



POWER OF KNOWLEDGE

An International Multilingual Quarterly Refereed Research Journal
UGC Approved

Special Issue - September 2017

म.शि.प्र.मंडळाचे

सुंदरराव सोळंके महाविद्यालय, माजलगाव आयोजित
आंतरविद्याशाखीय राष्ट्रीय परिषदेचा विशेषांक

हुंडा-एक समस्या : आढाने व उपाय

दि.११/०९/२०१७



बोडके बी.आर.
(संपादक)

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Dowry System in Society Its Causes and Solution for Prosperous Atmosphere.

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➤ **Introduction:-**

Dowry is one of the most ancient practices of India. The dowry system is a social evil; prevalent in all parts of India and almost in all the countries of the world. In India many of the traditional customs have been give up , but the custom of dowry has not only continued, but flourished over the years. The attitude of society towards the prevalence of dowry custom is neither uniform nor consistent. Theoretically a majority among the educated in the society disfavors it, but in actual practice, it upholds the custom under the fold of certain social and culture justification. ⁽¹⁾

➤ **History of Dowry:**

Originally the purpose of a dowry was to provide “seed Money” or property for the establishment of a new household, to help a husband feed and protect his family and to give the wife and children some support if he were to die. ⁽²⁾ A husband thus had certain property rights in his wife’s dowry. In addition, the wife might bring to the marriage property of her own, which was not included in the dowry and which was, as a result, hers alone. This property was “beyond the dowry” and was known as paraphernalia property or extra total property. ⁽³⁾

➤ **Dowry Refers as Blow:**

Dowry or Dahej is the payment in cash and kind by the bride’s family to the bridegroom’s family along with the giving away of the bride in Indian marriage. Kanyadanam is an important part of Hindu marital rites. Kanya means daughter and Dana means gift. A dowry is money, goods or estate that a women bridges to her husband in marriage. It contrasts with Bride price, which ids paid to the bride’s parents and dower, which is property settled on the bride herself by the groom at the time of marriage. ⁽⁴⁾

➤ **Causes of Dowry System:**

• **Greed Factor:**

Dowry demands often are exemplary of the collective of the society. Extortion in the name of social standing, compensation for the groom’s education, his financial stability is a key feature of Indian marriage. Demands are put forward shamelessly and are expected to be met with silence.

• **Society Structure:**

The dowry system is largely the manifestation of the patriarchal nature of the Indian

society where men are considered superior to women in aspects of physical and mental capabilities. With the backdrop of such societal structure, women are often considered second-tier citizens, fit assume only domesticated roles.

- **Religious Dictates:** religious constraint imposed by the society on marriage customs, mainly suitability of groom has a contributing factor towards the dowry problem. These constraints do not condone inter- religious marriages or even between different religious sects and a suitable groom has to be found from the same religious backgrounds. These restrictions limit the number of suitable matches.
- **Social Constraints:** Aside from similar religious backgrounds, further constraints are imposed based on caste system and social status. Practices like caste endogamy and clan exogamy, has to be kept in mind while arranging a match. Preferred matches have to belong to the same caste, different clan and same or higher social standings.
- **Social Status of women:** the inferior social standing of women in Indian society is so deep rooted in the psyche of the nation, that this treatment of them as mere commodities is accepted without question, not only by the family but by the women themselves. When marriage is viewed as the ultimate achievement for women, evil practices like dowry takes its roots deeper in the society. ⁽⁵⁾

➤ **Solution to Dowry System:**

Law;-Several laws have been enacted to prohibit the practice of dowry and the injustice against women stemming from it. The dowry prohibition act was passed on 20th may, 1961 with an aim to eradicate the evil practice from the society. The act declares not only the practice of accepting dowry unlawful, but also penalizes giving of the same. It includes property, valuable security like cash and jewelry exchanging hand during the marriage. Making demands of dowry is punishable by a minimum imprisonment of 5 years and a minimum fine of 15,000 rupees. Incidences of cruelty by the husband or his family against the wife have been addressed in the section 498A of the Indian penal code and Section 198A in the Criminal procedure code.

- **Enforcement:** it is never enough to just introduce acts and amend sections to fight against a social evil. This requires strict and ruthless enforcement of such laws. That aspect still leaves a lot to be desired. Although such allegations are taken very seriously by the authorities, lack of proper investigative procedures often leads to the accused going free. The government needs to ensure a zero-tolerance policy for such offenders and ensure enforcement of the law through systemic changes.
- **Social Awareness-** creating a widespread awareness against the evils of the dowry system is key step towards eradicating the practice. Campaigns should be designed to reach the deepest strata of the society and aim to spread knowledge about the legal provisions against dowry.
- **Education and self-dependence of women:** education is not just required to find your vocation in life, it is essential to open eyes and ears to a world beyond the one you can

immediately see. It is important for all of us to emphasize on educating the girls in order to fight widespread social evils like dowry. Knowledge of their rights will enable them to speak up against practice of dowry and ongoing marginalization.

- **Overhaul of mindsets:** India as a country requires major overhaul of its existing mindsets in order to push back against the iniquitous custom of dowry. They need to realize the fact
- that in today's society women are perfectly capable of doing anything that men can. Women themselves need to come out of the belief that they are inferior to men and they need to need to depend on men to provide for them.⁽⁶⁾

➤ **Conclusion:**

In a society which is highly divided into social stratification, wiping out custom which is being easily be wiped out so easily. The modern India could not go far from ancient India in the sense that girls are not treated equal to boys and dowry is considered to be an integral part of marriage even today. Dowry is a social evil which is 'hated' by most of the 'educated' Indians but 'practiced' very proudly in their own lives. It shows the crude difference between theory and reality, delivering a speech and living that out, ethics and practicality.

Today marriages are longer the combination of hearts. It is just the kind of business transaction. Dowry system is against the law of equality between man and women. In spite of modernization and the increasing role of women in all walks of life.

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