia marriages are encouraged to avoid sectarian conflicts and family disputes (Hussain, 2020). Religious endogamy is further reinforced by religious scholars and community elders, who discourage inter-sect marriages by citing concerns over cultural compatibility and potential conflicts in child-rearing (Mhaiske, Patil, & Narkhede, 2016). One of the strongest motivators for endogamy is the concept of family honor (izzat). Families believe that marrying outside the group brings dishonor, leading to social ostracization. Women who choose exogamous marriages often face harsh consequences, including forced divorce, family rejection, and even honor killings (Chaudhary, 2011). Endogamous marriages preserve property, land, and wealth within the family. Among feudal landlords in Jacobabad, marrying outside the caste could lead to land disputes and loss of political influence (Pakistanis, 2021). Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, have introduced new ways for individuals to connect across cultural and religious boundaries. that online

communication is leading to an increase in exogamous marriages, although these unions often face strong family opposition (Agha, 2016).

#### Material and Method

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the social, cultural, and economic factors influencing exogamous and endogamous marriages in Jacobabad. A descriptive and interpretive research design was used to capture the lived experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of individuals and families regarding marriage practices. It represents a traditional and tribal society, where endogamous marriages dominate. It has a mix of Sindhi, Baloch, and other ethnic groups, providing diversity in marriage practices. There is growing urban influence, which is slowly shifting social attitudes toward exogamous marriages. A purposive sampling technique was used to select individuals with direct experiences or expertise related to marriage practices. This method ensured that only relevant and knowledgeable participants contributed to the study.

#### In-depth interviews

- Target Group: 30 participants, including married individuals (both endogamous and exogamous), parents, religious leaders, and legal experts.
- Interview Format: Semi-structured, allowing participants to express their views freely.
- Participants: Young men and women (aged 18–35), discussing evolving marriage trends. Purpose: To compare perspectives between different generations regarding marriage

#### Results and Discussion

##### Analysis: Endogamous vs Exogamous Marriage in District Jacobabad, Sindh

This section presents a comparative analysis of endogamous and exogamous marriages in District Jacobabad, highlighting key patterns, similarities, and differences based on social, cultural, economic, legal, and psychological factors.

Table 1: Social and Cultural Dynamics

Factors	Endogamous Marriages	Exogamous Marriages
Social Acceptance	Highly accepted and encouraged by families and communities.	Generally opposed, leading to social isolation and disapproval.
Family Pressure	Strongly enforced by family elders, particularly in tribal and feudal structures	Families often resist and may attempt to prevent the marriage through coercion or threats.
Religious Influence	Encouraged by religious leaders who emphasize maintaining faith and cultural purity.	Often discouraged due to concerns about differences in sect, beliefs, and religious customs.
Tribal and Caste Influence	Tribal and caste identity is preserved, ensuring continuity of cultural traditions.	Seen as a threat to caste and tribal purity, leading to rejection by the family or tribe.
Community Reputation (Izzat)	Enhances family reputation within the community.	Considered dishonorable, particularly for women who choose exogamous marriages.
Arranged vs. Love Marriage	Mostly arranged marriages, with minimal say from individuals.	Often love marriages, where individuals choose their own partners.

**Observation**

Endogamous marriages reinforce traditional structures, ensuring social stability and continuity of caste, religion, and tribal identity.

Exogamous marriages face extreme resistance due to fears of dishonor and loss of social status.

Table 2: Economic and Financial Aspects

Factors	Endogamous Marriages	Exogamous Marriages
Inheritance and Property	Ensures family wealth, land, and assets remain within the same lineage.	Risk of property disputes and inheritance issues due to disapproval from the family.
Financial Stability	Families often ensure financial security through arranged matches.	Financial struggles are common due to lack of family support.
Bride Price / Dowry	Dowry (Jahez) and bride price (Vani, Watta Satta) are culturally expected.	Dowry practices are less common, but financial independence is required.
Employment Considerations	Marriages are often arranged within the same economic class, ensuring economic compatibility.	Economic disparity between spouses may create tensions in exogamous marriages.

**Observation**

Endogamous marriages preserve economic power within families, ensuring that land, property, and wealth remain within the kinship system.

Exogamous marriages often lead to financial instability, as families may disown individuals who marry outside their caste or religion.

Table 3: Legal and Institutional Challenges

Factors	Endogamous Marriages	Exogamous Marriages
Legal Recognition	Fully recognized under Islamic and Pakistani law.	Legally recognized, but often challenged by family and community.
Forced Marriages	More common, as family approval is prioritized over individual choice.	Individuals may elope due to family opposition, leading to legal battles.
Jirga and Feudal Influence	Strong influence of tribal Jirga’s in settling disputes.	Jirga often declare exogamous marriages invalid, leading to severe consequences.
Divorce Rates	Generally lower due to family mediation in conflicts.	Higher due to lack of family support and social stigma.
Marital Satisfaction	Varies; some couples accept the arranged structure, while others feel trapped.	Can be high due to personal compatibility, but social pressure creates challenges.
Emotional Stability	Supported by extended family networks, providing a sense of security.	Higher emotional stress due to family rejection and lack of social support.

**Observation**

- Tribal Jirga (councils) in District Jacobabad often intervene in exogamous marriages, sometimes declaring them void. Exogamous marriages face a higher risk of violence, especially honor killings or forced separation.
- Endogamous marriages provide stability but limit personal choice. Exogamous marriages may offer personal happiness but often come at the cost of family and social acceptance.

The comparative analysis reveals that endogamous marriages remain dominant in District Jacobabad, supported by social, economic, religious, and cultural factors. While exogamous marriages are increasing, they continue to face strong resistance, social isolation, and legal complications.

**Case Studies: Endogamous vs Exogamous Marriage in Jacobabad, Sindh**

To provide a deeper understanding of the complexities of marital traditions in District Jacobabad, Sindh, this section presents detailed case studies illustrating the experiences of individuals in endogamous and exogamous marriages. These real-life cases highlight challenges, social dynamics, and consequences faced by individuals who conform to or defy traditional marriage norms.

**Case study1: Endogamous Marriage Preserving Family Honor**

Xyz, a 24-year-old woman from a Baloch tribal community, was married to her paternal cousin as

per family traditions. The match was arranged when she was only 16, and she had no say in the decision. Her marriage was finalized to ensure family unity, maintain tribal heritage, and prevent inheritance disputes. The wedding was a grand affair, symbolizing family pride and social prestige. Amina initially experienced emotional distress as she had no connection with her husband before marriage. She was expected to adapt quickly to household responsibilities and motherhood. Over time, she found emotional support in female relatives, particularly her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law. Although she longed for independence, societal pressures kept her within the boundaries of tradition.

**Outcome:**

Despite initial unhappiness, Amina gradually accepted her marriage. She expressed neutral feelings about her personal fulfillment, stating that happiness is secondary to family honor. This case reflects how endogamous marriages maintain social and economic structures but limit personal freedom.

**Case study 2: Endogamous Marriage the Cost of Tradition**

Ahmed, a 30-year-old schoolteacher from a Syed family, was forced into marriage with a distant relative despite being in love with a woman from a lower caste. His parents strongly opposed his choice and warned of social consequences if he pursued the relationship. Ahmed’s family viewed caste purity as non-negotiable and pressured him to comply. He



reluctantly married his cousin, feeling trapped between duty and personal desire. Over time, he experienced emotional detachment, unable to connect with his wife. His love for the woman he had wished to marry never faded, leading to mental distress and depression. The marriage continued due to family expectations, though it lacked emotional fulfillment.

**Outcome:**

Ahmed remains in his marriage, feeling resigned to his fate. His case highlights the emotional sacrifices individuals make in endogamous marriages to uphold family honor and societal expectations.

**Case study 3: Exogamous Marriage A love Marriage**

XYZ, a 22-year-old university student, fell in love with a man from a different religious sect. Despite her family's objections, she insisted on marrying for love. Knowing the risks, the couple decided to elope and register their marriage legally. Sana's family immediately disowned her, refusing to acknowledge the marriage. Her relatives filed a case against her husband, falsely accusing him of abducting her. The community viewed her as a disgrace, cutting off all social ties with her. Sana faced economic hardship, as she lost financial support from her parents. Despite the social rejection, Sana felt personally empowered by her decision.

**Outcome:**

Although XYZ found emotional fulfillment, her social and financial struggles were immense. Her case demonstrates how exogamous marriages are often met with hostility, making them difficult to sustain in conservative societies.

**Case study 4: Exogamous Marriage a Tribe X.Y.Z**

Irfan and Nadia, a couple from different Sindhi tribes, fell in love and married without seeking approval from their families. When their marriage became known, their tribal elders convened a Jirga (traditional council) to pass judgment. The Jirga declared their marriage invalid, citing that "such unions destroy tribal integrity. Nadia's brothers were ordered to take action, leading to threats of honor-based violence. The couple fled Jacobabad, seeking refuge in Karachi. Local police were reluctant to

intervene, as the Jirga held significant influence in their village. The fear of being located and harmed forced them into an unstable, hidden life.

**Outcome:**

Irfan and Nadia now live in fear, unable to return to their hometown. Their case illustrates how tribal customs often override legal protections, making exogamous marriages dangerous in traditional settings.

**Discussion**

These case studies illustrate the deeply embedded traditions surrounding marriage in Jacobabad. While endogamous marriages ensure economic stability and family honor, they often limit personal freedom. On the other hand, exogamous marriages, despite fostering personal choice, face severe social and economic repercussions. Endogamy upholds tradition and economic security, but sacrifices personal happiness. Exogamy allows freedom and love, yet leads to intense resistance, legal battles, and social rejection. Education and urbanization are slowly shifting attitudes, but deep-rooted cultural resistance persists. The role of family and tribal influence in enforcing endogamous marriages, often prioritizing lineage preservation over individual happiness. The risks associated with exogamous marriages, including social ostracization, legal battles, and threats of violence. The emerging acceptance of exogamy in educated circles, signaling a slow transformation in societal norms. While change is occurring, it remains gradual and uneven. Efforts to promote awareness, legal protection, and community dialogue are essential to balancing cultural traditions with personal rights and freedoms.

**Conclusion**

The study of endogamous and exogamous marriages in Jacobabad, Sindh, reveals a complex interplay between tradition, social expectations, and personal agency. Endogamy continues to be deeply ingrained in the culture, ensuring familial cohesion and economic stability, but often at the cost of individual happiness. Exogamy, while offering greater personal choice, faces intense social resistance, legal challenges, and financial insecurity. However, gradual societal shifts, particularly in educated communities, indicate

a slow but growing acceptance of inter-caste and inter-tribal marriages. Future efforts should focus on legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and community engagement to foster a balance between cultural traditions and individual rights.

**Recommendation**

To promote a more balanced and progressive approach to marriage in Jacobabad, the following recommendations are proposed: Legal Reforms. Strengthen laws protecting individuals who choose exogamous marriages and ensure effective enforcement against honor-based violence and forced marriages. Community Awareness Programs, Launch educational campaigns highlighting the personal and societal benefits of allowing marriage based on mutual consent rather than caste, tribal, or family pressure. Economic Support for Couples, Provide financial and housing assistance to individuals who face economic hardship after choosing exogamous marriages. Involvement of Religious and Tribal Leaders, Engage religious and tribal elders in discussions to gradually shift traditional perspectives toward more accepting attitudes. Empowering Women, Promote female education and employment opportunities to enable women to make informed decisions regarding their marriage choices. Support Systems for Affected Individuals, Establish counseling services and legal aid for individuals facing repercussions from their marital choices. Mediation and Conflict Resolution, Introduce structured mediation services for families to discuss marriage-related disputes peacefully, reducing the risk of honor-based retaliation. By implementing these recommendations, Jacobabad can work toward a future where marriage decisions are based on mutual love, respect, and individual choice, while still respecting cultural values.

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