

CHAPTER VICONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

There is no society in the world without a social evil. There are also remedies for eradicating these social evils. Dowry problem is now becoming a worst social evil. It is becoming a burning problem. We read the news of dowry deaths daily in the newspapers. This social evil may be insignificant in the past time but now-a-days with the awakening about this evil is becoming more. I have a deep feelings for this problem. I think that a time has come for Hindu society to think seriously on this problem and to try to remove its bad effects.

I think mainly this is a problem of young girls. They have to think about this problem and stand firm to eradicate this social evil. They have to take a concrete decisions collectively on this. No one can help this problem without girls' active part for eradicating this evil. The educated girls have a capacity to take decision for anything.

So far I have collected the data regarding the attitudes of educated girls for this problem which is deeply related with these young college girls.

In Hindu society the dowry is a common custom throughout India. So it has become a national problem. Therefore, Indian government passed the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961. But it is

not much effective. Therefore, major changes in the legislation ~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> needed.

The young girls and boys have to think on this problem on the background of their married sisters and brothers. Because of unsatisfactory married life of their inlaws, the young generation has come to hate this custom.

In my questionnaire I asked the girls views about the retention of dowry system.

It is obvious from the survey, that 86 percent (that is thumping majority) of the girls are in favour of complete abolition of the dowry system.

That is most of a educated girls feel that dowry is unnecessary to set up a new home after marriage. The girls might feel that because of their education they can do and achieve the goal which they want to set up. Husband and wife can do anything for their own home by working hard.

Next question is which form of dowry girls prefer. I gave five different alternatives for their views which are mentioned in the table.

From their answers it appears that majority of the girls have given their choice to share in the property of their parents, which is now-a-days protected by laws. Girls feel that they have authority to share the property of their parents. It is

a graceful way of getting dowry for the establishment of their new homes. It is ~~the~~ their own feeling for the dowry.

But when boy's party makes demand of dowry aggressively girls feel insult in it. The educated girls always think that they are like boys, equal in all respects. Boys and girls are equal in all sides. So there is no need of dowry to equalise by adding something.

Secondly girls next choice of gifts in cash money. The researcher feels this might be due to the reason that girls do not want to involve in litigation with their brothers in parental property. They don't want to interfere in the immovable property.

Other question asked was about the form of marriage and also the expenses on the marriage.

Girls ~~have~~<sup>were</sup> given two alternates one is traditional marriage and another is civil marriage.

Majority of the girls prefer civil form of marriage. This trend shows educated girls want to escape from old traditions as way out of dowry system.

In case of expenses about marriage, majority of the girls want to minimise the expenditure on marriage.

Next question asked by the researcher was about the causes for the dowry.

Majority of the girls gave views that there are so many causes for dowry but main causes are the parental affection and low status of women.

The dowry system has its origin in parental affection, but in course of time, it has grown into a commercial practice. Then it has become a misery and hardship to many parents.

Status of women is declined with in course of time. To make a balance in both the status the dowry is added in the bride's side at marriage time. So low status of women is also a main cause of dowry.

The researcher has asked a question about remedies of dowry.

Majority of the girls agreed on the view that accepting different forms of marriage is one of the remedies on the dowry system. Instead of traditional marriage girls want to choose Registered marriage, Love marriage or Intercaste marriage as a form of marriage.

There is a need of mass education and also active leaders who can do mass education and propoganda on this social evil by their lectures.

The present All India Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, takes the same position as far as giving or taking of dowry is concerned.

Under Section 1 of the Act, no court will take cognizance without a complaint. It means that there must be a third party so interested in social reforms that he or she may spend both his or her valuable time and money in litigation to secure conviction. Unless a third party comes in, there will be no case and no punishment. Therefore it is not enough that legislation is passed.

The government has got some more duties apart from passing the laws. It must enforce them by setting up a proper machinery for that purpose. It must observe and watch why some people are prepared to respect these laws while others wish to violate them. And for this, it may even have to use force occasionally. Methods like warning, imposition of fine, confiscation of dowry given in marriage in violation of the laws and imprisonment may be used as punishment.

There is need for social awakening and understanding. This may be achieved by the work of voluntary associations and right propaganda.

The percentage of education among women is very low. Proper education can train them and make them capable of earning their livelihood and raising the family standard. Economic independence that a woman can achieve by education will help her in developing her own personality and at the same time bringing dignity to it. If in the western world the system of dowry does not exist, it is because a social understanding exist among the

people there. They feel that when women are also educated and can work like men, it is beyond reason to demand any special dowry from them. In India also, if women get education and make use of it properly, they may help the cause of abolishing dowry, of course, with due collaboration and understanding of men in this field.

The education that can create among the educated a sense of responsibility, self-confidence, dignity of labour and a kind of practical training that can help them to follow useful occupations at home and outside. Girls should have a better understanding before they attain marriageable age.

If these improvements are made, and if people begin to realise these values, the problem of dowry may not arise at all.

Inter-caste marriages may also discourage the practice of dowry. Parents have always a wish to marry their daughters into their own social group. But this trend creates competition in the marriage market. The inter-caste marriages may help to reduce this competition.

The people are facing a dilemma. Theoretically, they are opposed to the custom, but practically, they follow it, finding it difficult to escape it, fear haunts such people that the marital happiness of the girl depends upon the dowry as the behaviour of the family of the boy to be married would be regulated by the quantum of the dowry given.

The development of urbanization and individualistic pattern of living in society have also helped the growth of this custom to some extent. The setting up of a separate establishment by the boy gives a permission to his parents to demand dowry and once the vicious circle starts, every family is affected. The materialistic trend encourages the practice of dowry.

The inheritance laws giving right to property to the daughter are not really advantageous because of the interference laws, because of the interference of an outsider (the son-in-law) in the management of property of the girl's family. The solution lies neither in adopting.

If we adopt the love-marriage as a solution for dowry which is coming from western fashion. It is also not a perfect solution. In this marriage young boys and girls select their own marriage partners and are guided mainly by the intensity of love for each other, sometimes inviting the instabilities of family life like western families, the large number of broken homes resulting from divorces and desertion of wives.

Giving economic and social independence to the girls, may also not help to remove this evil. It may curb the practice to some extent, but for complete success something more will have to be done. Highly educated and economically independent girls also get married today with no less handsome dowry.



Law also can not do much for this social evil. Law is useful when public mind is sufficiently awoken to accept the change. We have an anti-dowry legislation but there is a great distance between this law and its acceptance. There are, of course, shortcomings in it which ignore the distinction between the 'giver' and the 'receiver' of dowry for purpose of punishment. People are, therefore, indifferent to the existence of the legislation, and this is the main reason why there is almost no case-law on dowry. The present all India legislation also has similar shortcomings and does not take into account the current social practices.

The present legislation also makes the offence non-cognizable and this feature weakens the whole process of its implementation. It may, however, not be possible to make it cognizable because if police becomes the watchdog at the marriage ceremonies, it will be living in a police state where all personal liberties are jeopardised.

People still feel that dowry is essential and that is why the inheritance laws are not very effective. Social welfare of women is not a substitute for social reform. Both require different approaches. Legislation and social welfare programmes without social reform approach cannot eradicate the social evils. We need a large number of organizations to be engaged in ~~remain-~~<sup>removing</sup>ing the extent and size of the problem. Through benevolent leaders we can do such things. Communication of the dowry



prohibition legislation is poor and in the absence of its knowledge, even the general educative value of the law is lost.

Leaders can achieve what the state machinery fails to achieve. They can help to educate the public mind.

Correct social direction through community, with the help of social reformers and leaders can change people's attitudes, which take a long time to develop and longer time to change. On the issue of dowry, legislation cannot go far enough to bring about a change in values. The base can be provided by the country's leadership alone provided there is sincerity of purpose, integrity and for-sightedness.

"It is now high time for Hindu society to put an end to this evil custom, which has driven many an innocent maiden to commit suicide."<sup>1</sup> There are signs to show that this custom is becoming unpopular and odious, but public opinion must assert itself more emphatically. The youth must rise in rebellion against it. The custom is really as heinous as the counter custom of bride-price, which has been so vehemently condemned by our culture. Proper female education, marriages at an advanced age, mainly settled by the parties themselves, and the awakening of the public conscience seem to be the only remedies that will eventually stamp out the custom.

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1. A.S.Altekar, The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, Page 71.

Qualifications of the parties, wealth, beauty, health, intelligence and good family were the main considerations in the selection of the bride and the bridegroom.

The inter-caste marriages were common in the Hindu society upto 10th century A.D. After that these began to go out of fashion because the cultural differences between the numbers of the different castes. Things began to change gradually, and by about 9th century, the cultural gulf between different castes became for wide to permit of happy and harmonious inter-caste marriages.

The cultural disparity, which was its main cause, is however now adminishing owing to the wide spread of a homogenous culture and education. If we consider the question of intercaste marriages in modern Hindu society from the cultural and sociological viewpoint, as distinguished from the theological one, we shall have to conclude that their revival would not be against the spirit of Hinduism, if the parties contracting them are of the same cultural level and outlook. The few intercaste marriages that are taking place now a days usually satisfy this condition. They cannot become more frequent until the cultural differences between different castes and sub-castes substantially disappear.

The researcher felt that there should be some effective changes in the legislation by government as required.

And there is need for young men to understand the real meaning and value of marriage. They have to take decision regarding what they mean by a wife, whether they want to marry with a maid servent or with a real mate, who works hard for their dreams in future. They have to think about marriage which as a union of two hearts and not a bargain of coins.