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DOWRY SYSTEM- A DE FACTO ALIVE **TRADITION OF INDIAN SOCIETY**

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Abstract

Any young man, who makes dowry a condition to marriage, discredits his education and his country and dishonors womanhood.

-Mahatma Gandhi

The act of giving and taking dowry has been criminalized in India by enactment of the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961. With this enactment, the system of dowry is abolished from Indian soil as per language of law. In India, dowry giving and taking is a *de jure* offence. But reality is entirely different. In *de jure* it is enlisted as an offence , but in *de facto* everyday innumerable young girls are becoming the poor prey of dowry demon. It seems impossible to find a marriage ceremony which held without dowry. This demon has worn the mask of custom and tradition to escape from arms of stringent laws. This so called tradition is a humiliation or insult to dignity of women , which symbolizes women as burden. Dowry is the product of gender discrimination , which enunciates that men are superior than women. Dowry system shun the existence of women. Dowry is the root cause of other evils like female feticides, infanticides, dowry death, domestic violence etc. Earlier Indian Government considered that strict legislation would surely draw an end line to this obsolete, rotten custom. But in spite of stringent laws, every day we come across infinite news of dowry tortures and dowry deaths. We are demonstrating ourselves as civilized and educated , but still our medieval mindset has not been changed yet. Even high education also failed to uproot this so called system. In reality many highly educated people tends to demand huge dowry in lieu of their higher degrees and high earning jobs.

When both education and stringent laws are unable to combat with this demon , then who can combat? This is a big question.

Keywords- Dowry , Section 304-B , dowry death , mindset , gender discrimination, female infanticides , cruelty

Introduction

Dowry is a social evil in society that has caused unimaginable tortures and crimes towards women and polluted the Indian marital system¹. Our Country India is the epicenter of dowry culture as this tradition has a long standing history and considered as a mandatory custom which automatically comes with the ceremony of marriage. This so called tradition is the product of gender discrimination which violates a basic democratic norm of our Constitution, which envisages the equal standing of citizens. This barbaric practice is the main culprit behind female feticides, female infanticides, denial of education to girl child and is a big hurdle in achieving women empowerment. Earlier it was confined only to Hindu religion, but now it is spreading like an epidemic to other religions and communities also. With its adoption across different communities across religions has led to a century old ceremony turned into a social atrocity². It is not wrong to mention that dowry custom is an extortion committed by groom's family upon bride's family. With modernization, our outfit, way of living, standard of life has undergone spectacular changes. But, there is literally no changes in heinous practice of dowry system. It remained stagnant throughout centuries. Even stringent laws are not success enough to uproot this custom. Many ethical and unethical customs has been extinguished from our society, but dowry custom has survived till now. The question is why this uncivilized custom is succeed to occupy its place in a highly civilized society? There are many reasons for existence of dowry custom. Let us have a look at various causes of survival of putrefactive practice of dowry in Indian society.

What Is Dowry?

Before approaching towards causes of dowry the first and foremost important thing we have to understand is the meaning and object of dowry. If we look for definition, then Indian Penal Code has not defined the term dowry. But, Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 has defined dowry as any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given directly or indirectly :

- By one party to a marriage to the other party to a marriage ; or
- By the parents of either party to a marriage or by any other person, to either party to the marriage or any other person at or before or any time after (on three occasions) the marriage in connection with the marriage of the said parties³.

The idea behind introduction of the dowry system with marriage ceremony was, to make sure

¹ <http://www.drishtias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-editorials/dowry-system-in-india> (last visited on 15.07.2022)

² <http://indianexpress.in/dowry-system-causes-effects-solutions/> (last visited on 17.07.2022)

³ Section.2 of The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961

that the bride will be financially stable after getting married. The intention was very clear. Parents of bride used to give money, land, assets to the bride as a “gift” to make sure their daughter will be happy and independent after marriage. It is surprising to note that how the custom which had aimed at independence and comfort of women have turned into a big misery for women. In India, dowries have transitioned from a way of endowing daughters with economic safety to a “groom price” - a transfer of wealth from the bride’s parents to the groom or his family, with the bride having limited rights over it(Srinivas 1984, Anderson and Binder 2015)⁴. It’s a matter of remorse that the gift upon which the bride had exclusive rights became demands of groom family and consequently non fulfilment of dowry made the life of a girl worse than hell.

Causes Of Dowry System

It is very tough to find any single reason behind prevalence of dowry system. A number of factors contributes towards the survival of dowry system.

1. Greediness:-

Greediness is the root cause of dowry system. With the birth of a baby boy, the greediness for dowry conceived in the minds of parents. Although our tradition always symbolized the birth of a girl as arrival of Goddess Lakhmi , but society always observe birth of a boy as a source of joy and future richness. Dowry system rests on the principle of unjust enrichment. For accepting a girl as wife of groom and daughter-in-law of the family, the groom’s family demands sumptuous articles and huge amounts of money. For them marriage is not a ceremony or sanskar as mentioned in Veda , but a means of extortion. It seems like a compensation for accepting a girl as putravadhu of their family.

It would be completely wrong to accuse groom’s family alone for survival of dowry custom. Many times it has been seen that bride’s family are eager to buy highly educated , well serviced guy for their girls by paying spacious amount of money. In our society some girls parents are present who tried to buy efficient grooms by money. They are also catalyst in social stigma of dowry system. This kind of practice by family members of girls encourages the nasty dowry system to survive .

⁴ <http://www.ideasforindia.in/topics/agriculture/dowries-and-women-s-well-being-post-marriage.html>

2. Social status of women as inferior in Indian society.

One of the undeniable causes of dowry system is gender discrimination. Dowry system is largely the manifestation of the patriarchal nature of Indian society where men are considered superior to women in aspects of physical as well as mental capabilities⁵. With the backdrop of such lousy societal structure, most often women are considered as valueless beings, who are supposed to confine within household chores. Our society often provide second class treatment to women. Many times it has been seen that they are denied access to education and jobs. Dowry is considered as the price for giving birth to a girl, which every father of girl child is compelled to pay to the groom at the time of her marriage. This social status of women as a burden is so deep rooted in the veins of society that even women themselves accept this view without any hesitation and teach same to their progeny.

Grooms family never paid respect to status or dignity of a girl. They considered their boy as valuable and precious, while at the same time they considered girl as inferior who will reduced to a maid after marriage. On the other hand family of girl also considered the girl as a burden for their life. The birth of a girl is considered as a matter of sorrow. Since birth of a girl, the parents starts saving money for her marriage and dowry. Recently researchers have find that dowry is a major contributor to India's gender imbalance. It perceived by the whole society that one day she will depart with hard earned wealth of her father to her in laws. This concept encouraged the practice of female feticides and infanticides.

3. Illiteracy

Earlier it was thought that illiteracy is one of the cause of survival of dowry custom. But at present century, where literacy rate has reached 74.04 %⁶, this theory seems quite wrong. This theory is not absolutely correct as many highly educated persons are demanding more dowry in lieu of their higher degrees and expenses for education. They are utilizing property of bride family as a reimbursement for their study expenses. Actually, we are considering those people as educated who have degrees. But, the real educated persons are those who are educated with moral values, who recognizes the dignity of women and respect women. So, high literacy rate is not going to bring any spectacular change, unless people themselves equipped with moral values and able to differentiate between tradition and extraction. It is not wrong to say that we are living in a world which is nuclear giant and moral infant.

⁵ <http://learn.culturalindia.net/essay-dowry-system-india-causes-effects-solution.html> (last visited on 20.08.2022)

⁶ 2011 census report

4. Poverty

Some section of people demand dowry by making excuses of their poverty. These belong to the category of people who seek to enjoy their life lavishly with the money of bride. Groom and his family considered it as their right. In middle class family dowry torture and dowry death rate is high. But, at present this disease of dowry also prevalent in wealthy family. This vice has not spared any section of people. *“All sections of society have fallen prey to the evil of dowry, including those financially sound”*, a Delhi court has observed while holding a man and his family guilty of torturing his 23 years old wife to death for not fulfilling dowry demands⁷.

5. Obedience towards customs

Most of Indians are reluctant to give up deep rooted custom by citing it as dharma. Most of times, the unethical traditions are observed without considering its spirit and effects. But what I feel that, this obedience to tradition is not true hearted. Because, if people are so enthusiastic to follow the tradition or custom, then they would never treat women as commodities. Our custom enunciates that *“yatra naryastu pujanya ramante tatra devata”*. which means where women are honored, divinity blossoms there and where women are dishonored, all action no matter how noble remain unfruitful. Actually it is not about obedience or adherence to custom, it is only about evil mind. People used to follow the customs discriminately. The concept of dowry that propounded in our culture never permits atrocity against women for the sake of dowry. But no one have paid heed to this true spirit of our culture.

6. Sick mentality of show off

In present society, dowry has been treated as a yardstick in measurement of one's reputation. Many parents of girls dreamt of organizing the marriage of their girls so lavishly with eye catching dowries to enhance their reputation in the society. The boy's family also show off by stating the price of their boy in the market of marriage with respect to education and job profile of the boy. The amount of dowry is indicator of price of boy. This behavior or urges to show off is a sick mentality, resulting in increasing the greediness on part of grooms family, who tried to squeeze the wealth of brides family in the name of prestige and reputation.

⁷ <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/wealthy-not-above-greed-all-have-fallen-prey-to-dowry-evil-delhi-court-5222639/> (last visited on 20.08.2022)

7. Poor implementation of dowry laws

Undoubtedly Indian Government has taken historical step by criminalizing dowry system. With this enactment, century old custom of dowry reduced to an offence. But improper or poor implementation of laws have made the enactment useless. The law however stringent may be, but it will remain futile if, no one will come to implement it. The duty of Government is not limited to enactment of Special Acts. It is also duty of Government to make aware people about the provisions, which will reduce the rate of crime in society.

8. Lack of awareness among people

In our society there are so many people who are unaware of the fact that giving and taking dowry is an offence. Yes, after six decades of enactment of the Act, people are still unaware about the provisions of dowry law. Due to lack of awareness, they failed to take shelter of the provisions in case of event of dowry atrocity. Government has made rigorous laws, but there is lack of endeavor on part of Government to create mass awareness about the provisions.

Why Abolition Of Dowry Is Indispensable In Current Situation ?

The consequences of dowry custom is horrible. Existence of dowry custom is detrimental to dignity and honor of women. Lets discuss why abolition of dowry has become *sine qua non* in present scenario.

1. Domestic violence and incidents of dowry death

The primary cause of domestic violence against women is due to non fulfillment of demands of dowry. The groom and his family always considered the bride's family as a never ending source of money. They demands valuables in every fair and festivals. Non fulfillment leads to physical and mental atrocity against bride. The various forms of dowry tortures are brutal beating, hitting, slapping, throwing out of matrimonial house, insulting in front of others, not giving foods and other requisites, keeping extra-marital affairs. By giving multifarious cruelty when, they failed to extract money from her family, they approached the extremeness of cruelty by pouring kerosene and set fire in order to burn the innocent young women alive. This is the most melancholic and heartbreaking consequence of dowry system.

In some cases they do not kill by themselves, but abets the bride to commit suicide. Continuous physical and mental torture instigates women to go into depression and commit suicide. It is a misnomer to state that the bride commits suicide. Because it is a murder of bride committed by her in laws. The cases of dowry death is increasing at an alarming rate in India. More than 8000 women die as a result of India's dowry system each year. As per NCRB report, 19 women were killed for dowry everyday in 2020.

2. Female feticides and infanticides

Although the demand of dowry arises at the time of marriage, but its effect starts from the time of development of a female fetus in the womb. A girl child is considered as a burden on the economy of family. So, people try to avoid from becoming parents of a girl child, which encourages them to commit inhumane offences like female feticides and infanticides. With the hike in price of gold, there is also surge of missing of female infants after birth. Nearly 45.8 million females are missing in Indian demography in the year 2020. Mainly due to pre and post-birth sex selection practices stemming from son preference and gender inequality, a recently released United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report has said⁸.

3. Higher rates of gender disparity

India has ranked extremely low- at 135th place out of 146 countries- in terms of gender parity, on the Annual Gender Gap Report 2022 of the World Economic Forum (WEF) released in Geneva on 13th July 2022⁹. The idea of paying heavy dowry in order to get a girl married has increased sense of inequality among the genders, placing men superior to women¹⁰. The custom of dowry plays an important role in maintaining gender disparity. As the parents have to pay dowries for their daughters, they neglect them in every opportunity as compared to sons. Son and daughter never get equal treatment in home. Daughters always looked down as a burden upon parents. Surprisingly people are encouraging dowry by citing it as custom, but ignored the custom of respecting the dignity of women. Girls have been termed as "duhita", which implies that she is lucky for both the family i.e. her parents and matrimonial. The matter of regret is that a girl never get respect from either family.

⁸ <http://theweek.in/news/india/2020/07/01/about-46-crore-females-missing-in-india-due-to-son-preference-unfpa-report.amp.html> (last visited on 25.07.2022)

⁹ 'The Hindu' newspaper dated 14.07.2022

¹⁰ <http://learn.culturalindia.net/essay-dowry-system-india-causes-effects-solution.html> (last visited on 20.08.2022)

Her parents always mentioned her as “others property” that one day she will depart with her husband and on the contrary, her in laws taunts her as she is “outsider”. In such situation the whole society treats women as second class gender.

4. Denial of education to girls

Expenditure for education of girls is looked as a wastage. Families also view education expenditure for a girl as a waste of money because this investment will not be reimbursed in future as she is termed as “paraya dhan or others property”. So, it will only drain the economy of family as they have to pay dowry at the time of marriage. That’s why most of times girl child is refrained from going to school. Along with this, it always perceived that women are born for household chores, so often parents give training to their girls for the same. The society has made despicable restriction upon girls to confine them within domestic shores.

5. Barring women from stepping into employment industry

One will get employment only when he/she is well educated and trained. Some women from non progressive mindset family could not get employment due to poor education, as their parents preferred them not to study formal education. Although middle class and upper middle class families impart education to their daughters by sending them to schools and colleges, but still they are reluctant to emphasize on career options for them. Due to doctrine of coverture, women are considered inferior than men and dependent upon men, so often families tried to keep women far away from employment industries. Due to this practice the contribution of women in employment industries is much lower than men, which in turn unhealthy for economy of our country.

How To Abolish Dowry System From Our Society ?

Dowry system persists in Indian society not due to fault of legislature , but due to faulty mindset of general public. Indian Government has declared it an offence, but still people are practicing it by citing it as tradition. It must be noted that this is truly not a case of adherence to tradition. It is a corrupt mind which justifies unjust enrichment. It is an evil which defends torture and unethical deeds. It is an atrocity against women which is responsible for taking numerous lives of innocent married women. Nothing is a good custom, which is opposed to public policy and unethical. It is completely wrong to keep alive a tradition which creates gender discrimination in the society.

Dowry is the genesis of smudgy mindset. This is not a disease of organ that any surgery can cure it. This is a disease of mind. That's why stringent law also failed to eradicate it. The mindset has to be changed. This is the only key to annihilation of the practice of dowry from Indian society. Special efforts are to be made by every institution to motivate people to act for the effective implementation of legislative measure to combat the menace of century old dowry system from our society¹¹. Undoubtedly dowries are widespread and oppressive- but that does not mean the practice is so entrenched that it can not be dismantled. Lets discuss about some measures which can be effective in eradication of dowry culture.

1. Gender equality

The primary cause of dowry is gender discrimination and unequal treatment between both sexes. We will not get rid of this practice until we achieve gender equality. The plight of the girl child initiated with her birth due to this particular infrastructure and continues to hamper her peace of mind and tranquility¹². Girls should not be looked down as burden. They must be treated alike boys. They must be given access to education. They should not be prevented from getting education. In our society, many times it has been seen that parents prevent their daughters from getting education by citing it as unnecessary. They save money for their daughters marriage, not for education. This mindset has to be changed. It has to be noted that it is not about the incapability of girls, it is only about the chances which has been denied to girls. In the words of **Swami Vivekananda** *"There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of woman is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing. There is no hope for that family or country where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness. For this reason, they have to be raised first."*

Hence, equal treatment of both genders is indispensable in building dowry free society and nation.

2. Transformation of mindset

Our society require a major transformation of its sludgy mindset in order to cease the practice of dowry. Society is made of people like us. We all are part of this society. If some people would come forward with a promise to eradicate the practice of dowry, then this will definitely bring a change. Mindset of girls, boy and their parents need to be changed. Medieval mindset which propounds women as an object or commodity requires to be changed. People must understand

¹¹ <http://yourarticlelibrary.com/society/dowry/how-to-prevent-dowry-in-india-6-suggestions/47643> (last visited 18.08.2022)

¹² <http://imp.center/i/amp/dowry-system-causes-effects-solution-5285/> (last visited 20.08.2022)

that women are not weak. Women are originator of new life. They deserve respect, not violence.

3. Education and self-reliance of women

The best form of dowry which the parents can give to their daughters is education. It is imperative for all of us to emphasize on educating girls. Education is a powerful weapon. By acquiring knowledge about their rights, these young girl would become the most important soldiers in the battle against dowry. Education will pave a way for them to engage in employment industry. In this way they will not depend upon any one and will become self-reliant. Education would give them a wider view , so that they will not consider marriage as only purpose of their life or as salvation. If they will acquire high education, then they will not consider themselves as inferior and they will speak against all those nefarious customs which is made with a view to shun the dignity of women. They themselves will fight against dowry custom. They will themselves strive for eradication of anti-women customs.

4. Active participation of social media

Media is the propagator of knowledge and the janitor of information exchange¹³. In current century social media is playing an important role in revolution. By using social media we can create awareness among people about legal provisions prevalent against dowry. Now-a-days most of people are using social media platforms. So, social media would be proved as the best platform in creating awareness among people. Most users fall within age range of 18-55. They are main strength of our society. If they will take a vow to eradicate dowry from our society, then definitely the custom of dowry will very soon removed from the list of rituals of marriage ceremony. We can organize online seminar regarding this topic to educate young boys and girls and encourage them to pledge against dowry system.

5. Role of voluntary organization and NGOs

The role of voluntary organizations and NGOs are significant in this regard. Wholehearted contribution is needed from various social and voluntary organization. They should approach every sections of society and every corners of society. Their role is manifold. They can help in preventing this evil and help the victim to get justice.

¹³ <http://imp.center/i/amp/dowry-system-causes-effects-solution-5285/>

They should visit villages and urbans and aware people about provisions of law. They should campaign against dowry by citing its consequences. They should help the victims of dowry harassment in getting justice. This kind of contribution of various voluntary organization and NGOs would surely bring reformation in society.

6. Role of youth

When we speak about abolishment of dowry custom , the only ray of hope is youth, the young generation. Youths have that potentials and energy which can surely succeed in dismantling this age old foul custom. When I mention the word “youth” , it means I refer to both young men and women. Endeavour is required from both sexes to uproot this deep rooted custom. Young women should pledge to refuse to marry those boys who put dowry as a condition for marriage. Young ladies should boycott dowry greedy boys.

An eye watching example is, a Patna girl rejects greedy groom after his family asked for extra dowry. *In April 2017¹⁴, a marriage was called off in Patna, Bihar ,after a bride refused to marry a man. The news thread states that the tilak ceremony was delayed after bride’s family tried to convince the groom’s family not to ask for additional dowry. Girl’s family told them about their paucity but it all fell on deaf ears. When the girl came to know, she called her family telling them her new decision to reject the “greedy” groom. The wedding was soon called off. This is really a very brave and appreciable decision. Other girls should take inspiration from this girl. Even the Police force also hailed the girl for taking such a bold decision. The then lady Inspector also praised the girl by stating that the girl is a dowry in itself. The society will have to change its outlook about dowry¹⁵.*

The young men must refuse to be sold and they should choose their partners in a fair manner. They have to remember that amount of dowry is not the parameter of their efficiency. Their efficiency and level of education reflected in their attitude towards women.

7. Role of law students

I feel that law students and lawyers are appropriate persons who can efficiently contribute towards the mission of abolition of dowry custom. The rationale is that they are well versed with various Constitutional and legal provisions. They can make understand people about their rights and existing legal provisions against dowry. They can explain people by relating it with all the

¹⁴ 18th April 2017 India today web desk (last visited on 05.08.2022)

¹⁵ 18th April 2017 India today web desk

provisions of Constitution , Penal laws, Special laws and various case laws and precedents. I think the participation of law students and lawyers would surely help in accomplishment of the mission of abolishment of dowry system.

Legal Provisions Aimed At Curbing The Menace Of Dowry

Lets have a look at various legal provisions which have been made to curb the menace of dowry.

1) Section.304 B IPC:-

Owing to innumerable cases of unnatural death of brides in 80s in our country, a new section i.e. Section.304 B was inserted in the Indian Penal Code in 1986, which deals with dowry death. The object of this section is to curb the growing atrocities against young women, who are dying due to failure to pay the demanded dowry.

Essential ingredients of Section.304 B IPC

- a. Unnatural death of a woman
- b. Women must die within seven years of her marriage
- c. Cruelty by the husband or any relative of her husband
- d. Demand for dowry
- e. Cruelty or harassment soon before her death

Punishment for dowry death

The minimum punishment is- 7 years of imprisonment &

The maximum punishment - imprisonment for life

2) Section. 498 A IPC :-

Cruelty to a wife by the husband or his relative is an offence under Section 498 A and this section imposes punishment on husband or his relatives. Section 498 A was introduced in the year 1983 to prevent cruelty to a woman by the husband and his relatives.

Section 498 A enunciates that

Whoever being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subject such woman to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment up to 3 years and also liable to fine¹⁶.

Cruelty means any willful conduct, which likely to drive the woman to commit suicide or to cause grave injury or danger to life, limb, or mental or physical health of the woman or

¹⁶ Section 498A Indian Penal Code 1860

harassment of the woman or her relative to meet unlawful demand for any property or valuable security. The cruelty of husband and his relatives on the wife is called 'matrimonial cruelty'¹⁷.

3) Section 113 A of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872

When the question is whether the commission of suicide by a woman had been abetted by her husband or any relative of her husband and it is shown that she had committed suicide within 7 years from the date of marriage and that her husband or such relative of her husband had subjected her to cruelty, the Court may presume, having regard to all the other circumstances of the case, that such suicide had been abetted by her husband or by such relative of her husband.

4) Section 113 B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872

Section 113 B speaks about presumption as to dowry death. It reads as follow- *When the question is whether a person has committed the dowry death of a woman and it is shown that the woman had been subjected by such person to cruelty or harassment for , or in connection with, any demand for dowry, the Court shall presume that such person had caused the dowry death*¹⁸.

It has to be remembered that such crimes are generally committed within four walls of home and in secrecy. In such cases independent and direct evidence is not easy to get. This is the reason why the Legislature has by introducing Sections 113 A and 113 B in the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 tried to strengthen the prosecution's hand by permitting a presumption.

5) The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

Under the Dowry Prohibition Act, dowry is declared as illegal. The outstanding provision of this Act is that, it has not only made taking of dowry as an offence, but also giving dowry is enlisted as an offence and punishable by law. The punishment for violating anti-dowry law is imprisonment for not less than 5 years and a fine of Rs.15,000 or the value of dowry given, whichever is more¹⁹.

In spite of these legal provisions, it is rarely reported as crime. According to the **NCRB report**²⁰, in a country with nearly 10 millions weddings a year, less than 10,000 cases of dowry were reported in 2015. Actually dowry incident gets reported only when the torture of groom family upon bride exceeds its limit and became unbearable for the bride.

¹⁷ Law of Crimes-1 Book by Dr. RD Vijayasekhar (pg-215)

¹⁸ Section 113 B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872

¹⁹ Section 3(1) of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (penalty for giving or taking dowry)

²⁰ <http://ncrb.gov.in> (Crime in India 2015 statistics)

Way Forward

Men and women both are two wheels of vehicle of life. Without one wheel the vehicle cannot run. Similarly, women are imperative part of our society, without them the society would succumb. The crucial point is that although some progress has been made, the basic attitude of Indian society towards women has not been changed yet, which is reflected in practicing such immoral custom. Dowry, as practiced in current times, has assumed the form of a social menace, as a barbaric practice against woman and her dignity and as a liability to the parents of girl leading to such consequences as female feticides and infanticides²¹. For eradicating dowry from our society, co-operation from all sections of society is inevitable. Country needs a multipronged approach to tackle the inhumane practice of dowry²². Conscience of whole society is need to be aroused with regard to dowry evil. We have to realize that dowry is a black spot on the bright face of our nation. We, as the responsible citizens of India have to strive for the termination of this evil practice so that we can make our society dowry free both in *de facto* and *in de jure*.

²¹ 'Indian Society-themes and social issues' book by Nadeem Hasnain (Mc Graw Hill publication) (pg164)

²² <http://www.ias4sure.com/wikiias/gs1/dowry/> (last visited on 18.07.2022)