



“Do-Wry”- Thesis and Antithesis

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Abstract

This article is based on the insalubrious effect that dowry system has created in India. Crimes and vulgarities are being committed by people of all caste and strata in the name of dowry. In fact even elites are not spared by this malady. The authors have tried to pinch the issue and at the same time instigated people, particularly the youngsters to do away with dowry. The title of the article is satirically based on the word dowry itself, i.e., do-wry which imply that dowry as an entity should be shown a wry face. Further elaboration is under scripted.

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The taut social gossamer social atmosphere strain and stress itself, relentless to cave-in to any circumstantial inexorable change. Yet sometimes the strain becomes too much; in fact, beyond the sustaining power of stress. A single crescendo voice could precipitate social upheaval clamoring for a change directed towards a beneficial path-way resulting in inevitable collapse of the old order. In that instant the social atmospheric network remain suspended uncertainly, devoid of pegs to hang around, and then, finally settle down complacently. The expected change has been brought about. But that can only occur when leaving aside the subtleties of hypocrisy social beings learn to differentiate the characteristics of social climate, thereby fortifying a unified front irrespective of many social diversifications – however greatly unbridgeable it appears – to ward off the common evil.

Sometimes as usual, opinions differ regarding the particular evil. This creates a dilemma similar to that of a man who had two sons: one, a potter and the other a peasant. If the man prayed for rain it would

have brought a calamity to one, but at the same time it was a necessity for another. Wisely he kept quite leaving for nature to decide. But what happens when the calamity is self-imposed? Under that condition it becomes the duty of the machinery of law to enact rules and regulations to safeguard the majority interest – irrespective of otherwise distinctions – from unwarranted intrusions. The word evil connotes disaster. If it is evil for one it is evil for all.

And dowry is an evil.

Let us first of all explore the ethics of the dowry system^{1,2,3}. This has been the unwritten rule of all time that where the boundary of morality ends, corruption begins. But morality is not a scientific phenomenon to be coded in ciphers rather it is that inherent quality of man percolating through ages. Therefore, morality cannot be encircled or enclosed within a mathematically precise fence. Concerning the dowry system could stingy bargaining be justified that precede the actual nuptial ceremonies? Marriage is a strangely solemn act^{4,5}. It involves the union of two sexes. Let that union remain un-tinged from any materialistic influence. Monetary refurbishment when once tasted makes the man voracious and the pit of greed is bottomless. Would we basically and genuinely call it an unhampered relationship when the lovers' union responds to the tinkling of two metal ornaments instead of a rhyme that automatically flows when two-pure-hearts unite, eager to explore the complexities of the world? Do we really think it an act of honor by accepting the dowry for ourselves or for our sons when we are definitely reluctant in procuring dowry to our daughters and sisters? If it is a system of mutual 'give-and-take', why is the hypocrisy? Why not abolish the system that does not recognize the moral values? Why not banish the system that make us tread the 'materialistic bridge' when human material is the subject of relationship? Why not exile the system permanently when it most of the time rob us of our wealth and sometimes our honor too? Why not do it away with this when our national interest is at stake? Why not kill the verminous plague of unimaginable disastrous potentiality that creeps in slowly but comes out with a blast? Do we not realize that this creates unnecessary economic burden? Do we really spend freely and joyfully on the procurement of dowry that we actually do? Does not the fear of society, the age-old fear of not losing our prestigious name most of the time alters our decisions? Do we really feel proud – as we so pompously show – when a horde of would be in-laws surrounds the prospector's lone figure in an eagerness to collect as much as they could that would shame even the most daringly inquisitive mind? Is that we avoid annoyance because at one time or the other in our lives we too had been similar characters on a similarly adorned stage? Do we not realize that what made us annoyed would necessary annoy others? Do we not feel the depth of the reality that the theme of play does not change when only the actors are substituted? If so, when why turning away the face from reality?

After all what is society? Obviously, it is a collection of human beings following certain ethnic norms, traditions and materialistic pursuit. Then what are social customs? Naturally, the customs followed by the society. It necessarily may not be the same for an entire collection but it definitely involves certain

section or sections of population. Most of the time customs are ‘tradition-labeled’ and there are ‘amended customs’ too⁶. If that is so could not we aggregate some social beings of like-mindedness, the proselytes, and start the revolutionary trend of ‘anti-dowry’^{7,8,9}. When its good aspects shall be realized people will automatically come flocking by. Then the species of ‘dowry-acceptors’ would become as rare as there had been the species of ‘no-dowry-acceptors’. Ostracization paves way for realization of truth which sometimes remains hidden in the mob mentality. After all truisms toward tradition too have limits. It is an age of experimentation. Table talk may influence a man at heart, but it definitely will not alter the traditional fear of ‘doing this’ and ‘doing away with that’^{10,11}.

Dowry is expecting us to ‘DO-WRY-FACE’ at it.

Conclusion

With the ongoing discussion the authors feel that a time would come when dowry system in India would be declared a pariah. How long would it take is anybody’s guess. The struggle against the well-entrenched system must go on. This article may be taken as one such measure.

Foot notes

- [1] Anwar Y, “Protection of Women under the Law, Deep and Deep Publications”, New Delhi, 1982, p 170.
 - [2] Goel A, “Violence and Protective Measures for Women Development and Empowerment” Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2004..
 - [3] Masood S.”Laws Relating to Women”, Orient law House, New Delhi, 2004.
 - [4] Agnes F.” Law and Gender Equality, the Politics of Women’s Rights in India”, Oxford University Press, 2001.
 - [5] Patel S.V.K,”Gender Bias —Violation of Socio-Legal Rights” Word’s Worth Publications India, 2004.
 - [6] Sharma O. C,”Crime against Women”, Ashish Publishing Hose, New Delhi,1994.
 - [7] Amar Singh v. State of Rajasthan, (2010) 9 SCC 64.
 - [8] M. Srinivasulu v. State of AP, AIR 2007 SC 3146.
 - [9] Satvir Singh and Ors v. State of Punjab and Anr, 2001 8 SCC 633.
 - [10] Muthu Kutty and another v. State by Inspector of Police, T.N, (2005) 9 SCC 113.
 - [11] Haria Lal & Ors V. State (Govt. of NCT) Delhi, AIR 2003 SC 2865.
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