



## Dowry Practice among Madheshi Community of Dhanusha District of Nepal Continuity and Change

Leelawati Yadav

Central Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu Nepal

Email: [leela9191@yahoo.com](mailto:leela9191@yahoo.com) or [leela.sba@gmail.com](mailto:leela.sba@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Dowry system is a burning issue in the Nepalese and Indian society. In Nepal, dowry practice is more prevalent in the Tarai region in the border areas between Nepal and India. Dowry practice has been found mostly in higher caste and higher educated family of Madheshi people. Among them Yadav and Sah Caste has its higher and higher practices. They have been found to giving continuity of dowry to main social prestige and can't leave the social cultures that have strongly rooted in Madheshi community. It is difficult and bad situation of Tarai in regards of women violence that is directly and indirectly interlinked with dowry practice. So in this article I argued that practice of dowry is increasing day by day but the cases are in hidden way. Based on key informants this study highly demands for removing of this dowry practice from Tarai. It is needed of further research activity, effective formulation and implementation of government Laws & Policies and to punish those who are directly and indirectly involved in giving and taking dowry. Thus way it is expected that the life of young married girls could be saved in the Tarai region of Nepal, particularly in my study area.

**Key words:** Dowry, Marriage, Cultures, Practice, Power, Patriarchy, Discrimination, Violence, Globalization, Sanskritization, Government Laws & Policies.

### Introduction

Dowry is a social evil, crime and very bad systems (Kupratha) that creates women violence, murdered, torture and mental pressure to both brides as well as their family for the whole life. In this study area, informants describe that "Dowry means – whatever all expenses like cash, materials, ornaments, gold, furniture, clothes and other equipment's that done during marriage of son & daughter may be given in the name of dowry( Dahej or Tilak) . It may be either forcefully demands from bride side or environment created to give all things without it is called dowry (Yadav, 2017).

Dowry system is scorching problem in the Nepalese society and this system is very much found practiced in the Tarai area of Nepal in comparison of other hilly and mountain region. Sachdeva (1998) describes that Dowry system has given rise to many socio-economic problems with very serious consequences, numerous incidents of bride burning, harassment and physical torture of newly-wed women and various kinds of pressure tactics being adopted by the husbands/in-laws pressurizing for more dowry have compelled the social reformers and the intelligentsia to give serious thoughts to various aspects associated with the institution of dowry. The offences of dowry-deaths, dowry-murders, dowry-suicide, demand of dowry etc. are the crimes committed against women.

The dowry system is one of the examples of ill –treatment practice to women in our society and has become a culture. This dowry system is still deep rooted in Nepalese society. Dowry is the money, goods or estate that bride brings to groom's house during/after marriage. It was designed to provide newlyweds security and basic needs but its meaning has been changed, Dowry is now can be defined as forced financial and material arrangement to be given by the parents of the bride to the parents of the groom as an essential condition of the marriage. Dowry is one of the social evils but still practiced in society as a culture. (Karki, 2014: 4).

The dowry system has responsible to a great extent for child marriage and discrimination against girls and women , although now a days ,parents have started to give opportunity of higher education for both sons and daughters but still it has seen in very problematic way towards dowry that more higher educated family demands more dowry. So, the maximum numbers of child marriage have occurred due to highly practiced of dowry in the Tarai. Although the dowry has been restricted by law, it has been still found in the increasing rate day by day. It has found that higher educated people want to save their prestige and status in their society.

The dowry system has come up as the basic and prime causes of domestic violence in communities especially it is a burning issue of almost all communities of Madheshi people in the Tarai region of Nepal. According to Upadhaya, Nepal is a multi –cultural society with different culture and traditions where women and girls have been still dominated and oppressed by the hierarchical system of the society, particularly the patriarchal society. Due to the discriminatory attitude women and girls still suffer by physical and mental violence as well as emotional violence. Girls and women still suffer by different forms of violations like child marriage, girls trafficking, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, marital rape, domestic violence and dowry related violence (Upadhaya, 2014).

This study has attempted to understand the dowry practices among Madheshi people of Janakpur Sub-metro municipality from Dhanusha district. This study has focused mainly to see continuity as well as changes about marriage pattern and dowry practices in the selected municipality ward No-1. It is found good settlement of mixed castes from Madheshi group in this ward. Tarai today presents a distinct multi-cultural region or the "melting pot" in terms of settlement of various groups of people. Among the various Madheshi groups, the central Bureau of Statistics listed only 100 ethnic/ caste groups in 2001 and the same cultural groups are noted down as Madheshi in 2011 census as well. The 2011 census added

some more cultural groups in the Tarai such as Sarbaria, Amat, Natuwa, Dev and so on. In this context this study highly focused for Yadav and Teli/ Suri castes as well some Brahman, Koiree, Muslim and Dalit where practice of dowry has increased day by day.

In this article, I have argued that now a day, dowry has been found highly demanded by higher caste and within higher educated families. The impact of this dowry practice occurred many crimes that we can hear and see directly and indirectly in our society. Many brides have been facing discrimination and violence after marriage due to the dowry practice but the violence cases are not seen or heard directly. In many cases, brides have been murdered, tortured and discriminated by their husbands and their family members if good amount of dowry is not given during the marriage process. Dowry system is social phenomena and the social evils that still practiced in Nepal. In comparison, this evil system of dowry is highly practiced in the Tarai region than mountain and hilly areas. This dowry is related to both money and goods which are given during the marriage time to the bride for taking her husband's house after getting married. In this connection, Karki (2014) describes that, the practice of dowry being pained to grooms with commitment risk of extortion and dowry death, it is spread over in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and has begun in Nepal. Dowry, a social evil, exists in Nepali society that is now connected with the social status and prestige of the family. Even the well-educated families start saving up money for their daughter's marriage as soon as she is born.

Most of the work has been done on this issue but the problem is still remaining. State policy is not strictly followed and implemented. So by considering all these situation and problems, this research has focused on understanding of Madheshi community people about their understanding on dowry, its purposes, practices, its impacts and changing pattern of dowry through anthropologist perspectives. Also a lot of law has been formulated although the weak implementation still couldn't end the dowry practice. This study has focused on analysis and gaps between policies formulation and its implementation of the dowry system in Nepal. Furthermore, informants have been selected from higher castes as well lower castes to see the real practice of dowry. This study mainly focused to Madheshi people for those who belongs to Yadav, Teli&Suri( Sah) , Brahman, Muslim, Koiree (Mahato), Dhanuk( Mandal), Badhai( Sharma) and Dalit( Chamar&Dushad) . Really, this study found fruitful for gathering information on continuity and change in dowry practice in urban as well as rural areas within higher and lower caste and educated and uneducated family of Janakpur in Dhanusha district of Madhesh provision from Tarai.

### Objectives

The general objective of the study is to analyze the dowry related practices and changing patterns of it, especially in the case of women's violence in the Tarai region of Nepal. And the specific objectives are as follows;

- To assess the cultural practices and present situation of dowry practice within Madheshi people in the Tarai region of Nepal.

- To identify the major factors contributing to the continuity and change of dowry practices in Tarai region of Nepal.
- To analyze the impacts of dowry practice on bride, family and society in the context of violence against women.
- To analyze the people's perception about the removal of dowry practice. To examine and analyze Government policies and Laws related to dowry, their gaps the implementations in Madheshi community of Tarai.

In this study, Dowry continuation and change is dependent variable. Likewise; Patriarchy, Socio-cultural practice, Socio-Economic condition, Caste Hierarchy and Government policies & Laws are independent variables those are interlinked and dependent on each other. Finally, this study provides overall scenario on dowry related practices in Tarai within Madheshi community people. However, a few emphases have been also given to marriage pattern. My study focused to find out the major factors, impacts of dowry and peoples' perception for the removal of it. It has been also analyze that how the globalization, education and economy have made effect to change the practices of dowry and women suffered from different types of violence.

### Literature Review

This literature reviewed of literature on the subject that is theoretical perspectives on three different theories that is Gender perspective, Practice theory, Modernization theory and other relevant theoretical review in concept to understand, dowry, marriage, Legal provision and social-cultural context on dowry continuation and change. So the main concerned of this ethnography has based on these perspective that means both men and women representation and involvement in every aspect of life that is required during education, occupation, power authority, decision making power, mobility, freedom, opportunity , marriage , economic power , gender relationships, behaviors, identities and many other things that required in life. In my study areas it found that the role of patriarchy is most important and people found to giving priority and practice their previous concept and systems for doing marriage and dowry practice although some changes has come after people educated and has become modernized.

In the context of gender perspective on property rights, decision making power and find the gaps in policies implementation on women property rights that is very important for continuation of dowry and women violence. Economic power of women directly or indirectly supports to decrease dowry system and women violence. Feminist anthropologists have been arguing for the past quarter century, gender is not the same as sex. Although biological differences may exist among people, what makes them salient in any given situation will depend on cultural norms and expectations. Likewise; *Ortner and Harriet* write, " what gender is, what men and women are, what sorts of relations do or should obtain between them- all of these notions do not simply reflect or elaborate upon biological" givens" but are largely products of social and cultural process . According to *Michelle Rosaldo* , " Gender in all human groups must ,then be, understood in political and social terms, with references not to biological constraints but instead to local and specific forms of social relationship and ,in particular , of social inequality. According to *Joan Wallach Scott*,

“Gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes and gender is always “a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated (Laura, 2004: 50-51).

The study of marriage and dowry is significant in the sense that it provides a complete picture of the entire social set up of the community, its caste system, economic status, educational level, values, norms, ideals, and behavior pattern (Bhatia, 1974). According to Bhatia, as far as the selection of spouses is concerned, the very basic values have experienced a change. Previously, the lineage of the girl or the boy was emphasized the most, but in the present situation primary importance is attached to the economic status of the families concerned. Now more and more stress is on educated brides although the craze for handsome girls has not completely disappeared and the lineage of the boy and the girl is given secondary importance.

Practice theory has supported in my study to emphasize the power relationship between male and female in every aspects of life during decision making process. According to Foucault (1954-1984), Pastoral power is a form of power that needs to sacrifice individual life. Likewise; here (Ortner, 1984:159) described about the Practice approaches that attempts to see this making, whether in the past or in the present, whether in the creation of novelty or in the reproduction of the same old thing. In this context, this practice theory has supported in study to analysis the history about marriage pattern and dowry practices within higher and lower castes among both educated and uneducated family, where some priority has given to Senior citizen people (older people) views who were staying here for long time. Here I found that senior citizen people have much idea on my study issues and they want to share it freely. Furthermore, this research has analyzed linkages, gaps and interconnection within these three practice theory. It also analyze the historical cases and interpretation on dowry and marriage related issues that how the power shift continue within patriarchy and how power relation play the important role in society in aspects of decision making, controlling economic power in every aspects of life . It also identify the situation of violence cases (like mental torture, physical harassment, abusing, killing, threatening, suicide etc.) within the higher and lower castes that practiced due to not bringing enough dowry in marriage.

Katharine (2004), draw on a practice –theoretic framework and concepts from Gramsci and Bourdieu –habitus, doksa, symbolic violence, ideology and critical consciousness –as well as insights from feminist geography and anthropology on the cultural and spatial dimensions of oppression and resistance . This study has emphasize the gender ideology , women’s involvement in production or income generating activities , economic power , women meaningful participation in decision making, education, opportunity, mobility, freedom, economy and marriage pattern in Tarai community. Also found cultures has strongly rooted in society.

Modernization theory; is a theory that used to explain the process of modernization that a nation goes through as it transitions from a traditional society to a modern one. Khondker & Schuerkens (2014) presents theoretical approaches on social transformation, development and globalization, social transformation and

synthesizes various theoretical strands such as modernization, dependency and world-systems theories, and globalization and multiple modernity theories. This ethnography analysis on economic perspectives is states that, the exploitation and inequality factors between male as well female access and opportunity in ever aspects of life. In this study I have chosen modernization theory to study the socio-cultural transformation of the traditional healing system. Which, I found the role of modernization theory is important in cultural transformation for Tarai from Dhanusha district.

Abdollahian et.al (2012) deal with the relationship between economic development, cultural change, and political liberalization is often explored through the lens of classic modernization theory. But they has not looked the other factor for cultural change and transformation such as intervention of modern technology, process of globalization, urbanization and education and awareness. So on those are try to covered in my study and found that its really difficult and not so easy to change the culture of any society.

Liechty (2008) states that, the middle-class culture is hanging between “high and Low” within the concept of “Suitability and Necessity” through modernization culture. This modernization theory support for help this study to find out the gaps and linkage between suitability and necessity within higher and lower castes in marriage and dowry practice. Study has also analyzed that how and why the dowry practices. Either it is necessity or suitability or continuity for “Ijjat”and prestige. It has found that people of my study areas think that it is very necessary to give their daughter as much as can they do for the betterment of their daughter and also they need to survive and stay in society. So it's necessary to support daughter anyhow and how much parents can do.

### **Dowry Means**

According to informants of my study areas, Dowry is a form of marriage, other consumable or non-consumable goods given by bride to groom party by forcefully or internal understanding for showing prestige in society and it becomes like a competition. Dowry system means the money which is taken before marriage from bride parents just like; First, installment during engagement (Cheka) that is before marriage and rest of the installment during marriage day at the time of Tilak. Finally, it may be known as whole things that expenses done for daughter's happiness during marriage is dowry that should be end. (Yadav, 2017).

Das (2008) says that dowry is a compulsion and as such a curse for women dignity and a great problem in the Mithila region. Apart from beauty, a Maithil girl needs a huge dowry to get a suitable bridegroom. Girls, whose parents cannot fulfill the greed of in-laws for "more" Tilak have to bear "more" physical and mental torture. If a bride’s guardian is not in a position to pay dowry in cash and kind, he has to manage it anyway either by taking loan or by disposing his land or other property. Dowry system is mainly in Hindu religion. It is due to religious beliefs, socio-cultural practices and also due to education without consciousness. It was initiated as a gift of love from natal side to brides, later it had taken the form of demand for dowry.

Reshma and Ramegowda (2013), Dowry or Dahej is the payment in cash or/ kind by the bride's family to bridegroom's family along with the giving away of the bride (called Kanyadan) in Indian marriage. Kanyadan is an important part of Hindu marital rites. Kanya means daughter and dan means gift. Traditionally dowry is meant to be a gift.

Karki (2014), Dowry is the money, goods or estate that bride brings to groom home in her marriage. It was designed to provide newlyweds security and basic needs but its meaning has changed. Dowry is now can be defined as forced financial and material arrangement to be given by the parents of the bride to the parents of the groom as an essential condition of the marriage. It is one of the social evil but still practiced in our society as a culture.

### Prevalence of Dowry

Dowry system in Indian marriage can be called the commercial aspect of marriage. The practice of giving dowry was very common as among all people of all nations. Dowry system in India was prevalent since the verdict period. Originally, the purpose of dowry was to provide "seed money" or property for the establishment of a new household, to help a husband feed and protect his family and to give the wife and children some support if they die.

Siwan (2007) notes that, the dowry system dates back at least to the ancient Greek city-states (800 to 300 BCE) and to the Romans by around 200 BCE. The Greco-Roman institution of dowry was then eclipsed for a time as the Germanic observance of bride price became prevalent throughout much of Europe, but dowry was widely reinstated in the late middle Ages. In medieval Western Europe and later, dowries were common practice among most, if not all, social and economic groups. Since dowry was required under Roman law, dowries were also transferred in many parts of the Byzantine Empire until its fall to the Ottomans in the fifteenth century (*Patlagaen, 1996*). Dowry payments were prevalent in seventeenth and eighteenth century Mexico and Brazil, where Spanish and Portuguese family law governed colonial marriages until those countries gained their independence (*Nazarri, 1991; Lavrin and Couturier, 1979*). In contemporary times, India's widespread dowry payments have been extensively documented. Dowries have long been a custom in India and are presently an almost universal phenomenon. Comparatively little research has explored marriage transfers in the rest of south Asia, though several studies point to dowry payments now occurring in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka and also in Nepal. There is abnormal condition of domestic violence against woman in Nepal and all over the world. Nepal consists of diverse ecological, ethnic, cultural and multi-language societies; in general, our country is predominantly a Hindu country, where it has its own cultural practice and value regarding the states of women and men. The status of men and women are unequal. Women are considered as second – class citizens in this patriarchal society. Thus most of the families are men headed and treat the women as commodities or child producing machines. Women are affected disproportionately in different ways than men. In addition, the combination of poverty and gender discrimination results on many unpleasant problems in their own family. Our cultures are patriarchal in nature. Thus, in the socialization process while women are taught to be non –

aggressive, submissive, soft spoken and timid. Men on the other hand are taught aggression, violence and boldness. In addition, Nepali law does not address domestic violence, despite its high prevalence in all sector of the society. Generally speaking, domestic violence is regarded as family business, which does not require intervention of law. Hence many cases remain unreported and it will continue to remain behind closed doors as long as the society continues to regard domestic violence as normal, or to dismiss it as a private matter. Then women continue to suffer gross violations of human right within their homes. Violence can result in injury to victims, which also bears the cost of seeking medical treatment, the inability to supplement family income due to loss of productivity and employment. It continues to destroy families and affects society at large. So, the issue of domestic violence needs to be a mainstreamed in the government policies and a program with high priority.

Lena (2000) notes that, dowry payment in India in the last five decades is rising. Generally dowry is a concept used mainly by economists. The economists wrote: Boys inherit the family name and land and provide an old age insurance policy. Girls join their husband's families and need dowries. Becker, economists have modeled dowry as negative bride price pertains to the net transfer while the common usage of the term pertains to the gross transfer. Historically, dowry has been high caste (class) phenomenon. The root problems of dowry system is occur early child marriage in Terai region. According to anthropologists, Dowry refers to the gross assets a bride brings in marriage. However, according to Becker and economists, dowry refers to the net payment: the bride-side's contribution minus the groom side's payments. (Lena, 2000: 8 -14).

Pamita (2000) says that the dowry-related violence is the very good irony for 21st century. In the year 2005, a total of 24 incidences of dowry were published. The age of the victims of dowry ranges from 15-19 to 25-29 age groups. Almost all incidences of dowry (19 out of 24) are from Tarai castes and 5 are from Brahmin, it indicates that dowry system may be most prevalent in Tarai castes than Hill castes ethnicity.

### Social and Religious Context of Marriage

According to Afran Rahman Chaudhary (1998), marriage is one of the most important events in the life course of Indian men and women, marking the transition to adulthood. It is considered as a sacramental union in the Hindu faith and is almost universal both for men and women in all over India. According to Hindu faith "one I incomplete and considered unholy if they do not marry" (*Prakasa, 1982. Cited in Afran 1998:14*).

Yadav (2007) study shows that the legal age for marriage is 18 for females and 21 for males in India. In context of Nepal, marriage is an important indicator of family life. Marriage is almost universal for both male and females in Nepal. The MulukiAin (1963) fixed the legal age at marriage for girls at 16 and made polygamy and child marriage illegal. A girl can marry after the age of 16 years with the consent of her parents or guardians and at 18 years she can marry without their consent. The corresponding ages for men are 18 and 21 years. In South Asia marriage is an indicator for female to be a mother. To continue the new generation, marriage is compulsory socio-metric scale (Yadav, 2007: 1).

Katherine (2004) says that in Nepal, the Newars of Sankhu, consider dowry is unequivocally valued as “women’s own property” and thus contradicts the ideology of women’s dependence embedded in patrilineal patterns of inheritance (Angsa). Invited guests must contribute to the bride’s dowry, at scale specified by the type of invitation received, in the form of sweets, breads, Lakhamari. Throughout the feast the bride sits surrounded by close family members receiving the dowry gift—the brass water urns, pressure cookers, steel pots, silver plates, copper vessels, brass utensils—that tower behind her in a prominent display of the wealth her family has leveraged through its wide social networks. Once in her marital home a woman’s dowry enjoys a special status as her exclusive private property. (Katherine, 2004: 157).

### Legal Provision Regarding Dowry

Nepal has already formulated legal provision regarding dowry although weak implementation not fully forbidden the dowry practice in society. Regarding this, Interim constitution of Nepal (2007) has ensured some fundamental rights of people. According to obligations, directive principles and policies stated on; Article 20(1) states no discrimination of any kind shall be made against women by virtue sex. Article 20(2) states every woman shall have the right to reproductive health and reproduction. Article 20(3) states no woman shall be subjected to physical, mental or any kind of violence; and such act shall be by law. Article 20(4) states sons and daughters shall have the equal right to ancestral property. (Karki, 2004: 13).

The policies formulation on dowry mentioned in Law (Bidheyak) that posted on date-2016-4-17 by Mahila kahabar. The mentioned policies are; Proposed to stop dowry practice, 3 years punishment for taking dowry and 5 years for demanding dowry, 5 years punishment in case of giving and receiving dowry and 50 thousands cash (in case of torture; by biting or violence), 3 years punishment and 30 thousand cash (in case of taking dowry before conducting marriage), 3 years punishment and 30 thousands cash (in case of conducting more than one marriage, that is Bahoobibah), one year punishment and ten thousands cash (in case of child marriage supporter and this type of marriage might be cancelled). (<http://mahilakhabar.com/?p=13402#sthash.3aPUvvEt.dpuf>).

### Social –Cultural Context on Dowry Continuation and Change

Dowry refers to “the property, money, ornaments or any other form of wealth which a man or his family receives from his wife or her family at the time of marriage. Dowry is both a practice and a problem with Indian marriage. (Haveripeth, 2013; Cited in Singh 2013:41).

Gramsci ideas, approaches and concepts focused on writing about culture and given importance on language to understand the culture better. According to Gramsci, culture is a concept of socialization, conception of the world, thought of practical action, culture is a product of history, product of history not a culture, collection will and historical produce to rescue. Gramsci, also described about the importance of power that how domination practice in class and power relationship. His main concern was culture change and thinking for more equitable where he also mentioned about the problem of structure and super-structure. He makes the distinction

between “class-in-itself” and “class-as itself” shows the relationship between “state” and “civil society”. Gramsci, writes that “the state is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules. Hegemony defined as consent organized by the organizations of civil society as opposed to the state with its apparatus of coercive power (Crehan, 2002). Crehan, ideas has supported to analysis the power relationship between men and women where patriarchy is the main rooted in Tarai and study also emphasized on how power is generated through socio-culturally, political and by government that has try to find out the gaps on policies formulation and implementation.

Foucault (1954-1984), analyzes the power relationships and its shift. Foucault analysis about *Discipline and punish, The Birth of the prison, really* gives very good understanding that is still presence in Tarai community in some way. My claim is here that, In Tarai community still fully power controlling is with men and women are oppressed and bond to spend her whole life in male control since birth and living like a prison life. Women are still spending her life without any freedom and people like them who spend their life in prison. Really Foucault views has supported to analyze the situation on power relation within men and women, individual and groups, civil society and state where women can’t do anything from her choice. It's really very good linkage with policy system that demand new policy and system that we can see in *Foucault (1977)*. This really supported to analyze on impact of dowry and gaps for government policies implementation.

Foucault (1978). The history of the sexuality shows the four rules for power relations; that is between knowledge and power that discourse on ideas of morality, sexuality, marriage, institutions, practices of values and how power works? This relationship shows that how power is working from ground? His main concern was on; techniques and technology of power. (*Foucault 1978: 88 and 139*). Regarding this study has analyzed the power relations and decision making power has been how changing after the higher education and knowledge incensement now a days. My concern is here that, study also focused to link the changes that comes after higher education and modernization in Tarai in context of marriage and dowry practice.

Bourdieu (1977), described about the term “Doxa” that is accepted as a natural and self-evident part of the social order. Gender differentials in bargaining power are likely to affect. (Agrawal, 2008: 58). Study has analyzed the situation and way of bargaining during the marriage on dowry that how much and what should be given and taken by pressure.

Appadurai (1996), shows the relationship between cultural dimension of globalization and the effect of migration. This migration cultural increase shifted in the global cultural order, created by cinema, television and video technology. This ethnography has analyzed the factors of shifts and change after migration on socially, economically, politically and religiously. Study has also linkage the important features of consumption (food habit), fashion design and pleasure that directly demand of high dowry as per economic perspectives.

Liechty (2008), Suitably Modern conceptualizes the consumer of culture, mass media and youth culture in Kathmandu through both theoretical and ethnographic perspectives. He illustrated about “globalization” that through growing network it make linkage class based projects cultural production around the world. Here the cultural practices plays in the cultural production of space, especially in modern, urban settings. This ethnography has also analyzed the changing pattern of dowry and analysis the role played by youth who migrated and mobilized in foreign country and s support for bringing change.

Reviewed literature showed that every day dowry system is becoming a serious problem. Mostly researched phenomena are limited to dowry system is a social evil. However, I found the gap about what actually going on, is it increasing or decreasing? I observed that parents are spending huge amount during marriage from bride side as well bridegroom family for maintaining their prestige and showing high status. So I claim here that dowry has become for saving prestige, competition and showing their high status in their society. In case of not giving sufficient dowry many violence incident occurred and many bride have reached to death.

## Methodology

This research has examined the continuity and change regarding dowry practices and somehow marriage patterns at Janakpur Sub-metro Municipality from Dhanusha district. In fact, a large number of mixed community and castes lives in different ward of Janakpur, although only ward Number-1; selected from Janakpur Sub-metro Municipality.

This research article is based fully on ethnographic approach with the primary goal of collecting primary data in the field through using Participant observation, Key informant interviews, case study and Focus group discussion for collecting qualitative information. Here, Participants observation plays a very important role for collective data. Although few information collected through quantitative on informant's family background that includes; family structure, education, economic condition, marital status and age factors. Secondary data were also collected from different website, previous research study, using internet, like minded organization and dowry related violence cases from Medias, published and unpublished news. Old historical information has also gathered from senior citizen community people through simple talking in shops and meeting them near their house regarding marriage and dowry practices and changing scenario.

I selected this area because it found mixed castes settlement in Janakpur from higher as well lower caste both from rural and urban area those who have different level of education and living for different purpose like; education, job, business, work opportunity etc. According to my prior experience the dowry a case, violence cases and discrimination against women has found increased in everyday practices.

This study is followed by purposive sample. The sample for this study was 25 currently from both male and female aged between 20 to 60 years age group. So all the 25 dowry cases have been collected that focused on both cases that dowry given, also not given and some of the violence cases. These information have been

collected through women development offices, women activists, NGOs , WOREC Nepal, Lawyers, Media person, Political leaders, school teachers, Child club, parents, Senior citizen people, married women, students, victims, local people who belongs from higher and lower castes belonging to both educated and uneducated family .

This study has focused on both Epistemology and Ontology. Epistemology, with positivism and constructivism has used for the development of knowledge, where focused information on social-construction of patriarchy and success positive cases on dowry practices within the society. Likewise; Ontology, focuses of the study is subjectivism and objectivism for information gathering and documentation through direct participation in marriage events within such community. The study has adopt a value under approach because for liberation of women is the ultimate goal of the study. Axiology of the study is value-laden.

I participated in marriage ceremony to see the reality of giving and taking system of dowry. Where I found, Participant observation is very useful for real collection of data. During the field work I used a final design questionnaire to collect detail information through different stakeholders and key informants. Those Key informants for this study were local community people, women activist, political leaders, Medias person, students, child club members, school teachers, NGOs activist and also with some of the parents, son, daughter, daughter –in-law, from both higher and lower caste and higher educated and lower educated people. All the informants were male and female both married as well unmarried. All these information support my study to analysis about dowry practice, its main causes, impact of it and highly demand for the removal of this dowry practices from Tarai. In this study I have prepared most relevant case studies where focused to gather real information on dowry related cases and due to keeping secrecy name has changed. 5 violence cases were carried out from published, unpublished and through getting information from locally people. Focus group discussion has done with school teachers, School students those were both boys and Girls from class 8-10.

This study has make re-visit to ensure internal validity of this research by triangulation through repeated visit observation during the marriage ceremony for perspective of getting truth information rather just giving general information. I observed that people saying one thing and the reality is different regarding dowry practice. Here, my argument is that dowry is highly practice within higher caste and higher educated people as well couple that people also found giving continuity of their culture. Finally, all the information collected through design questionnaire and final report prepared through analysis it and getting feedback from different expert of concern area.

## Findings

As a native scholar, I studied about dowry practices within Madheshi community in Janakpur Sum-metro Municipality Ward No.1 that relies on ethnographic research design that highly focused to find out about the dowry practices within both higher and lower caste and both educated and uneducated family. All together 25 key informants interviewed on structured questionnaire , Focus group discussion and creating case study that followed by individual opinion of informants about dowry

practices and incorporated here their voice and opinion that dowry should be continue or it may be removed? Where found majority of removing it although found highly practiced in study area.

Dowry system is a burning problem in the South Asian countries. In Nepal, dowry practice is more prevalent in the Tarai region in the border areas between Nepal and India. The advancements in new technology have brought a remarkable change into the life of people. Unfortunately, Nepalese men and women have compelled to face many problems related to dowry. During my study, a total 25 key informants were selected from different age groups starting by age 20 and above 60 years. Informants are both male -11(44%) & female-14(56%), those are illiterate, literate and having higher education among different mixed castes like; Yadav, Sharma(Badhahi), Muslim, Suri(Sah), Teli, Brahman, Kushwaha, Baniya, Dhanuk, Mandal, Rajput, Tharu, Mahato(Kooree) and others as well who found living together for different purposes either their own home or in rent. In this study, highly informants interviewed from 41-50 years (that is 32%) because study highlighted to collect detail information through married couple. All interviewed informants found to be working as a House worker, Teachers, Business man, Social worker, Journalist, Advocate, in Government job, Students and in different NGOs / INGOs, respectively. Furthermore, females have been highly involved (32%) in household work. Similarly, 32% were busy in different development sectors like; NGOs, teachers, government agencies, political leaders and business work, mostly those were male.

This research has analyzed the view of mixed castes from Tarai on situation, some changes and continuity on dowry practices. My argument in study is that dowry practice is increasing day by day in Tarai although it is found in hidden form. But the dowry practice is still prevalent due to different purposes; some demand for getting all the expenses done for the sons for his higher education, for doing further business of son and longtime settlement for newly married couple. Also they have tried to take out all the expenses done during the daughter's marriage those who have more than 3-4 daughters and they feel that daughters are burden for parents. One of the unmarried girls says and request that please don't feel and accept daughter like a burden because we daughters are also most important members of family. Without daughters no world, country and our society and all are in dark.

It was found that total 25 informants reported that they got arranged marriage in the past, however, now also cent percent arrange marriage but practice has been changed that seven informants reported that present marriage that are some mixed which are love and arranged marriage. It means if they have fell in love, and then they were arranged and got married. It shows that in Tarai arrange marriage has been still mostly practicing and slowly parents have started to accept love marriage. In this situation parents are in pressure to accept it because both son and daughters have been sent for higher education and educated children are forcing to parents for accepting love marriage as well arranged marriage.

Dowry practices has been change into another forms such as Tilak, living goods, necessary for living and also right of the property. Almost all informants have supported that amount, cash, gold,

ornaments, clothes, many other materials like (household utensils, valuable things, furniture, Guest expenses etc.) are the forms of dowry and it has taken or given in both way directly or indirectly. Interesting, One informant says that it is not a social system but it is crime (Kupratha Ho) where many women are still suffering from different violence due to dowry practice. This crime should be end immediate. Dowry system is not new, it has been practiced since a long time but now a days it has been found like pressure to parents and very expensive to marry daughter. Dowry system can understand as a ; women murder, crime, violence, Tanasahi, Karchamp, pressured, Kupratha and booking Cota through installment wise payment system for marriage successful.

Dowry practice has found to be highly increasing day by day in Tarai for keeping social status and prestige. More than 40-50 lakhs has been found expenses in my study area but the voice is same like "We have not given nor taken dowry in marriage of son and daughter. Once it was really very difficult to find out the situation. I present in this type of two marriage ceremony and found not less than 40-50 lakhs expenses done. So now the situation is different that's why parents have been found doing more and more expenses for the happiness of their daughters."

Women development officer says that government should be come first and need to follow strictly their rules regarding marriage and dowry system. Also school students have shown their majority and support. A student of child club has found good role playing to stop child marriage.

A majority of the men and women opined that the initiative for the abolition of the dowry practice should be taken by the groom's side. The advocates of such a view-point were of a low educational status but were spread over all age groups and all income groups in both service and business classes of the community. Those who favored initiative from both, the girl's and the boy's side, were educated belonging to middle income groups. There were a few informants who favored initiative from the girl's side and these were of the opinion that if the girl's party decides not to give any dowry even if the girl has to remain a spinster throughout her life, then only can the evil of dowry be removed from the community. There was still another group who favored that none of the parties should take the initiative for getting the dowry system abolished- in other words, they demand retention of the dowry system as it is present in the Tarai community today.

Due to the dowry practice women has been found suffering from different type of violence, torture, mentally and physically illness, murdered, suicide, beating, burning and emotional harassment. All the people want dowry practice should be end anyhow as soon as possible so the life of daughter will be save. So finally, I found there is not fixed demand, it depends on peoples attitude and somehow to save their prestige in society. If we want we can end dowry system that should be better to start self. So highly voice raised for removing of this dowry practice.

### **Conclusion**

This research shows that dowry is still prevailing and highly practiced in Tarai. It's very critical situation of Tarai due to dowry practices that means (Dar LagdoAwastha cha). This study has not cover all the areas of Madhesh provision and in Dhanusha district

that need to more study in this area because this information is from ward No-1 Janakpur. Although the scenery is almost similar in other wards of Janakpur and other district of Tarai Madhesh.

In study areas, I found culture is very strong that people can't escape from it easily. Social-culture has found deeply rooted in Tarai. Although some positive changes has been seen during the COVID that is 36 Young girls and 36 young boys Married without taking dowry (Purnaropma Adarsh Bibah). This marriage happened during BibahPanchami that done by Manimandap in JanakiMandir and economic support done by most of the Madwari people and some business man. So I think its better way to mobilize youths, community people, political leaders and development workers like NGOs. It's necessary to more focused study in whole Tarai area so that real picture can come and that will be easy to work.

Government rules and regulation are not found strongly formulated and those Ain are in only paper. It has been not found effective implementation and monitoring. Rich people and criminals have situation of easy escape modality. So that women are badly suffered to death and murdered. Society peoples knows the situation and see the occurred cases but it is difficult to give punishment and the people found to afraid of giving real news. So I think that government should make strong and quality rules & regulation and it should be highly practiced and criminal should be punished immediate.

The punishment system is very weak from the beginning. I observed people directly and indirectly supporting for practice of dowry. In my observation now it demanded by pressure although groom parents demand, bride parents in situation of full filling the needy items for their daughter happiness. I highly recommend for strong rules from government side and effective implementation of it.

Finally, I recommend for further study in all ward of Janakpur and Dhanusha district in both urban areas and rural areas of Tarai . My study shows that highly practice of dowry is in Janakpur within Madheshi community of higher caste and even in higher educated family although higher educated son and daughters have played important role in their family for not demanding. So it need to still focus on girl's education so that they can take further strong steps for their better future. It's very difficult to leave culture that found strongly followed in society although it is possible to decrease some more violence cases by changing in people's attitude towards dowry supporting and doing well behaved with brides. So I highly recommend to motivate and mobilize youths and it can be started by each own family especially from groom families for not taking and supporting dowry practices.

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