

Dowry System in India

The Concise Oxford dictionary gives the following meaning of the word 'Dowry': "Portion woman brings to her husband, talent, and natural gift." We stick to only the first meaning of the word and we forget altogether the second meaning.

Even the meaning of dowry as we understand it today is not so relevant or as irrelevant as we have made it through our vicious practices. Most probably the practice of giving of dowry by the girl's parent to the bridegroom originated in a noble spirit. Its purpose was to enable the newly wedded couple to start their household comfortable and with least inconvenience. But it all depended upon the capacity and will of girl's parents. There was no compulsion or coercion involved in it.

Unfortunately, in modern times, the dowry system has assume alarming proportions. Dowry is given and taken freely. The boys are auctioned, as if, in the open market. They go to the highest bidders. The girls are treated as commodities or as cows and goats. No attention is paid to their natural gifts, their education and accomplishments. The poor fathers of the girls have to get themselves ground in the mills of sweats, toil and sacrifice all their lives. Thus, the birth of a daughter becomes the bane and stigma to the unlucky father.

Even after having given a handsome dowry after begging, borrowing and stealing, the woes of poor parents do not end there. The girls are asked by their greedy in-laws to bring more and more gifts. In fact, there are endless demands. Many girls at last get bored and bold enough to raise a tremulous voice against cruel and unjust demands. The result is torture by the in-laws and in some cases even death by burning.

We claim to live in a civilized society. often, we flaunt our moralistic and idealistic pretensions. Should we not be ashamed of ourselves for prefacing or letting practiced such cruel practices as the dowry system? If we have any qualms of conscience that prick us, should not we raise a full-throated voice against such barbaric practices?

As a first step, all of us should pledge never to give or take dowry in any form. Better to remain unmarried than to participate in such an obnoxious system. Secondly, we should socially boycott the defaulters. Thirdly, mustering up courage, we should report the matter to the police in case of default of the Anti – Dowry Act passed by the parliament and the state legislatures. Fourthly, the women

organization should, in particular, activate themselves further and, if need be, sit in dharma in front of the houses of dowry seekers. In fact, this evil has taken such deep and firm roots in our society that only a determined bid and effort can uproot it.

Essay No. 02

Dowry Problem

Dowry custom has been a curse for India. The birth of girls is said to be a degree of money against the parents. Dowry has destroyed our economy. Today we fix dowry rates for boys of different categories – doctors, engineers, lecturers, businessmen, executives, etc. Merits of the girl have nothing to do in the settlement of marriage.

This growing social evil of dowry attracted the attention of our government. It started a fight against dowry custom. It made Anti- dowry Act in 1961. But it received no support of the society. The administration also neglected the Act. Hence this Act gave no relief to the poor and middle-class people.

This evil custom of dowry gave a death blow to the society. Our late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi studied the situation. She asked the young boys to come forward to fight against this social evil. She herself set an example by marrying her younger son, Shri Sanjay Gandhi to Menaka without any dowry. Her call received a warm welcome.

Many States took steps against the evil. They amended the old Anti- dowry Act. They also made new Act. Dowry was restricted to Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 5000/- Punjab and Bihar were first to fight against this demon of dowry. They were followed by other States. People are asked to celebrate the marriages in day time with simple decoration road blocking and fixing shamiyanas on the public places have been banned.

Youth Congress under the guidance of its President, Miss Ambika Soni, and Shri Sanjay came forward to fight this social evil. Both of them made tours from cities to villages. They asked people to fight against the devil of dowry. They held public meetings.

Dowry system is prevalent in almost all sections of Indian society. Dowry is what parents give to their daughters at the time of marriage. It is a kind of help given to the newly married couple from bride's parents to establish a new home. This custom is very old. It was not bad in the past because it was a voluntary offer but these days it has become a necessary evil.

Dowry system has eaten into the bones of our society. The birth of a daughter is no occasion of joy for the parents. A girl when becomes young is a burden on her parents. They have to face great difficulties in finding out a suitable match for their daughter. It is a problem to get her married in a rich and respectable family without a decent dowry. Daughters of poor parents however beautiful and well educated cannot be married to a rich man's son. Many girls commit suicide to save their parents from the evils of dowry.

Though Government has strict laws against acceptance and victimization of dowry but to no purpose. In this regard youths and society should come forward and launch a campaign for rejecting and boycotting the people who accept the dowry. More attention is needed to make the girls qualified and employed to bear the responsibility of society.

Essay No. 03

Dowry System

Dowry system is the biggest evil of our society. The sacred institution of marriage is reduced to a business transaction. In fact, the whole affair has assumed the dignity of women. The parents of the girl are made to pay not only huge amounts of cash but also give luxury items like television sets, refrigerators, cars and what not. Poor parents borrow huge sums of money on high rates of interest to provide dowry. Many girls are put to a lot of trouble and some of them commit suicide.

The system has been in practice in India from time immemorial. As the Hindu law in the past did not give daughter the right to property so the father gave away a part of his property to the daughter in the form of dowry. It was also thought to be a sort of help to the young couple to set up a new house. The custom became an evil as the greed of bride- grooms, parents mounted. Thus, from a grace it became a shame of our society.

Today most of the girls are educated and many of them are employed and economically self- sufficient. They are in no way inferior of the boys. So the girls are not longer dependent on their husband's income. They can stand out individually as they have an identity of their own.

Giving of Dowry is no problem for the rich. In order to enhance their false social prestige, they give maximum dowry. The poor try to imitate the rich and fall into trouble. So, the practice must be put to an end. Laws cannot produce the desirable results unless the people especially the youth take a pledge not to give or take dowry. Being a social problem, it has to be tackled on social level. The social organizations must carry out intensive anti- dowry propaganda. The young boys

and girls can come forward and resolve not to give consent to any such marriage where any type of dowry is involved. Marriages must necessarily be performed in presence of some legal authority and a legal bond got signed by both parties that no dowry will be exchanged. Above all, it is only the education of girls which can make them awakened and self-sufficient and also aware about their rights along with the duties which they have to perform in their new house. The question of marriage should not be exclusively a matter to be settled by the parents only; the involvement of youth should be of prime importance; it would surely minimize the chances of such evils of dowry.

Essay No. 04

Dowry System: A Curse or The Social Devil — Dowry

Dowry system is a curse on our society. This system was applicable in all civilizations and religions that did not permit division of parental property between the daughter and the son equally. Dowry system has become a greed for many parents, despite the fact that governments have regulated equal rights for girls in the parent's property. At least a dozen women die each day in kitchen fire, and some are harassed and victimised. Some commit suicide due to extreme sufferings and mental tortures for not paying repeated demands of dowry. Only a few cases are brought to justice. The son has become a saleable property that parents want to sell at the best. The dowry system was something originally purposed for the independent wealth of the bride in a time when she was unlikely to work outside her home or for any mishap. Like many customs and traditions, time changed the original meaning and purpose. While the dowry system is still in place, it has become more of a 'bride-price' system. The parents of a baby girl must come up with a respectable dowry. If a good dowry is not made, the girl is unlikely to have a 'good' match. A good match for a very poor family might be marriage of their daughter into a slightly better financed family or a good match for a middle income family might be finding a husband who is a doctor or engineer. As you might have probably guessed, there are very few brides who actually retain their dowry after marriage. In the most honorable of families, the bride is allowed to keep certain items for her own use, such as the bed and cooking pots she is supposed to bring with her, apart from the jewellery. There are families who will use the bride's dowry as their own. The bride's dowry will be recycled for the groom's sisters' dowry. Sometimes, the groom's family uses the bride's dowry entirely for their own means. There have been horrible, true stories of the groom's family agreeing to a particular dowry, and after the marriage, a new demand for more dowry from the bride's parents emerges. Threats of divorce are often used to harass the bride's parents to give more dowry. In a country where shame is brought down on the divorcee, parents of the bride do whatever they can to save their daughters from this shame. Occasionally, the threat of physical violence is

used. Even if the bride's parents are not able to continue doing so, the bride is either sent home in shame, or sometimes killed in an 'accident'. It is not surprising that the number of female-feticide is extremely high in India. Interestingly, this is happening in Indian culture, which places high value on females. The girl child is the lifeblood, pride and honor of the family, but the abortion rates of female baby is also sky high. Parents are advised to educate their daughters as times have changed. In the present world, education has more value in the employment market and many fields have been opened for Women to become entrepreneurs. Amount of dowry may be invested for her secured future.

Girl's parents should help by reporting to government or concerned authorities about the dowry demands. Marriage with such boys should be discouraged as demand of excessive dowry means they do not want girl but money this can result in extortion after marriage by torture. All dowry receipts and payments as dowry need to be recorded with marriage registration authority to help in case unwanted incidents or separation occurs. Only with the courage of parents we can remove this curse from our society.

Essay No. 05

Dowry System

Dowry system is something obnoxious and must be hated as such. It is an ancient institution, but its evil effects are most blatantly being felt in the modern times. It is prevalent particularly in India.

All sections of Indian society, particularly those connected with hypocrisy have taken toll of the morals of even the so-called highly practice of this heinous institution is one example how sham and most of the people, in this matter, cannot stand the test of truth. The Hinduism, are under the baneful effect of this system, though others the poor are all under its spell and with all their pretensions and excuses, are perhaps not completely free from its sway. Moreover, the rich and enlightened elitist society as there are only a few who have been able to reject the temptation of dowry and unfortunately, they are hardly ever recognized or held in esteem for this courageous act of abnegation.

In fact, boys are not married but sold like goats and buffaloes and the highest bidder can purchase them. But, as far as treatment is concerned, these are the girls who are treated like animals. A girl who is married with the condition of dowry on her head, is actually not married but sent to the altar for sacrifice like a sacrificial goat.

Dowry Is the real manifestation of man's unmitigated greed and misery and spells doom for all concerned. Sometimes, it is said that elders insist on it. Some say it is as per tradition. Others say, marriage devoid of dowry is a blank ritual which is bereft of all colour and gaiety of the festive mood at the time of marriage. Thus, all concerned have excuses aplenty.

It is in the fitness of things that the Anti-Dowry Acts should be enforced strictly. At the same time, it is of paramount importance that a general awakening among the people, particularly the youth, should be brought about through mass media.

It should be noted in particular that at present women are being exploited and harassed for bringing less dowry and there is no surprise that we have so many dowry deaths and suicides. All of us must join hands with the government in eradicating this menace.