

Delineating the Myth of Reality of the Hidden Form of Hindu Dowry System in India at Present Time

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Abstract:

Hindu Dowry system was customarily a voluntary marriage gift from the bride's family to the bride on her marriage. The practice of it is historical. It was started in the mediaeval period. It was like a ritual and also a part of tradition of society before it was started as a system. But, with the passage of time, it has become a business tactics to secure the life of the bride through fulfilling the expectation of the groom family. Therefore, they have to give money, jewellery, home accessories and so on and so forth. This paper is an attempt to analyse the myth of reality of the hidden form of Hindu dowry system is still present in India.

Keywords: Hindu Dowry, Practice, Business Tactics, Secure, Myth of Reality, India

Reality is very much integrated with the human evolution since the very beginning of human existence. It is the only thing which keeps on altering the traditional approach and pens the modernization of the old ink down on the new page in the human history constantly. In this context, it is an album of myths in which few stories are original and rest of them show the same scene with different background and colour. Therefore, it creates the notion of hyper-reality in the contemporary era which is saturated with eclectic mix, images, maps, models and signs that have become ends in themselves, and for which we have never known the original in which truth is nothing but an illusion of reality.

The 'Dowry Prohibition Act' was enacted by the Indian Parliament in 1961 and has since been amended several times. Nonetheless, the legislation proved to be ineffective in restraining the practice of it. Although social and economic development alone is often enough to erode many traditional institutions, the

practice of dowry has increased across Indian society both in the total amount of wealth implicated and in geographical extent. Though the face of dowry has changed, but, still it has been going on through the various hidden forms such as the demand of self dependent bride, hypergamous marriages, and marrying a daughter to someone within the higher social status in Indian marriage market society. In this context, reality of Indian society is an illusion where masculinity is the centre, which televises the superior status of male over almost everything, and inferior of female.

Therefore, the patriarchal notion points out the binary opposition between male and female as well as culture (masculine) and nature (feminine) and shows how the former has decentralized and devalued the latter and considered them as subordinate to the former. Hence, the reinforcement of dowry is still going on in which both the bride and groom's families are involved where bride life and her culture are passivity, ignorance and docility. Besides, they have been facing innumerable challenges such as domination, exploitation, marginalization, discrimination, inhuman treatment, and mentally harassment or death which is beyond one's imagination.

Review of Literature

Dr Arya Anita (2000) in her book '**Indian Women**', discusses about the experience of a grass root worker, practically involved in to social activities and mixed up with masses. She also tries to provide information on gender and economic participation and the related problems of working women at various levels.

The expert's groups (2019) analyse the details about dowry vs. extortion; people's protests and vigilante justice, distortion of tradition, positive potential of family's role, changing forms of dowry, misuse, abuse and under-use of anti-dowry laws etc.

Leila Ateffakhr, (2017) in her article entitled '**Dowry System in India**' discusses about dowry, dowry deaths suicide, marriage system etc.

Ahuja, Ram (2009) in his book '**Violence against Women**' discusses the problem of violence against wife. It is not recognized by some scholars as a problem of criminal violence but is viewed by them as a social problem of human welfare and a social issue of changing woman's status in family and society. Contrary to this, the problem of dowry death is not considered a private family matter but is largely

recognized by the public, the intellectual community and the criminal justice system as a vital problem of criminal violence.

Sharma K. L (2014) in the book '**Indian Social Structure and Social change**' points out about the social system of India. In this book the author discusses that hierarchy and inequality are deeply rooted in India's tradition and are also found in the form of the in equally place in caste and class groups. These have resulted into persistence and equilibrium because of organic linkages and interdependence of various socio-economic groups.

Mrs. Reshma and Dr. Ramegowda (2013) in his article entitled '**Dowry-The Cancer of Society**' focuses in details like violence against women, history of dowry, and various kind of dowry as regions wise and sociological module of dowry problems in Indian society etc.

Rubaiya Muzib(2015)in his article entitled '**Dowry Death in Assam: A Sociological Analysis**' emphasis historical background of dowry system, Marxist theory of gender and dowry death, some important dowry death cases of Assam, social factors of dowry death and laws related to the prevention of dowry.

Bhavana. N & K.S. Roopa(2015) in their article entitled '**Youth attitude towards marriage and changing trends in marriage**' deals with the concept of marriage, love and arrange marriage changing attitudes towards marriage etc.

Monobina Gupta (2009) in his compiled and edited book entitled '**Marching together Resisting Dowry in India**' highlights about AIDWA report, courts of women, stridhan and women, law and state. He also analyses dowry, ritual status and hypergamy etc.

Madhu Purnima Kishwar (2005) and his expert group published article entitled on '**Violence against women: Good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women**'. The expert's groups discuss different issues of dowry.

Research Gaps

The present research finds out the following research gaps

- i) Though the dowry system was abolished by the law of parliament, yet it has been going on silently.
- ii) Today, due to dowry system women have been facing innumerable challenges such as domination, exploitation, marginalization, discrimination, inhuman treatment, and mentally harassment or death which is beyond one's imagination.

Statement of the problem

In the hyper real world, reality is power centric. As a result, who is more powerful he/ she paints the reality with his or her own colour which is far from truth and as a consequence the social evil of dowry is deep rooted in our society. The offences of dowry, dowry-death, dowry-murders, dowry-suicides, demand of dowry etc. are the heinous crimes committed against the women.

Though the 'Dowry Prohibition Act' was enacted by the Indian Parliament, but with the passage of time how it has been evolved silently in the 21st century in India. So, the pains, pangs, pathos, anguishes, and psychological traumas women regarding the silent pain of dowry have been disparaged yet.

A modest attempt is made to analyse critically the new trends set by the judicial activism in liberating women from the onslaughts of men.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are;

- i. To know the historical perspectives and changing trends of Hindu dowry system.
- ii. To know the changing causes of Hindu dowry system.
- iii. To study and the impact of Hindu dowry system on Indian society.
- iv. To know the preventive measures/laws of Hindu dowry.
- v. To analyse sociologically whether there is possibility of misuse of the provisions relating to Hindu dowry.

Research questions

Every action has an equal and proportionate reaction; like this the researcher always finds some short of questions in his mind which creates the issue to find out solutions to each and every problem. As such after taking this topic into my research work, I found a lot of questions, which needs solution. The research questions are as follows;

- i. What are the reasons behind the changing patterns of Hindu dowry system?
- ii. What are the effective causes of Hindu dowry?
- iii. What are the impacts of Hindu dowry on Indian society?
- iv. How many preventive measures and laws against Hindu dowry system are taken?
- v. What is the actual reason behind the misuse of the provisions relating to the Hindu dowry?

Methods of Study

The present research is based on analytical study, both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used and stratified random sampling technique will be used for further research.

Conclusion

The focus of the present study is on the socio-economic, cultural and religious aspects which effects or influence on the women's right and the reasons of causing various problems for women's victims of dowry. For the better understanding of the present study, it would be necessary to grasp the information regarding the offences related with dowry imposing major obstacles to lead a healthy family life in the familiar atmosphere.

In 21st century the rising incidences of crimes and violence's against women are compounded by the massive challenges of caste, ethnic, conflict, religious and revivalist forces. Because of illiteracy and poor out-reach of legal services; women are more often than not ignorant about their rights. In fact, there is over whelming evidences to indicate a wide gap between the constitutional mandates and disturbing trends in social reality. The government apparatus and society do not appear to have come to terms with the implications of this study area.

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