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# **IF SOCIETY ACCEPTS DOWRY, WHY DOES IT QUESTION ALIMONY?**

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## **Introduction**

In many In many societies, of South Asian countries especially in India, marriage is not viewed merely as a union between two individuals; it is often treated as a social contract tied to traditions, expectations, and financial exchanges, but "according to society marriage is not just merely having ties between two people it forms ties between two families". One such deeply rooted practice dowry, where the bride's family provides money, gifts, property, or valuables to the groom's family at the time of marriage.

Despite being illegal it's considered crime in India, dowry continues to exist openly practiced and is often normalized by society, where dowry is seen as a moment of pride but they don't realise what they are doing in their greed some families think it as a they are claiming a compensation from the bride family as they are getting their son who was received good education and job. Ironically, the same society that quietly accepts dowry frequently questions alimony - a legal financial support provided after divorce. This contradiction raises an important question: if dowry is socially accepted, why is alimony criticized so heavily? To understand this issue, one must first understand the difference between the two concept. Dowry is generally demanded or expected before or during marriage, often under social pressure. Alimony, on the other hand, is financial assistance awarded after separation or divorce to support a spouse who may be economically weaker. While dowry is rooted in tradition, alimony is rooted in law and the idea of fairness. Yet, society treats them very differently.

## **Society perception**

Dowry has existed for centuries and has often been disguised as a "gift" given out of love for the daughter. In reality, it is very dark however, it frequently becomes a burden on the bride's family. Families spend their life savings, take loans, or face humiliation simply to meet social expectations some families from the birth of their daughter they start to collect

money for their daughter because at that time their top most priority is her marriage despite she don't receive proper education or cannot study further because society feel over education daughters can be dangerous to the society but today people want educated daughter in law so that they can show the world and keep them inside the cage. In some cases, failure to provide sufficient dowry leads to domestic violence, harassment, or even deaths. Despite these harsh realities, dowry is often normalized in conversations where law treats the one who is giving dowry and one who is accepting both should be equally punished, where groom family is wrong but bride family is also more off bride family even after knowing their demands and dowry is illegal they do more than their limit to satisfy those beggars and if someone is not demanding anything they force them that it's custom without this marriage can't be complete. people refer to it as "custom," "help," or "status," making it appear socially acceptable even when the law clearly condemns it.

Alimony challenges this structure in a different way. It recognizes that marriage is an economic partnership and that one spouse - often the woman but in some case men also they do demand alimony - who sacrifice career opportunities, education, or financial independence for the family. After divorce, alimony aims to prevent sudden financial hardship. Instead of viewing this as compensation for contribution and sacrifice, society often sees it as a burden on men. This reaction reveals how uncomfortable people become when financial accountability shifts after marriage.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that both dowry and alimony can be misused. There are cases where dowry laws have been falsely invoked, just as there are cases where unreasonable alimony demands have created legal and emotional stress. However, misuse of a law or system does not invalidate its original purpose. By that logic, no legal protection would survive scrutiny. The existence of misuse should encourage fair implementation, not complete rejection.

### **Effect on women**

Another factor influencing public opinion is changing gender roles. Today, many women are educated, employed, and financially independent. This has led some people to argue that alimony is outdated. However, every marriage functions differently. In many households, one partner still sacrifices professional growth for childcare, domestic responsibilities, or family support. Financial dependence does not disappear simply because society is

modernizing. Courts usually consider income, lifestyle, duration of marriage, and responsibilities before granting alimony. It is not automatically awarded in every case.

Interestingly, society often romanticizes sacrifice before marriage but questions support after divorce. Parents proudly spend enormous amounts on weddings to maintain social prestige, yet discussions about alimony are filled with anger and judgment. This difference exposes how social acceptance is often shaped more by tradition than by justice. Women who is affected mentally and physically after marriage. where she puts her 100 percent efforts so that her both the family can stay happy one where she was born but don't have any authority there because she has a new home and now she is just a mere guest , and other family who never recognises her as their family member ( in some households) but none of them become happy. Despite the girl not have done any mistake she is expected to "adjust" from her own family and the society because society blames women that today's women does not accept the concept of marriage and the society normalizes domestic violence, mental physical abuse by the society after giving so much as gifts or simply dowry they are never satisfied they want more and they don't have shame in it after receiving so much it's their favourite line that "what they have done,if if they cannot give such small gifts why did they got you married bring it from your family or otherwise we will kick you out of this home" . Sometimes they don't get help from the own family so there expectations are shattered that what can they expect from the society when their own family is not helping and that last day often being killed by the grooms family or commit suicide after this also this is also the society is not satisfied because a divorced daughter is not acceptable to the society because the daughters blamed that she should have adjusted what's the big deal if they are harresing her without understanding their pain ironically a woman is suppressed by women it's important to change our mentality" Recently a judgement given by the supreme court judge a divorced daughter is better than a dead daughter" to safeguard women with it's negative effect .

### **Conclusion**

The debate is not about whether dowry or alimony is "better." In reality, the two are fundamentally different. Dowry is an illegal social practice that has harmed countless women and families. Alimony is a legal remedy designed to ensure fairness after the breakdown of a marriage. One is rooted in social pressure; the other is rooted in legal responsibility. Comparing them directly may not always be accurate, but questioning why

society accepts one while criticizing the other reveals important truths about gender expectations and social hypocrisy.

A progressive society should oppose dowry completely while also supporting fair and balanced alimony laws. Financial justice in marriage should not depend on gender stereotypes or outdated traditions. Instead of blindly defending or attacking either concept, society must focus on equality, accountability, and mutual respect.

Ultimately, the real issue is not just money - it is mindset. Until society learns to question harmful traditions as strongly as it questions legal protections, debates around dowry and alimony will continue to expose deep contradictions in our social thinking.

