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DOWRY DEATHS: A CRITICAL STUDY OF EMERGING JUDICIAL TRENDS IN INDIA”

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ABSTRACT

The Dowry system in India has been running for a long time. It is the money that is given during marriage to the boy or their family, even property can also be included in dowry. The system of dowry started from ancient times like during marriage the money will be given to the groom so that he can take proper care of his bride, it was used to honour both sides of the family. As the time changes dowry still remains in the society but its significance keeps changing with time. Nowadays, the dowry system is becoming like business for some castes. Dowry system is becoming a burden for the bride’s family. Many times if demand is not fulfilled for the boy’s side then the marriage is abruptly cancelled as a result of this failure. If we see it in our Asian country, then dowry is becoming more important for the groom’s side, mainly in countries like India. To end this heinous social practice, the government has made a law to refrain people from taking dowry under the Act of 1961. Whatever money or property given by the bride side they should accept but it never followed. Many places we come to know that because of not doing so on the groom’s side the girls are harmed in such a way that sometimes even it leads to death. Some people even think dowry is like crime, it’s illegal and they never ask anything from the bride’s family. In India, everyone speaks and progresses for women’s rights and says ‘Beti Bachao Beti Padhao’ but a girl even after achieving everything in her life; where she starts taking care of her family but even then she can’t escape the shackles of dowry. Some time because of dowry which is mostly prevalent among the below poverty line people they kill their daughters after they are born or before their birth in the mother’s womb itself so that they can escape dowry. Since they know after growing up and educating her, they still need to give dowry in order to get her married.

KEYWORDS – Groom, Jahez, Great Evil, Cruelty, Domestic Violence and Crime.

INTRODUCTION

When a woman enters into wedlock she has many salutary expectations. She would expect happy conjugal life, she would then expect to be a mother one day and then she would expect to be mother-in-law and grandmother and so on. All these expectations are shattered by the cruel hands of dowry related death. Bride burning is a shame for our society. Poor never resort to it. Rich do not need it. Obviously because it is basically an economic problem of a class which suffers both from ego and complex. Unfortunately, the high price rise and ever increasing cost of living coupled

with enormous growth of consumer goods effacing difference between luxury and essential goods appear to be luring even the new generation of youth, of the best service, to be as much part of the dowry menace as their parents and the resultant events flowing out of it. How to curb and control this evil? Dowry killing is a crime of its own kind where elimination of daughter-in-law becomes immediate necessity if she or her parents are no more able to satiate the greed and avarice of her husband and his family members to make the boy available once again in the marriage market. Eliminate it and much may resolve automatically. Social

reformist and legal jurists may evolve machinery for debarring such a body from remarriage irrespective of the members of the family who committed the crime and in violation penalizes the whole family including those 2 who participate in it. That is social ostracism is needed to curtail increasing malady of bride burning. The dowry is a deep-rooted evil in the society. It stated as a customary presents with love and affection. In olden days, it was customary to give some presents to the bride and bridegroom and his family at the time of marriage.

Meaning of DOWRY

The system of giving dowry to girls in marriage is an ancient Indian custom. It is in fact that portion of the parent's wealth which they wish to give to the daughter. This helps the girls in question and the groom to start a home of their own. However, it is very sad that this custom has been vitiated in our times, and the system has become a menace, a social evil in our society. Wedding are no longer happy events, but keep the brides, parents on tenterhooks lest the groom's family demand unreasonable gifts on the eve of the wedding. In fact, quite often, the greedy groom or his parents do demand gift in cash or kind such as a motor car, video, etc. which the girls parents may not be able to fulfill. Then they are caught between the devil and the deep sea. Breaking off the wedding at the last minute brings infamy to the girl. Very often false, malicious stories are spread about her so that re-engagement and marriage becomes difficult. Often girls are driven to suicidal lengths because of the tension created by such a situation. Another technique adopted by the boy's family is not to make unreasonable demands before the wedding, but harass the girl after the wedding to induce her to request her parents to give the gifts they ask for. The girl is taunted at every step and her life is made a virtual hell until she can fulfill the unreasonable demands of her husband and in laws. Another ploy used by such uncouth

people is to pack the bride off to her parents house and are told to come back only if she can induce her parents to give more dowry.

Conclusion

The persistence of the dowry system in India reflects deeply entrenched socio-cultural practices that continue to undermine the dignity and rights of women. Despite legislative measures such as the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, the menace remains prevalent, leading to alarming incidents of harassment, domestic violence, and even dowry deaths. This practice, which once symbolized goodwill and familial bonding, has devolved into a form of extortion that imposes severe emotional, financial, and societal burdens on brides and their families. Addressing dowry-related crimes requires a multi-faceted approach involving strict law enforcement, societal reforms, and enhanced awareness. Education plays a crucial role in dismantling the social constructs that perpetuate this evil, while punitive measures against offenders, including social ostracism, can act as a deterrent. Furthermore, changing societal perceptions of women's worth beyond monetary contributions is critical to eradicating this practice. Efforts to combat dowry and its associated atrocities must be comprehensive and involve all stakeholders, including families, communities, policymakers, and social activists. Only by fostering an environment of equality and respect for women can society overcome this grave social evil, ensuring that marriage becomes a bond of mutual respect rather than a transaction dictated by greed. The fight against dowry is not just a legal battle but a moral imperative for a just and progressive society.