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Dowry Is An Extreme Disease In Dena Paona By Rabindranath Tagore

Miss. Sunanda Chakraborty, under graduate student (Bankura University)

Dr. Ramen Goswami, English Department, Magadh University

Abstract: It was the year 1887. Tagore was a 26-year-old woman's rights activist who began a fight to end atrocities and injustice against women. In 1891, he penned the novella Dena Paona (Debit Credit) after four years of anguish. It was the narrative of Nirupama, a young woman whose life was cut short by the heinous social practice of dowry. Dowry is a well-known socioeconomic problem in India that is tearing at our society's social fabric. It causes some, if not many, Indian middle-class families to fall into poverty, which is known as dowry poverty. Dowry abolition is under the umbrella of human resource development (HRD) efforts, which include women's empowerment, which is a constant necessity. Dena Paona (Debit Credit) is a dramatisation of India's dowry deaths.

Keywords: dowry, system, insult, insecurity, death

Impacts of theme and narration

When a daughter was born in a Bengali family after five males, the parents named her Nirupama, the inimitable one, because of their abundant devotion. Such a lovely name had never been heard before in the family. Names of gods and goddesses, such as Ganesh, Kartik, and Parvati, were frequently utilised. Nirupama's marriage was now being considered by the family. Ramsunder Mitra, her father, went around looking for a good groom but couldn't find anyone who suited him. Finally, he discovered that he was the only son of a powerful Rai Bahadur. Although this Rai Bahadur's ancestral riches had diminished, the family remained aristocratic. The groom's family requested a dowry of 10,000 rupees as well as numerous additional presents. Ramsunder consented without hesitation; he couldn't let such a groom pass him by. But there was no way he could raise all of the funds. Even after pawning, selling, and exhausted all other options, there was a 6000-7000 rupee shortfall. In the meantime, the wedding day was approaching.

Finally, the wedding day arrived. Someone had agreed to lend the remaining funds at an excessive interest rate, but he failed to appear on the scheduled date. At the wedding reception, a heated argument erupted. 'Let the auspicious event take place, I'll definitely pay off the loan,' Ramsunder humbly urged the Rai Bahadur. The groom could not be brought to the assembly until the entire money was paid,' the Rai Bahadur answered.

The women in the home began to weep as a result of this terrible tragedy. The source of her misfortune sat motionless in her silk bridal gown and jewels, her forehead smeared with sandal paste. She didn't have a lot of affection for or regard for her future in-laws. Meanwhile, things started to look up. The groom abruptly defied his father and exclaimed, "I know nothing of this haggling and business; I have come to marry, and I shall marry."

'See, sir, how the boys behave these days,' the father grumbled to everyone around him. 'It's because they don't get any moral and religious education nowadays,' other elderly men in the audience responded. The Rai Bahadur sat forlorn, seeing the poisonous fruit of modern education in his own son, and the wedding was solemnised in a sad and depressing manner. Nirupama's father drew her to his breast as she was about to leave for her in-laws'

residence, and he couldn't hold back his emotions. She inquired, "Won't they let me visit you again, father?" 'Why not, my daughter; if not, I'll go get you,' said the father. Ramsunder visited his daughter frequently, but he treated his son-in-law with contempt.

Ramsunder decided that the money had to be paid in some way after being humiliated at a relative's residence. But he was already teetering under the weight of his present debts, and his family's costs were stretching him to the brink. He had to use a variety of devious techniques to avoid paying his creditors. In the meantime, the girl was constantly teased by her in-laws. She began to cry behind closed doors on a daily basis in response to the insults directed at her family. Her mother-in-law's resentment remained unabated. If someone said, "What a lovely bride!" 'Her face is soothing to the eyes,' the old lady would retort angrily, 'Yeah, she's very pretty!' She was as lovely as the family she came from. Her food and clothing were also ignored. 'She has enough meaning, if the father had paid full price, the daughter would get full care,' the mother-in-law said if a friendly neighbour pointed out a defect. Everyone acted as if the bride had no right to be in the house because she had cheated her way in. Perhaps the father had learned of his daughter's neglect and humiliation.

His boys, on the other hand, were informed. They objected and pleaded with him not to. Especially the three older sons, two of them were married and had children. He had to halt the sale of the house due to their adamant opposition. Ramsunder then began borrowing modest sums of money at a high interest rate from several sources. He was no longer able to fulfil his family's expenses as a result of the scenario. Nirupama deduced everything from her father's expression. The old man's grey hair, gaunt face, and ever-cowering demeanour revealed the family's unfathomable poverty and anxiety. How can a parent disguise his remorse when he has done something terrible to his daughter?

Nirupama felt compelled to return home for a few days to soothe her grieving father. When she saw his tired face, she couldn't stand being away any longer. She asked Ramsunder, Father, to take her home for a change. All right, said the father. Ramsunder, on the other hand, lacked the power to make his wish come true. Due to a shortage of dowry money, a father's inherent claims to his child had to be pawned. He had to beg meekly even to see his daughter, and if he was denied permission once, he didn't have the courage to ask again. But how could a father refuse to bring his daughter home if she requests it? So the humiliation, indignity, and loss that Ramsunder had to go through in order to raise 3000 rupees before bringing the request to his daughter's father-in-law should be left unsaid here.

Ramsunder sat next the man, wrapping the money in a handkerchief and fastening it to a corner of his shawl. He began by narrating the local news quietly and with a smile. There was a spectacular burglary at Harekrishna's house, which he recounted in detail; he compared the intelligence and temperament of the two brothers, Nabinmadhab and Radhamadhab, singing praises of Radhamadhab and condemning Nabinmadhab; he gave a fantastic account of a new disease in town, and then, finally, putting the tobacco pipe down, he said as if in the middle of a conversation, Oh, yes Every day, I remember it and remind myself to bring some when I visit. Besides, my friend, I've grown elderly.' He took out the three notes with apparent unconcern and aloofness, but which were actually three of his ribs, after such a long preface. When the Rai Bahadur saw merely 3000 rupees, he burst out laughing and exclaimed, 'Let it be, I won't need that.' He stated he didn't want to make his hand reek for no cause, citing a Bengali proverb.

Ramsunder had lost the confidence to confront his daughter, so he returned home, clutching the notes in his quivering hands and fastening them to a corner of his shawl. He made a pledge not to return to the Rai Bahadur's residence until he could pay up all the money and confidently lay claim to his daughter. Weeks and days passed. Nirupama dispatched messenger after messenger but never saw her father. Hurt, she eventually stopped sending ambassadors, which irritated Ramsunder, but he still refused to visit her. The Bengali calendar's sixth month, Ashwin, has arrived. "I must bring my daughter home at this puja festival or else..." Ramsunder remarked, making a terrible pledge.

Only if you pay the money is it humiliating, Nirupama added. Is your daughter devoid of self-respect? Is all I am a bag of money that has value as long as there is money? No, don't humiliate me by paying that money, father. My husband, on the other hand, is opposed to it. "Then they won't allow you come see us, my child," Ramsunder explained. What options do you have if they don't? Nirupama answered, "You don't try to take me

either.” Ramsunder grabbed up the shawl in quivering hands, still clutching the money, slung it over his shoulder, and fled like a criminal, avoiding everyone’s eyes. Ramsunder, on the other hand, who had brought the money but departed without handing it after being convinced by his daughter, did not return.

Nirupama was gravely unwell at the time. Her mother-in-law, on the other hand, could not be held entirely responsible. She was very unconcerned about her own health. She slept the entire chilly fall nights with her head propped against an open door; in the winter, she wore only a thin layer of clothing. Her eating habits were erratic. When the maid neglected to bring her food, she didn’t even bother to say anything to remind them. The idea that she was at the mercy of a strange house’s master and lady, as well as the staff and maids, was taking root in her thoughts. Her mother-in-law, on the other hand, could not stand this attitude. ‘Isn’t she from a noble family?’ she would say if she noticed Nirupama’s slight apathy towards food.

The old lady replied, 'It's just a ruse to Get her to go to her father’s place.' It may seem strange, but Nirupama was seen by a doctor for the first time the evening she began gasping for air, and it turned out to be his last visit. The household’s eldest daughter-in-law had died, and her funeral rites were performed with considerable ceremony. In the district, the Rai Chaudhuries were known for their ceremonial immersion of the idol at the end of the puja festival, while the Rai Bahadurs were known for their dramatic cremation of the eldest daughter-in-law. Nobody in the area had ever seen such a massive sandalwood funeral pyre. The Rai Bahadurs were the only ones who could afford the magnificent funeral.

Everyone offered extended descriptions of the pomp and grandeur of his daughter’s death while consoling Ramsunder. Meanwhile, the Deputy Magistrate wrote, ‘I have made all arrangements here; please send my wife to me as soon as possible.’ ‘My son, we have found another girl for you, so take leave immediately and come home,’ Rai Bahadur’s wife answered. The dowry was set at 20,000 rupees this time, entirely in cash.

Dowry as social evil:

Every year, the social sins of dowry and bride-burning become more visible, casting a pall over India’s growth and achievements on other fronts. What Tagore said 120 years ago still holds true today. Every year in India, thousands of attractive daughters-in-law are “burned to death” for dowry. People will recall Tagore’s love of life under the leadership of achievers like Dr. Karan Singh, to whom the drama is dedicated. It will help the weak overcome greed and sustain higher life values. India will reclaim her moral high ground. Let us make a commitment to make our mothers’, sisters’, daughters’, and wives’ lives decent, dignified, and free of fear and crime.

Literary review:

Women in India are frequently forced to marry by their families. Some may dispute that it was an arranged marriage, but Tagore effectively conveys the fact that the event was solely a result of compulsion. Not only that, but Tagore also includes the truth of Dowry’s social ills. Because it is socially acceptable in India to be tortured or even killed if the bride’s family cannot give the agreed-upon sum of money. “...The girl was taunted by her in-laws at every step,” says page 59. Behind closed doors, she cried every day at the insults directed at her family.” As a result, it is clear that women’s status in society is slightly diminished.

Conclusion: To sum up, some of the short stories in this book are unlikable and leave the reader with bad sensations. Tagore's work to expose genuine concerns in Indian society and to present a vision of how women should be is admirable, and his efforts to advocate for women's rights through his literature are commendable.

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