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## Dowry System in Bangladesh: A Socio- Legal Perspective

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### **Abstract:**

*Bangladesh suffers some evil culture and superstitions. Dowry system is one of the worst evil cultures in the society. It has been an ancient and widespread practice, as it is found and practiced almost all class of people irrespective of religious belief and economic and social condition. Though the government from time to time enacted laws for elimination of dowry practice, still it persists and found in the very whole texture of the society. There is a gap between practice and legal sanctions. The study in the beginning focuses on the socio- legal factors which constantly inspire dowry practice in Bangladesh and then finds out the loopholes of existing legal sanctions. The write up finally comes up with some recommendations of rethinking the existing legal sanctions to fight this evil.*

**Keywords:** Dowry, Dowry practice, Evil, Women, Violence

### **1. Introduction**

The practice of dowry is still triggering the violence against women despite harder sanctions imposed by State laws, and the rates of incidents are only increasing. Violence against women, the most pervasive human rights violation, regardless of any distinction as to geography, culture or wealth, is a great concern for any society (BNWLA, 2003). Bangladesh is no exception to this. At present violence against women has been increased in an alarming rate and one of the most common violence is for dowry demands. In recent years, dowry levels have risen to previously unforeseen levels (Suran Luciana, Amin Sajeda, Haq Lopita, Chowdhury Kabita, 2004). Although dowry demand is illegal under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000(amended in 2003) and the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980,(hereinafter referred as DPA ), the practice still persists as a custom, especially in the rural areas of Bangladesh. As a consequence of unpaid dowry, women are tortured by their husbands and in-laws, burnt by acid, or even murdered (BNWLA, 2004).

Despite the law against dowry, implemented 31 years ago, and the work of NGOs on women rights, legal awareness, the discussion of the consequences and disadvantages of dowry, it persists and the number of people practicing even increases (Götting Katharina, 2009).

The question is why does dowry still persist?

This write up attempts to address the various socio legal factors which positively contributes towards this evil practice. Focusing on those reasons the research study comes up with analyzing existing legal provisions and to suggest positive changes to these legal provisions.

### **2. Dowry- A Clarifying Outline**

There is a considerable debate what constitutes dowry in its various forms. The confusion is more acute as in the societal context dowry is differently defined than in anti-dowry law (Dr. Monsoor Taslima, 2003).

Generally a dowry is the money, goods, or estate that a woman brings forth to the marriage. It contrasts with bride price, which is paid to the bride's parents, and dower, which is property settled on the bride herself by the groom at the time of marriage (Khan Rahman Saira, 2001).

While dower (Bangla: *denmahour*) identifies the giving of property or money from the bridegroom or his family to the bride or her family, dowry is- a certain form of gift transferred on the occasion of a marriage, whereas the gift from the father of the bride respectively her kinship is changing hands to the kinship of the bridegroom or typically to the married couple themselves. According to Menski in literature on dowry in South Asia and Bangladesh one can distinguish three types of dowry: The first is dowry in form of presents like furniture, household goods, jewellery etc. which are given to the daughter as an investment to the marriage, their use is for the new household, but they are meant to stay in the brides possession. The second type of dowry, most always refers to a large investment or present, which has the purpose to demonstrate the wealth and status of the bride's family. The third and most

problematic type of dowry refers to the case when the amount and the sort of gifts are decided by the husband and not if but rather that it will be demanded "either as a condition for the marriage itself, or at a later stage" (Götting Katharina, 2009).

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980 in section 2 defines dowry as any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly-

- by one party to a marriage to the other party to the marriage; or
- by the parents of either party to a marriage or by any other person to either party to the marriage or to any other person; at the time of marriage or at any time before or after the marriage as consideration for the marriage of the said parties. And in the explanation to this section it has been made clear that any presents made at the time of a marriage by any person other than a party to the marriage to either party to the marriage in the form of any articles the value of which does not exceed five hundred taka, shall not be deemed to be dowry within the meaning of this section (DPA, 1980). Again the Prevention of Repression Against Women and Children (Amendment) Act, 2003 defines 'dowry' as money, goods or any property which has been given or agreed to be given to the bride-groom or his father or mother or any person on his behalf, directly or indirectly, at the time of marriage or before marriage or at any time after marriage in condition with the smooth continuation of marital life or as a consideration given by the side of the bride and the money, goods or property which has been demanded from the bride or her father or mother or any person on her behalf, by the bride-groom or his father or mother or any other person on his behalf as the above mentioned condition or consideration.

From these two definitions it is clear that dowry is a wide term including money, goods or any property. In the social context of Bangladesh dowry includes cash money, jewelries, furniture, all types of house hold materials, car, and land, flat, even educational expenses of the bride-groom for higher education and expenses necessary for economic migration. Most importantly the definition of dowry is wide enough to include any such transfer made to the groom or his family either voluntarily or on demand; and it will be considered as dowry if it is given before or at the time of the marriage or after marriage.

### 3. Dowry Practice in Bangladesh: A Social Evil Transformed As a Well Established Custom

Dowry system is neither uncommon nor a recent phenomenon in Bangladesh. This evil culture has been in practice since ancient period. History shows that, the most ancient institute of marriage in Vedic period was associated with 'Kanyadhana' which was gifts to virgin bride and, 'Varadakshina' 'Stridhana' were voluntary gifts given by the bride's father to the groom, and voluntary gifts given by the relatives and others to bride respectively. In all, these were contributions to the groom and his family from the bride's side. It seems that the dowry system, as it practiced today was unknown in early period (Nithya N.R, 2013). This unknown and willing practice of ancient period which was mostly prevalent in wealthier families now unfortunately transformed into the greed of dowry and struck to most ordinary families and has become an unspoken demand for marriages (Khan Rahman Saira, 2001).

Dowry system emerged mainly in Hindu community. As under Hindu law, female issues do not inherit anything, they were given every possible valuable thing as marriage gifts to secure their future. Following the foot step of Hindu community, the Muslims as well started the practice of giving dowry to their daughter, sometimes as a token of affection or sometimes as a means of showing social status. Whatever may be the reason, the unpleasant truth is that this Hindu religious practice becomes a common social custom for all, irrespective of their religious belief. Though, from the very beginning it was a voluntary practice without any coercive overtones, in the course of time, the voluntary element in dowry has disappeared and the coercive element has crept in. It has taken deep roots not only in the marriage ceremony but also post-marital relationship.

There are some common debates regarding the practice of dowry. Some argue that dowry system is prevalent only in a particular segment of our society; that is, the illiterate marginal section. But unfortunately, they ignore the fact that the well-off educated section of the society contributes to the problem same way. The Marginal class takes dowry as a means of earning some cash; or sometimes their illiteracy makes them unaware of the evil character of dowry. On the other hand, the elite group also provide dowry at the time of marriage, though they name it as 'marriage gifts'. As they offer it willingly, they are unwilling to consider it as dowry and thereby contribute deliberately in its persistence. Indeed, the elite class raised the level of dowry to such ridiculous stage that the marginal classes are forced to accept and continue this unhealthy and illegal practice at any cost. Dowry system continues to be a social epidemic in Bangladesh. It is so deeply ingrained in our social texture that it is getting its acceptance as a rigid social custom. A good number of arguments are found to justify the dowry system. Of them, one argument is that it is a fine method of setting up an establishment for the newlyweds (A. Farouk Sharmeen, 2005). Some arguments are found on the point that since the bride's parents are quite choosy about the groom's income, qualifications and his property, why shouldn't the groom get a price for what he has to offer? They think that marriage is a girls' life insurance and so the dowry is the premium. Besides, there is a mindset among some people that a girl carrying with her a respectable dowry feels confident while entering her in-law's house while a girl without dowry feels uneasy and apprehensive (Mst. Khatun Taslima, Farzana Rahman Khandaker, 2012). In addition to these philosophical factors, people's lack of knowledge about the law, poor education and absence of social awareness, the discriminatory socio-cultural attitudes rooted in the system and in the public mindset in general, are the key factors which allow dowry system to be continued as an established custom.

### 4. Calculating the Socio Legal Factors Which Contributed For Dowry Practice in Bangladesh

Dowry was legally banned by the Dowry Prohibition Act 1980. But there is no noticeable change in the dowry practice since the enactment of the law. According to Dr. Saira Rahaman Khan, there has been no decrease in the trend, despite the fact that there is a Dowry Prohibition Act in place and several large NGOs and government initiatives to stop violence against women. She explains that the factors that are conducive to the continuation of dowry-related violence in Bangladesh are-lack of implementation of laws, lack of

political will of the government, the perception of domestic violence as a social matter, ingrained 'traditions,' and especially the overall corruption that directly and indirectly influences all of the above (Ariyathilaka Ruwanthika Kaushalya, 2005). There are number of problems in the implementation of the laws. Firstly, many people especially women do not know much about the laws and about the ways to enforce them. The Govt. is often criticized for not applying the DPA rigorously (Götting Katharina, 2009). Though NGOs have been making campaigns about laws relating to dowry and demerits of dowry for decades, till date, they did not succeed in creating active awareness regarding the laws and their enforcement mechanisms among the mass people. As the Government is not taking adequate initiatives to implement the laws adequately, people just do not take it importantly, because their practical life demands something else. Many parents even consider the laws prohibiting dowry payments as vague threats compared to the immediate and practical issue of having unmarried daughters on their hands. Thus the lack of power or even the lack of will to proactively enforce the DPA is one – though not the only – of the major reasons why this law did not effectively reduce the practice of dowry (Götting Katharina, 2009).

Secondly, unwillingness of people to take resort to legal actions pose a serious impediment in the way of implementation of the law; especially for women as they are reluctant to go to the court because they run the risk of not being welcomed again or even being abused by her family-in-law. Thus to file a charge on dowry can be problematic for women, since they have to fear of being aborted by her family any more. Thirdly, poor people do not go to court because they cannot afford the expenses involved in legal actions e.g. – fees of lawyers, court fees, inevitable expense of speed-moneys to different persons in different stages of the process etc. And most importantly, people do not go to the court as they have no faith in the existing judicial system because of the corruption of governmental employees, local government and judicial institutions. Again criminalization of both the parties involved in dowry practice also discourages people giving dowry to take resort to legal actions. Apart from the aforementioned difficulties of implementation of DPA, there are a number of social and economic, cultural and religious factors which are responsible for such continuous persistence of dowry. In this connection, following factors are mention worthy-

#### *4.1. Women Are Considered As Burden*

Most women of our society are economically dependent on their relatives. As long as a female remains with her paternal family, she is maintained by her father or brother. After marriage, husband has to bear the living costs of her and her children as well. For this reason women are considered as a liability. People who take dowry believe that it is their right because they are taking on someone else's liability on their shoulders, therefore they are entitled to this as a right and people who give dowry feel that they need to pay compensation for passing on their liability to someone else. At the heart of this is the feeling that women are not breadwinners. Though many women are becoming earning members nowadays, the ratio of working women and wage-earning women is not enough to make an impact in the custom of practice of dowry. Kishwar also argues that the decrease in the economic role of women is accountable for the dowry practice we find in South Asia today. White challenges theories like this by arguing that at the same time as dowry increases, the rate of women in paid labour increases. Whereas rice husking is no longer an important source for female earning, the garment industry has opened up a new and large arena for female employment. Still, it can be argued that, not the economic role of women but the social construction of treating women as dependants inspires the dowry practice (Cecilie Geirbo Hanne, Imam Nuzhat, 2006).

#### *4.2. Orthodox Thinking*

According to Katharina Götting, the idea of 'purity of girls' as subsisting in Bangladesh is one of the key reasons of dowry practice. As found in her field work, relation between boy and girl without marriage is considered as illegal and such type of contact results in a degradation of the girl's and her family's reputation.

Village people think that one solution for such problem is to give their daughters into marriage to prevent them from losing their 'social honour'.

This link of the 'social honour' of the females and their families to them being married is also related to dowry. People frequently argue that they have to pay dowry because otherwise they will not be able to get their daughters married off (Götting Katharina, 2009). Failure to get one's daughter married is a source of shame in our society. There are popular beliefs about grave consequences of this kind of failure, among them that parents who die before their daughters are married will burn in their graves until their marriages take place (Cecilie Geirbo Hanne, Imam Nuzhat, 2006). For these reasons people marry off their daughters even in exchange of dowry.

#### *4.3. Unproductive Role of Wife*

The rapidly spread of dowry in the mid-century emerged simultaneously with the increasing importance of wage-labour, which usually is done by men (Götting Katharina, 2009). On the other hand, women secure the base of the preservation of their husband's manpower and his working ability. They do the domestic work, raise the children and teach them, how to adapt into the prevalent social structures and customs. But women's such unpaid labour is generally considered as valueless (Mahbubur Rahman Muhammad, 2011). Thus the valuation of the work of women and men modified: women now have to bring something into their marriage, to compensate their 'worthless' work, since it does not produce any income (besides that women most often do not inherit). This reflects existing gender hierarchies, in which the value of male siblings is highlighted for the maintenance of a family and the women hold an inferior position (Sharmeen A. Farouk, 2005).

#### 4.4. Social Security

The idea of social security as it is prevailing in our society is also responsible for the persistence of dowry. If there is some unhappiness and quarrel happen within two families, because of non- payment of dowry and the wife or her father fails to pay dowry, she has to get back to her father's house. To be sent to the parent's house can result in divorce or separation, which leads to being socially disregarded by her environment. Being separated or divorced a woman losses her guardian and her bread-winner, which can result in impoverishment for her. Women in this country cannot easily get a job as they would have to leave the private sphere to do so, which is not allowed to them according to the ideology of *purdah*. It is also quite impossible for a woman to find a new husband as she is not fulfilling the ideal of purity any more (Mst. Sultana Jubida, 2005). Again, women victim of violence for dowry demands, in majority cases, do not complain to the police because when her complaint reaches her husband's ears, all hell might break loose on her life. If a wife is thrown out of her house by her husband, and she has no income or education, she has no option but to stay with her father. This becomes not only a matter of financial strain but also sometimes a matter of shame for her father's family. (Ariyathilaka Ruwanthika Kaushayla, 2006) For these reasons, the wife and her parents family fulfils dowry demands of the husband at any cost and thus dowry prevails.

#### 4.5. Unemployment and Poverty

Poverty and rising unemployment among young male in rural areas in Bangladesh has a close relation with the institution of dowry. Marriage and dowry are seen as a source of earning by them. At one time, parents would want a son to becoming an earning member of the family, but, as now the possibilities of securing a job being reduced in a competitive job-market, they consider the taking of dowry through marriage as the only source of their possible income (BNWLA, 2011).

#### 4.6. People Consider Dowry as a Custom

Dowry has now become a recognized part of marriage transaction in Bangladesh. People think that as dowry has become a custom they should also abide by it and they consider it is their duty to pay dowry to keep the long- practiced alive. They do not want to be seen as rebelling against traditions. Dowry is practiced in wealthier as well as highly educated families, too. The husband usually does not explicitly ask for a payment, but the bride's family uses the dowry to show wealth and status and also to honor the bridegroom's family (Götting Katharina, 2009).

#### 4.7. Imbalance Ratio of Men and Women

Some authors tend to show that dowry still persists because of demographic effects of declining mortality in a population in which men marry women from younger cohorts than their own. As mortality falls, younger cohorts will increase relative to older cohorts, leading to a surplus of marriageable females. According to this theory, higher ratios of males to females are positively associated with the increase in dowry payments

(Ambrus Attila, Field Erica, Torero Maximo, 2009). "Marriage squeeze"-theories argues that dowry occurs when there are more women than men in the marriage market. Women have to offer a dowry to be able to compete on the marriage market. Even in societies where there is no significant disproportion between men and women, as Bangladesh, this theory can provide an explanation for the practice of dowry. If people believe that there are more women than men on the marriage market, they will act corresponding to this belief. Social and cultural ideas about men, women and marriage are also significant for creating an imbalance between marriageable men and women. In rural Bangladesh, the socially accepted marriage age for a woman is lower than for a man. As the norm is that a man should marry a woman who is several years younger than him, this creates a tighter marriage market for women than men (Cecilie Geirbo Hanne, Imam Nuzhat, 2006).

#### 4.8. Hypergamy

According to Lindenbaum, one of the reasons for persistence of dowry is the increased competition for high-quality grooms. Some parents want to raise their status by marrying the daughter into a higher-status family, a practice known as *hypergamy*. Notably, it has been observed that the size of the dowry rises steeply in step with the desirable qualities of the son-in-law (Suran Luciana, Amin Sajeda, Huq Lopita, Chowdhury Kabita, 2004). By giving large dowries and spending large sums in their daughters' weddings, they can display their wealth publicly as well as secure a prestigious groom for their daughter. This practice was mimicked by less affluent groups as a strategy of gentrification (Cecilie Geirbo Hanne, Imam Nuzhat, 2006).

#### 4.9. Dowry Enhances Women's Status

There is a misconception prevailing in our society that dowry enhances women's status in her in laws family. It is considered as seed capital for the new family and father of the bride hopes that dowry will establish his daughter's position and she will live a happy life (Götting Katharina, 2009) In some case parents pay dowry where the bride is of deep complexion or less attractive or mentally or physically disable as compensation to the grooms family (Mst. Sultana Jubida, 2005).

#### 4.10. Dower Is Considered As Pre-Mortem Inheritance

According to Hindu law of inheritance, daughters do not inherit father's property .So parents marry off daughters with a much of wealth and much of money in the form of dowry as dowry is the only possibility to receive any possessions from the daughters father, the husband or his family try to take advantage of the opportunity. However, Muslim law allows daughters to inherit and they get half



of the share of the son. But after their father's death women often renounce their claim of the inheritance in order to assure the positive relation to and the support by their family. According to this approach, Hindus as well as Muslims perceive dowry as a form of pre-mortual inheritance. (Barrister Afroz Tureen, 2011)

#### *4.11. Payment of Dowry Has Become a Vicious Cycle*

Dowry, in Bangladesh, now has almost become a custom. A family who gives dowry to their daughter also takes dowry from their daughter in law. The logic is that as they are giving their daughter dowry, they should also take dowry from their daughter in law and thus it has become a vicious cycle of exchange of dowry.

#### *4.12. Moral Defects*

According to Dr Taslima Monsoor, the recent emergence of dowry among Bangladeshi Muslims is more due to simple greed and commercialization of marriage than the impact of traditional culture, the urge of hypergamy and the undermining of the women's productive role. The impact of men coming into contact with a wider cash economy by going abroad has also been shown to be a significant variable for their raised expectations in marriage (Dr. Mansoor Taslima, 2003).

### **5. Rethinking Legal Sanctions**

Despite every stigma, dowry continues to be the signature of the marriage, and the system is so deeply textured in the social culture, most of the time people do not even realize that they uphold and maintain the practice unconsciously. Social reformers of the nineteenth centuries clearly perceived the deadly effects of the dowry system and persistently strove for its abolition. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar and Mahatma Gandhi, to name only a few, tried their best to mobilize public opinion against the system. Gandhiji unequivocally expressed his views against dowry when he said "Any Youngman who makes dowry a condition of marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonors womanhood." (Khan Rahman Saira, 2001)

Considering the great demand, the government has passed the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980. But the Act does not root out the practice as it was expected. The law was followed in its non-observance because of serious defects and faults in its phraseology, as section 2 defines any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given directly and indirectly by one party to another party or by parents of either party, or by any other person before or at the time of marriage. The definition covers a limited area by mentioning the phrase 'before or at the time of marriage after the marriage'. But practice shows that post marital dowry demand is the most common practice which does not come within the preview of the definition.

Again penalizing both the parties is another great defect of the said Act. Helpless bride's family may compel to give dowry, but still they do not seek recourse to the Act, as there is a fear of possibility of punishment. Considering these loopholes government take necessary steps to amend the law to ensure its effective implementation.

Another Act mentioned earlier Prevention of Repression against Women and Children (Amendment) Act 2003, also addressed dowry and section 11 provides penalty for causing death, or attempt to murder, or causing grievous hurt, or simple hurt to the wife for dowry demand which is respectively death penalty, life imprisonment and fine, or any term of imprisonment up to twelve years and not less than five years. This kind of strong sanction is really worth to appreciate. When a dowry death is alleged, the motive of the murder will decide the jurisdiction of the court (court established under the Act). The problem is that, if the court finds no proof of existence of the motive of dowry, it must take its hands off the case. In a case (State vs. Abul kalam, 2003) the trial court convicted the accused under section 11 for murder of his wife for dowry. On appeal the High Court Division, found no evidence that the murder was committed for dowry and held that the case fall under section 302 of the penal Code, and quashing the conviction order.

It is worth to mention here section 4 of the above mentioned Act which prescribes several punishment including death penalty and life imprisonment for offences caused by inflammatory, corrosive, or poisonous substances. Though the section not expressly mentions dowry related offence anywhere but still there is room for interpretation as burning, acid throwing, inflicting poison for non fulfillment of dowry demand is usual incident. This type of positive interpretation of section 4 can address dowry demand and the motive is not necessary to determine the jurisdiction of the court.

Violence in marriage and Spousal violence includes both physical and mantel torture is common for dowry demand. Women are tortured by husband and in laws if she is incapable of fulfillment of dowry demand. She usually faces humiliation, verbal abuse, physical or mental torture. Sometimes even she is forced to leave his husband place for unpaid dowry (Dr.Nasreen Mahbuba, 2010)

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010, is another positive initiative by the government for addressing domestic violence against women. The Act in the beginning defines "domestic violence" in article 3 as "abuse in physical, psychological, economical and sexual nature against one person by any other person with whom that person is, or has been, in family relationship, irrespective of the physical location where that act takes place".

The section is unique as it not only defines physical from of violence rather to include Psychological abuse including but not limited to verbal abuse, harassment, and controlling behavior. So in case of physical or psychological abuse for dowry women can take resort to the Act. Most of the time file a charge on dowry can be problematic for women since they have fear of expulsion from husband's place, and also scared that her husband is no longer willing to continue matrimonial relation after she has taken legal action against him. Considering these fact, the Act provides that the victim shall have every right to reside in the shared residence due to family relationship (sec 10). The Act also does not provide any corrosive punishment rather to prescribe compensation (sec-16).

In Bangladesh a Hindu woman can inherit according to section 3 of The Hindu Women Rights to Property Act, 1937 if the propitious is not survived by son, son's of a predeceased son and not otherwise. An effective amendment of personal laws is to require making it possible that Hindu woman can inherit with their male siblings. That will be a strong step against dowry practice.

In addition to all these, article 27 of the constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal protection of the law for all citizens including women. Article 28(1) of the Constitution expressly prohibits discrimination amongst citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Where as a combined study of these articles prima facie leads one to conclude that women in Bangladesh are guaranteed equality with respect to men before law, article 28(2) limits the equality by excluding private life.

Since Bangladesh is a party to the Charter of United Nations, hence Bangladesh is under an obligation to promote and ensure 'gender equality' and to combat 'discrimination against women' pursuant to article 55(c) and 56 of the United Nations Charter, 1945.

Moreover Bangladesh has ratified The Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979. Hence Bangladesh is under an obligation to ensure equality and gender justice.

## 6. Conclusion

The institution of dowry has spread into our society like a disease. This so called disease is sometimes so severe that we do not even hesitate to abort our female child by sex determination in the womb as we are not willing and able to bear the future burden of the female child. It seems as if discrimination begins from the very existence of the fetus in the womb. After examining all the background reasons it is prominent that the institution of dowry now has become a social problem which is connected with various social, economic, cultural and psychological factors and also some wrong religious conceptions. The practice is also influenced by some common problems like corruption, poverty, unemployment. As long as these concrete causes are not targeted, mere implementation of laws will not reduce the practice. Hence strategies have to be planned with due consideration to these factors; otherwise dowry will continue to perpetuate miseries in the lives of hundreds and thousands of women's lives. Apart from legal sanctions, to stamp out dowry system the initiative must start from the women themselves (Nigar Meher, 2014). As their life and dignity are at stake, they should be made the most significant actor in this struggle. Therefore effective encounter to this evil will be successful through women empowerment by ensuring education, legal literacy and thereby motivate them to recognize their capacity and rights. Local community and civil society should play strong role in developing newer form of cultural norms that respect women and promote their safety and dignity. Creating awareness about the evil of dowry on communities conveys the importance of rooted out dowry system in the society.

The media plays key role in both influencing and changing social norms and behavior. Hence a conscious effort to make media professionals aware of the issue can play an important role in addressing dowry system. Alternative media such as theater groups, puppeteers, musicians and street performers can successfully address and create public awareness against dowry practice.

Academic and research organization should the chronic lack of statistics on dowry practice that acts as a barrier to policy change on this issue. Above all Bangladesh should set goals to fight dowry system keeping in mind to legal drawbacks as well as social and economic factors, and will take a strong stand against such uncivilized practice by protesting it, reporting it, and respecting women in their fight for right to live with dignity.

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