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**Address:-Ashok Yakkaldevi 258/34, Raviwar Peth, Solapur - 413 005 Maharashtra, India
Cell : 9595 359 435, Ph No: 02172372010 Email: ayisrj@yahoo.in Website: www.isrj.net**



DOWRY DEATHS IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

SUMA S NIRNI

Lecturer Dept of history
HKES's Smt C B patil arts & commerce degree college Chincholli karnatak state.

Abstract:

Dowry is an evil but essential ingredient of marriage. This evil custom has spread all over the country and has become nightmare of unmarried girls. Dowry deaths which now show an increasing trend in our society, are truly brutal murders, through they are given and appearance of suicide or accidental death. The protectors of the woman in her husband's house are turning into inhuman killers for social status, government post of groom and according to the financial condition of his family with a desire to get rich overnight by dowry money the freely husbands and in laws of husband's family are torturing the innocent bride and even committing murder for dowry property¹.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN TAMILNADU

Liberation, freedom, respect, justice and general upliftment in all walks of life and to their security within their homes from drunker illiterate (mentally and physically) abusive husbands and from the dowry torture from their heartless.

In recent years the practice of dowry and primarily dowry murders, have been an object of increased public interest. The dowry system is regarded as signifying the low and declining status of women. For women, status is initially ascribed by their sex, but a variety of factors determine an individual's status position relevant to others²

All media of Tamil Nadu should highlight these celebrations and their significance in a very big way, creating much social awareness and importance of the liberation and freedom of the women in Tamil Nadu and educating the men population. To respect and do justice to women both young and old at home and in public places and provide them equal status with men-in fields and in all walks of life. It is men who do bride burning, harass their wives for dowry³.

A girl is the young plant that gets neither light nor water she is the flower that would have blossomed but cannot. Half fed and held heartedly educated, she gets only half-wage for her labor. Women like a man are a wonderful creation of God; many men (not all) from time immemorial have dominated, slaved and tortured women mentally, physically and sexually. The country got its freedom, but women continue to be bounded. Dependence of a female in our society as;

“Duteous girl obeys her father,
Husband sways the duteous wife,
Son controls the widowed mother,
Never free is a woman's life”.

A woman cannot live her life on her own terms. Woman as to suppress all her feelings, desires and passion and should obey elders. Woman beautiful and strong wings using which she can soar high⁴.

DOWRY IS A SOCIAL EVIL

The ancient marriage rites in the Vedic period were associated with the kanyadaan or the ceremony of giving away the bride. It was a voluntary practice without any coercive overtone. The Dharmasastras suggested that the maintenance and the ornaments were the bride's property over which she enjoyed complete right and which would provide her financial protection in adverse times. Thus the dowry system as originally provided the post martial security to helpless bride who would feel lost in a new home with no income of her own⁵.

Dowry is a social evil. It is an accepted fact that dowry is a social menace. Demanding leading to many acts. Of violence and crime. It has become a status symbol. Certain high class industrialist and others demand Rs. 25 to 50 lakhs. This sort of a "Vulgar show of the rich", as Pandit Nehru used to say makes even the middle class imitate and spend beyond their level leading them to bankruptcy and depriving the children⁶.

The menace of dowry creates a lot of problems to the parents of the bride every often unable to accumulate the required amount the parents have to inevitably delay the marriages of their daughters. In certain cases the marriage proposals also end in rejections or refusals not to speak of the consequential financial strain and the ill-treatment of the brides. It is day story to hear brides experiencing a variety of ill-treatment like taunts, beating, and forced return to natal family⁷.

PREVALENCE OF DOWRY SYSTEM TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

The course of dowry has claimed number of victims throughout India. The facts and circumstances of the few recent dowry deaths cases may be illustrative. Which took place in Tiruchirappalli district. According to the 2003 survey, there were 40 cases registered but most of the cases did not come to the knowledge of the public.

Case Study Raju Married Easwari on 27th January 2001 at Perur. At the time of the marriage he demanded 3 sovereigns of jewels and money for running business on that score the accused picked up quarrel with Easwari Several occasions and the accused even refused to go to the parents house of Easwari for "Thalai Deepavali" and thus he caused cruelty to Easwari. On early morning he subjected Easwari by saying that she is not having a good character. Due to cruelty 24th June 2002 she hanged herself and despite the treatment she died on 25th June 2002.⁸

CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF DOWRY.

As a part of custom, the feelings of the parents and their concern and sense of obligation play a dominant role in perpetuating the practice. Urged by their mounting anxiety, the parents of the bride are anxious and tend to spend large amounts. They are the brides' security or it is given so as not to send the bride empty handed or to get a good match. In no way will they attribute the payment of dowry to the groom's or his parents.

Produced adverse effects on society. Most of the families in meeting dowry demands to secure happy future of their daughters have to indulge in debts. Sometimes when middle class parents of bride are unable to meet the abnormal demands or dowry they marry their young daughter to an old man or man or to an unworthy person who does not ask for dowry such ill asserted matches or where the girl is constantly harassed for bringing less⁹.

Female children's are killed by people because of the problem 'dowry' The problem of dowry takes many lives of female children. The dowry problem is the root cause for female infanticide. These two major problems ruin the society.

GOVERNMENT LAW

The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 defines if a person demands directly or indirectly from the parents or other relatives or guardians of a bride or bridegroom may be imprisoned for a minimum of five years and fined not less than Rs. 15,000 or the amount of the value of the dowry whichever is more.

A new section has been introduced in IPC to deal with instances of cruelty to a woman by her husband or the relatives of her husband by making this offence punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and also to section 5 or 498A10. Any person who retains the dowry and does not return to the woman entitled to it is guilty of criminal breach of trust under section 406 of IPC. Section 304B-IPC where the death of a women is caused by any burns or bodily injury or occurs otherwise

than under normal circumstances within seven year of her marriage and it is shown that soon before her death she was subject to cruelty or harassment by her husband or any relative of her husband for, or in connection with any demand for dowry, such death shall be called dowry death and such husband or relative shall be demand to have caused her death. The situation changed in 1986 when parliament introduced a new provision in the India Evidence Act as section 113A.¹¹

Love marriage helps the pair to understand each other in a better way. It will eradicate the problem or dowry. Because they are mutually understanding each other, when they fell in love. They do not care about dowry their life is fully based on true love. Hence, the love Marriage will be the solution for Dowry problem.

Dowry a “Social Evil” should be brought night from the lower classes in the educational institutions. Hence, the mind of the future generation should be changed not to follow the evil practice dowry. An unanimous decision should be taken that not to marry the person, who demands dowry. The educated women should be participated and protest against this problem and they should be given awareness on the same.¹²

Last but not least the reduce on the expenditure of marriage, the menace of dowry and its problem will also be solved.

1.Mohd Umar, Bride Burning in India, New Delhi, 1995, p.235.

2.Ibid,p.236.

3.Hari, Internet ForumHub 123236,15.59.14, HTML, googly.com,2002

4.V Geetha, status of Women in India, Magazine, Tiruchirappalli, 2002, p.35

5.Sebasti L. Raj, Quest for gender justice, Madras, 1991, pp.91-92.

6.Mamta cingh, violence against women, New Delhi, 2000, p.1560

7.Ibid,p.157.

8.Judgment delivered in the Municipal Court on 21.06.2004, Crime no: 299/2002, Tiruchirappalli Municipal Court, Date: 21.06.2004.

9.Mohd Umar, op:cit, p.246.

10.Sebash L.Raj, op:cit, p253

11.Thomas B. Jayaseelan, Women Rights and law, New Delhi, 220, p. 235.

12.Mohan Umar, op:cit;p.307. V. Geetha, Status of Women in India, Magazine, Tiruchirappalli, 2002, p.35.

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