



# **DOWRY SYSTEM AS A SOCIAL EVIL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MAHESH DATTANI'S *DO THE NEEDFUL***

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper deals with the advantages and disadvantages of dowry system in contemporary society. As you all know that dowry system is a common problem in our society. This research throws light on a serious problem arising out of the dowry system. Drama emerged as a remedy and awareness of this harsh treatment of family and society. Socially 'Do the Needful' is Mahesh Dattani's biggest dramatic play. Dowry is imposed on the whole family. The playwright shows how the family and society are affected by the dowry system. The dowry system has brought down the life and wealth of a family. Dowry system should be completely stopped and awareness programs should be organized to fight this problem.

Key Words: Advantages, Disadvantages, Dowry System, Family, Society, Awareness.

## **Introduction:**

Both the generations are doing their jobs. Chandrakanta Patel with Kusumben Patel is preparing to settle the marriage of her divorced son Alpesh. Kusumben Patel is expecting dowry from the Gowda family. But the Gowda family says that according to their custom dowry is not allowed. Both families lie. The Gowda family says that they are doing inter-caste marriages for the sake of their daughter Latha. Both Lata and Alpesh have loose characters. They want to fulfill their wish under the guise of marriage. Alpesh cannot keep her happy. Lata says Alpesh you cannot sleep in bed with me. Alpesh says yes. Lata likes Slim who lives in Bombay. After marrying Alpesh, she can fulfill her wishes. In this, both the families are trying to save their honour. But the new generation Lata and Alpesh are not worried about their family. In the

guise of holy marriage, Lata along with Slim and Alpesh with Trilok still do the needy. The following lines reveal this.

“CHANDRAKANT PATEL. Patels believe in very high dowries. But we are not interested. We want our Alpesh to be happy.

PREMA GOWDA. We don't believe in giving dowry. No one in the community gives or accepts dowry.” (DATTANI, 2000, p. 150)

Alpesh is boasting for being very rich. Alpesh is a divorced person. He has gone to see Lata for marriage in pressure of his parents. He trembles when he tells more lies and lies about them. He wants also more dowry so he boasts:

“ALPESH. So I applied for this loan, and ... I got it.

CHANDRAKANT PATEL. Seventy-five lakhs..” (DATTANI, 2000, p. 136)

Expecting dowry in family for fame. The Patel family has reached Bangalore. Bangalore looks very attractive. it looks very nice. There are Alpesh, Chandrakant Patel, Kusumben Patel Patel in the taxi. Chandrakant Patel is talking about Bangalore. They watch the assembly. Chandrakant Patel tells about the assembly that it has been made by the Gowda family. On this Kusumben Patel asks Chandrakant Patel if he will give us dowry, otherwise don't talk. This shows the high expectation of the family for dowry.

“CHANDRAKANT PATEL. It has changed so much. Look! That is the Vidhana Soudha. It was built by a Gowda.

KUSUMBEN PATEL. Why are you telling me that?

CHANDRAKANT PATEL. Are, I said it just like that only. Since we are meeting a Gowda family...

KUSUMBEN PATEL. Will they give this Vidhana Sabha as dowry? ... (DATTANI, 2000, p. 127)

Talking about the Dowry system, Goods that the parents give at the time of their daughter's marriage is called dowry. But nowadays it has become a good condition for the girl's marriage. The girl who goes to her in-laws' house with more things at the time of her marriage, gets a good groom and a good house in our society. On the other hand, whether a girl is decent, she is well-mannered but her parents do not have much dowry to give, then she has to face a lot of troubles in her laws. To have a good relationship with her girl, in our society a girl is weighed with money. At the time of marriage, the boy's parents bid for their boy as if he is sitting in a market place. Every year so many girls have to commit

suicide because of this dowry. Many girls do not tell their parents and they themselves keep on tolerating atrocities in the in-laws' house.

A lot of marriage ceremonies fail before because of this dowry and even return before the girl's door. Look at the irony of our society. The groom one who took the procession back is not insulted, but sometimes the girl's father has to commit suicide. In society, there is no harm to the groom. But the bride's father, who is a helpless father, hangs himself on the noose. Later that girl has to listen to taunts that "look she is the same girl whose marriage procession had gone back." That girl is also looked at with suspicion. Being a girl is a crime in society. Sometimes the parents of the girl herself also refuse to adopt her. When a bride comes to her parents' house after being unhappy from her in-laws' house, then it is explained to her by her own parents that now this is not your home. Now, you will have to stay where your dolly went. The meaning will come out from these words. Hearing all this, there is no other way for that girl beside suicide. It raises a question. Does the girl really have no home of her own?

Because of this dowry system, girls are killed in the womb before they are born. This is a very serious question for a mother because a mother loves all her children equally, but because of this dowry, if a second or third daughter is born to a mother, then she starts worrying. From where will she manage the dowry? Superstition also prevails in our society which is also a big blot on our society. There are many hypocrites in our society who rob people by saying that we give medicine to be a boy and many foolish people come into the talk of these hypocrites and do sorcery and sorcery. Many times, in this hypocrisy, so many women have to lose their respect. A living human being is burnt alive for the sake of dowry, humanity is killed.

There are many honor contractors in our society that instead of punishing the slayers of their girl. They keep silent considering their own girl's fault and the extent is when a helpless parent says that she was sad, all the sorrows went away. There is dowry which also encourages discrimination in our society. If two daughters-in-law come together in a house and one brings a lot of dowry with her and the other does not bring dowry, then the in-laws discriminate against her. It becomes common for them to disrespect her, to let go of her for everything. Our society is also responsible to some extent for promoting this practice. If a girl gets more dowries then her truth spreads like fire all around and then society compares her with the one who brings fewer dowries. Then examples are given that our daughter-in-law did not bring anything and her daughter-in-law, see how much dowry has brought with her.

This evil practice can be stopped only when our society will be aware. When, we will give girls equal opportunities like boys. Both giving and taking dowry should be stopped and girl's education should be given more importance. Girls should be explained that they should not depend on others. Standing on her own feet, girls can illuminate the name of their parents in the society. Awareness program should be organized by the government. The government should now make more strict laws to stop this practice. Producing a girl is not a crime, but why bidding for your own boys is a crime.

Even a cruel crime like feticide is the result of the dowry system. Mother who is forced to kill her own part even before she is born is just because of dowry. As soon as the family members come to know that there is no boy in the womb of a mother then that daughter is killed by the family without any thought in the hide of abortion. Where does the humanity of the person die where the mother's love which is equal for a boy and girl. It happens only because of a dowry system. She has to kill his beloved daughter. Here the love and soul of a mother are killed. It is meant to say that feticide is the result of the dowry system. If dowry practice would not be there in our society, then a girl would not have been killed in the womb. He too had the right to live in society. To eradicate the dowry system from the root, we will have to change our mindset; some social workers should oppose the dowry system. People have to understand that it is wrong to judge a girl's ability by dowry. Girls should be educated and given opportunities to progress. If the girl can stand on her own feet, then perhaps this practice can be abolished. Strict laws should be made by the government for both giving and receiving dowry. The man who asks for more dowries for his son should be boycotted in the society. When we see advantage and disadvantages of Dowry System, there no advantages of Dowry.

#### **Causes of Dowry:**

1. It is an ancient tradition. It is quite difficult to challenge the stereotypes of the society.
2. Girl's family member tries to find upper class family than them so that their daughter might be happy.
3. Bride's family often denies an average groom they try to find highly reputed and well settled. In this way they are ready to pay much dowry in the hide of gifts. And they try to fulfill the demands of the groom.

#### **Dowry Prohibition Act:**

Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 states that taking and giving dowry is a punishable act.

## How to eradicate Dowry System?

1. There should be such awareness slogans published and approached to the society which can change mindset of stereotypes peoples.
2. We should not accept the demands of grooms. We should not offer more gifts to the groom's family even if we are capable. This step should be taken first from a rich family. They will inspire other people also.
3. Social organizations also should take strict actions against such people who give dowry and demand dowry. Awareness program should be flourished by the government. A person who doesn't accept dowry and give dowry should be awarded on international level so that it can motivate people.

### Works Cited

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