

Implication of Dowry on the Women of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT: Bangladesh is a developing country. In our country there are many kinds of undesirable customs. Dowry is one of them. Because of this evil practice the brides have to give huge amount of money, furniture, ornament and many other things to the bridegroom which is against our Islamic law and public interest. That's why it has drawn my attention, though many researchers have done huge works in this regard. The purpose of my research work is to find out consequences of dowry, the process of removing the dowry and establish equal rights of men and women. In doing so I have found that many women think that they are giving dowry so that they can lead a happy conjugal life. Besides they think that if they cannot give dowry at the time of marriage their marriage will not be solemnized. Though solemnized marriage will be dissolved for want of dowry. It is a matter of regret that in spite of remarkable development of women in different sectors they cannot exercise their rights properly because of this evil practice to some extent. After concluding my work within 47 interviewers (university students) representing their families I have found that 30% of that can't think marriage without payment of dowry, 4% think dowry is being used as a means of enriching themselves, Dowry is a condition precedent of the marriage seems about 26% . 2% of my study mentioned that dowry is increasing because of lack of Islamic knowledge. Surprisingly 38% comments that marriage dissolved due to nonpayment of dowry. Giving and taking dowry is prevailing in our society for want of well bred or well education, lack of Islamic knowledge and laws regarding their right. Lastly I want to say because of patriarchy society it is increasing. So I recommend that attitude, mentality, thinking, views of men should be changed. Everybody should grow up with this mentality that women have same the right as men in all spheres of life. They cannot be deprived. Morality and ethics should be strong. Family education is needed alongside institutional education in order to change the mentality of our patriarchy society.

KEYWORDS: Dowry, Islam, Al-Quran, Patriarchy, Law etc.

1 INTRODUCTION

In many societies in our Bangladesh many undesirable customs exist. Dowry system is one of the worst practices. It is not such types of practice for which there is any religious sanction but continues in Bangladesh now a days.

It is not under Islamic law rather it has lowered the status of the women in our society. Because of this practice, women are not getting their equal right or exercising their equal right. This problem has drawn my attention because it is a great social problem which has grave dimension in recent year and all attempts for the solution of the problem have not produced desired result. Due to unfulfilment of dowry demand many women die at the hand of their husband, whereas in Islam, marriage is considered as a sacred bond, that is why peaceful and happy relationship is being shattered.

The custom of giving and taking dowry is not part of Islam, though it actually seems to be on the increase among several Muslim cultures. It is such a type of practice which has never been sanctioned by Islam and statutory law Dowry Prohibition Act 1980

The concept of dowry seems to be an imitation of ancient Hindu culture in which daughters are not given any share in the family property but were given a payment part of which might be in the form of household goods as a measure of compensation. This is totally Un-Islamic. It is an insulting practice. Among the Hindu it has been considered to be *kanyadaan* that is the gift of the daughter. Hindu marriage is not complete until or unless, 'bridegroom is given *varadakhshina* in the form of cash or kind. Basically that was out of love and affection.

Besides, articles were given to the bride which constituted *stridhan* that is the property of the bride. In course of time, these two aspects of Hindu marriage assumed the name of dowry [1]. The concept of dowry has not only spread rapidly among the Hindu also to the other communities like Muslim.

Muslim community in Bangladesh inherited the menace from the Hindu society which gives 'pon' during the daughter's marriage since she does not inherit her father's property. In several parts of our country Muslim had been less influenced by Hindu manners and customs.

According to [Encyclopedia] dowry is defined as a term denoting the property, whether really or personally that a wife brings to her husband on marriage [2].

Women are recognized by Islam as a full and equal partner of man in the procreation of human kind.

To this equal partnership in the reproduction of human kind Allah says- 'mankind verily I have created you from a single pair of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes and so that you may know each other [3].

In the Holy Quran, Allah said 'give the women their dowry as a free gift but if, they by their own pleasure, remit any part of it to you take it and enjoy it with good cheer. '

Moreover, it has been stated in the Holy Quran, Let them arise out of you.

A band of people

Inviting to all that is good.

Enjoining what is right.

And forbidden what is wrong.

They are the one to attain felicity [4].

So it is seen that the dowry system is not recognized in Islamic law. Muslim women were supposed to be protected by dowry but they are the victims of dowry. The status of women is an important factor affecting overall development of a country. This spectrum of people to the prospective grooms from higher classes of the society willingly gave dowry to the prospective grooms from higher classes of the society to become a part of that class [5].

Though the concept of dowry is not recognized in the religion but has spread into it [6]. The main purpose of this research is to find out the consequences of dowry, the process of removing the dowry, to create awareness among the people to strengthen the Islamic and statutory law regarding their rights and thereby establish a balanced and improved society.

2 METHODOLOGY

The data for the present study actually has come from the field survey. In 2013 9th December I went to Leading University at Bandor Thana, Sylhet district in order to conduct the research individually, I selected 47 students of law department who represented their families. By adopting quantitative method, I made some questionnaire and delivered the questionnaire among the students in order to find out their views and thinking regarding the dowry problem. For this reason I stayed there for 4 days. On the basis of the following Questionnaire I have conducted the research

a) Yes b) No

20. Apart from the govt. measure there are many others non govt. organization to tackle this problem. But why they can not succeed?

Make comments.....

21. Do you think that by giving or taking dowry actually they are becoming happy?

a) Yes b) No

22. As, different kinds of govt. measures or non govt. measures have failed to tackle this problem. so in this present circumstances what kinds of measures do you support?

Explain.....

23. Do you think that more proactive measures or approach should be taken for the elimination of dowry?

a) Yes b) No

25. Can you recollect any recent step that the govt. has taken to stop the violence of the evil practices?

Mention.....

Signature of the Interviewer

Signature of the Interviewee

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The present research work is based on empirical study and survey that revealed the following results and impacts mentioned bellow and also expressed through piechart and table. The result of my study was very ridiculous because maximum women think that they are giving dowry so that they can live with her husband house safely and with honor. Minnat Ali (in his story Mia barirgolpa) parents gave as dowry 8 carat gold and 2000 tk. to the husband in order to bear the educational expenses. Their idea was that their daughter will lead a happy conjugal life [7]. A study made by the BARD a non govt. organization in early sixties shows that before 1935, the Muslim groom's family never demanded dowry from the bride family. However at present Muslim society in Bangladesh no longer lag behind the Hindu community. Dower has become a custom essential in all marriages [8]. 30% women cannot think their marriage without payment of dowry whereas it is stated in the Quran that 'Give the women (on marriage) their dower as a free gift' [9]. Besides, 4% women think that dowry system in being used as a means of enriching themselves. Even poor men are taking this chance of exploiting the bride's family to improve their fate from poverty and unemployment [10]. Which is against the verses of the Quran and at the same time discriminatory because of sex. My study reveals 26% women think that dowry is a condition precedent of the marriage. Prospective grooms and their families demand large sum of money or property from the bride's family as a precondition to the marriage agreement [11]

My study reveals that 2% women think dowry is increasing because of lack of Islamic knowledge or not following Islamic rules and regulation properly, though Quran indicates that women have similar rights as men according to what is equitable [12]. Moreover my study reveals that 38% marriage has been broken due to nonpayment of dowry. There are reports that marriage has been broken due to failure to meet the demands of bridegroom party [13]

Sl.No.	Opinion of women	Number	Percentage
1.	Can't think marriage without payment of dowry	14	30
2.	Dowry is being used as a means of enriching themselves.	2	4
3.	Dowry is a condition precedent of the marriage	12	26
4.	Dowry is increasing because of lack of Islamic knowledge.	1	2
5.	Marriage dissolved due to non payment of dowry.	18	38
	Total =	47	100

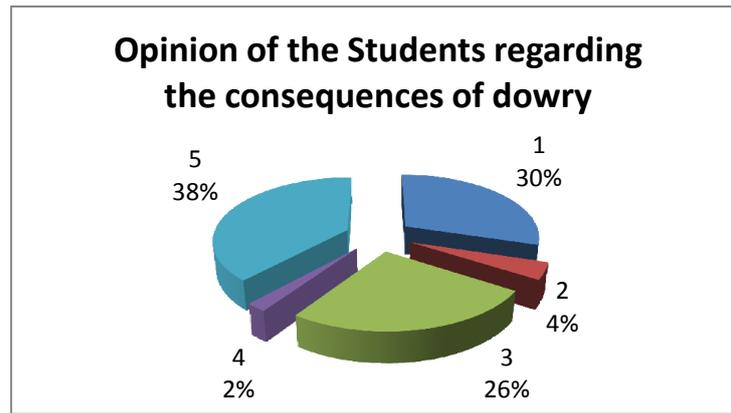


Fig. 1. Shows that various percentages opinion regarding dowry system

4 CONCLUSIONS

It is a matter of regret that despite different kinds of achievement in the field of women development dowry related violence is increasing in a very alarming way, though in the Holy Quran Almighty Allah said that women have similar right as men, according to what is equitable and treated men and women as complementary with each other. But the real picture of society is not showing this because of lack of Islamic knowledge, consciousness, and lack of knowledge regarding their right established by statutory law.

By practicing this custom women are being deprived to exercise their equal right. Besides, now a days women are more highly educated than man ,so why they do not think women as their equal partner, why they do not think women as their good friend, it may be because of patriarchy society.

How long it will be continued? How many women will become the victim of the evil practice whereas women were supposed to be protected by dower. Culture of demanding dowry from the bride’s family are actually practicing the opposite of what Allah has commanded because of unconsciousness. Islamic law has laid emphasis upon equal status, fairness and kindness.

Despite anti dowry law, it is increasing because of lack effectiveness or implementation. If we can’t solve this problem, we will not be able to ensure equal rights between men and women. By solving this problem I want to establish a balanced and improved society because dowry system is not only against our Islamic law but also it has lowered the status of the women in our society.

For this reasons following recommendations may be taken into account-

1. Attitude of patriarchy society should be changed, women should be considered as equal partner, and for this reason well education or well bred is needed. alongside institutional education. Children should grow up with this mentality that no body is superior ,men and women are equal in all spheres life
2. Different rights of women should be enrolled in the text book of each educational stages so that they can be conscious regarding their rights.
3. Despite Quranic prohibition, many people of our society are following the practice of giving or taking dowry because of lack of Islamic knowledge so, Islamic thinkers can play a vital role in this regard, such as by going door to door of every houses or by delivering speech through media, (Radio, Television).
4. Despite anti dowry law1980, it is increasing which indicates there is a big gap between the application law and social practice, Maximum people are not law abiding so ethics and morality should be strong. Apart from that , social movement, campaign of different NGO regarding the bad practice can play a vital role like JatioMahilaParishod in this regard.
5. Civil society can come forward to solve this problem by delivering speech regarding the bad practice through different media.

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