

GENDER DIFFERENCE IN ATTITUDE TOWARD DOWRY SYSTEM AMONG DIFFERENT CASTES IN PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

The dowry is immoral crime that persists across different culture in Pakistan, which is discriminatory against unmarried girls whose value is determined by how much dowry they possess. This study examined the attitude toward dowry system that has been practicing among different castes. Gender differences in attitude and perceptions of young and older adults' about dowry system were analyzed. A quantitative method was used, 300 male and females were selected purposively to collect the data from various parts of Punjab. Participants came from various caste systems i.e. Sheikh, Butt, Jutt, Syed, and Rajpoot. The Dowry System Assessment Inventory was utilized as a tool for data collection. Data analysis and result computation was done by applying ANOVA, T-test, and Chi square to examine the relationship between survey demographics and variables. The findings revealed that majority of people oppose dowry but men and women from modern urban culture have been practicing it by facing financial challenges. Participants in the current survey suggested that in order to omit this system, both the state and older people need to take action.

Keywords: dowry, gender differences, caste, financial challenges

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of current study was to identify gender disparities in attitudes concerned to dowry system across various caste systems. Gulzar (2012) asserted that being married is a turning point in one's life. There are many different ways to define dowry. For acquiring an extensive understanding of the dowry notion which means the money, property, or estate that a woman brings to her husband when they marry. Traditionally, this compensation or transfer of goods falls under the purview of the wife's natal family. All over the history, the customary dower have been seen in a wide variety of cultures and groups (Ali, Arnadóttir, & Kulane, 2013).

Even though many individuals still do it, dowry is among the social habits that no educated person would openly acknowledge it, still being offered and received as dowry. Even among the more educated members of society, debates about dowry are still a significant component of the wedding ceremony itself (Subhani, Imtiaz, & Afza, 2009). Given that they could be important, these presents have typically been modest expressions of well wishes. The dowry, however, has changed in recent years and now refers to a sizeable transfer of money from the bride's parents to the groom's family. It has also grown to be a crucial bargaining chip in marriage contracts (Srinivasan & Lee, 2004).

Gowda (2014) claims that historically, the dowry is purposefully provision of "seed money" or property investment for the start-up of a new house, to aid a husband in providing safeguard to his

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family, and to support his spouse and children in the event if they passed away. As a result, a husband was given legal ownership of his wife's dowry. Even the earliest available documents, including the Code of Hammurabi, according to researcher, chronicle the dowry as an established norm. To protect the woman from the risk of abuse by her spouse and his immediate family. It has always been one of the dowry's most fundamental purposes.

The dowry system definitely performed some important services for both families involved and society as a whole. It allowed individuals to locate a good fit for their daughters, provide social and financial stability for their daughters, build partnerships with families of similar status, prevent family property partition, increase their sense of self-worth via festivities and exhibitions of material possessions, and more. In other cases, the young and their parents view dowry payments as a legitimate steppingstone to a greater social status. Since lower and middle-class people must await until they find a groom for their girls whose dowry requirements are within their means, the dowry system has either implicitly or explicitly contributed to the growth in the average marriage age among these groups (Rao & Rao, 1980).

However, experts like Makino discovered a strong correlation between a larger dowry, which includes furniture, electronics, and kitchenware, and the status of women in married households in remote Punjab, Pakistan (Makino, 2019). The dowry culture is a scandalous crime that persists across Pakistan. It's a kind of discrimination against unmarried ladies whose value is determined by how much dowry they possess. It's a serious curse since it's a sign of selfishness and greed, especially for parents from the lower middle class. People as a result experience sadness and a sense of being cursed after their daughter is born. There doesn't seem to be a way out of the dowry system for another century since it is so ingrained in Pakistani society. Even today's well-educated households start preparing for the daughter's dowry as early after she is born, consequently what can one anticipate from the illiterate people (Gulzar, 2012).

Dowry has become problematic to perform marriage, that's a crucial component of life and dowry is imposed necessarily since it is the parents' duty to provide a successful marriage (Bradley & Pallikadavath, 2013). The major disadvantages of dowry system are discussed by researchers like Gulzar, who pointed out that anytime a poor household is seeking dowry for their daughters' wedding, they would beg regardless of their genuine self-esteem. Women get psychiatric disorders as a result of their in-laws' harassment and inability to pay the dowry. Owing to the dowry system, poor people are incapable of marrying their girls or retain them at home. Additionally, the years are slipping away from them. They commit suicide in order to escape the anguish and suffering. Some family members of lower social classes attempt to earn money in illicit and unethical means in order to pay the required dowry (Gulzar, 2012).

Pakistan has the third-highest rate of dowry fatalities among Asian nations, according to a survey mentioned in (The Nation, 2019). About 2,000 dowry fatalities per year are reported, or 2.45 per 10,000 individuals. Pakistan is at the top of the list for dowry violence because it has copied the Indian dowry practice (The Nation, 2019). Furthermore, a dowry is provided to family of groom by the woman's parents in about 95% of all weddings in Pakistan According to a study conducted, 69 percent of Pakistanis feel a girl cannot get married without dowry, and 84% of Pakistanis say it is highly or somewhat crucial in marriage. A girl's parents start acquiring assets as soon as she reaches puberty. In recent times, the worth of dowries has soared in Pakistan. It is still usual in Pakistan for brides to carry some type of dowry with them, whether they are Muslim, Hindu, or Christian (Fakhar, 2020).

Objectives

1. To investigate the attitudes regarding the dowry system that differ across genders.
2. To investigate how different castes see the dowry system.
3. To investigate the attitudes on the dowry system among people from various income ranges.
4. To identify how the younger and elder generations feel about the dowry system.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mathew (1987) conducted research on attitudes toward dowry. They found that the youngsters, who are meant to be the change-makers, preferred dowries more than their parents did. The growth in material aspirations and demands appears to have led to their complete dependence on the dowry system. Since it was expected that post-graduate students would be more socially aware, have developed distinct attitudes on marital relationship and dowry, and be suitable for or contemplating marriage, the study was only conducted on this group of students. The results of the attitude scores of the parent participants

were shown to be more reliable compared to the student respondents. This implies that parents, who have been more constantly exposed to dowry difficulties than students are, have developed more generally critical sentiments about dowry.

In addition, research found the connection between dowries and incidents of domestic abuse against married women. The research emphasized the importance of preserving and even extending the anti-dowry campaign targeted at the ideologies that acknowledge the need to alter the wedding structure. A vast majority of respondents admitted the dowry as a significant problem for women, but they also claimed to keep paying it since it was the only way to guarantee a "decent" marriage. They found that the patriarchal system had problems, with young women naming dowry as the most significant problem they faced (Bradley & Pallikadavath, 2013).

The study was conducted by Gulzar et al., (2012) identified negative effects of the dowry system. The purpose of the study was to demonstrate the influences, preferences, and participations of individuals who have been practicing the dowry system. A simple random sampling and questionnaire was used as a data collecting tool. It was concluded that dowry is a social evil that must be banned in the country. Because it's been Indian Hindu custom and Pakistani Muslims have been following the dowry system just like infused into their blood of society or a religious obligation.

Moreover, Samuel (2013) carried out a study to look at how South Asian Canadians' opinions about immigrant marriage customs. The data in research came from a qualitative survey notable people from Kerala who emigrated to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The findings showed that in the face of multi-faceted structural-cultural influences, women actively participate in improving their lives. Arranged marriages and dowries are their rooted in patriarchal structures. Women can deliberately modify, reject, and adopt various cultural behaviors because of improved access to education and professional jobs because of migration.

Another study conducted by Ali, Arnadóttir, & Kulane, (2013) the aim of their study was to determine the patterns, demands, and opinions about dowry among women in Karachi, Pakistan, as well as their perceptions about harmful effects of dowry. It was a qualitative study based on content analysis of 5 women's focus groups. Findings concluded that women from all socioeconomic classes in Karachi are well aware of the problems caused by dowry practices. Dozens of issues of these practices have resulted negative consequences recently in Karachi society.

Another study conducted in neighboring country by Gowda (2014) the major objective was to examine and contrast of socio-cultural practice of dowry with the socio-educational profiles of victims of dowry crimes. Data was collected through formal and semi-structured interviews, as well as focus group discussions, to investigate the reasons of Dowry. The findings of research showed that while sections 498-A and 304-B have given the Article 51-A of the constitution, which makes it illegal to give or receive dowry, is still ineffectual despite the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961's teeth because dowry-related sociocultural norms have not changed. Even typically legal system people take part in dowry trades. To put an end to this heinous practice, adequate social awareness, and education, as well as legal penalties.

Another study was conducted by Shah & Qasim (2016) the cross-sectional study is being conducted in the rural and urban areas of Pakistan's Southern Punjab. The study's major goal was to discover the social factors that influence dowry system. The findings showed that dowry is positively connected with factors such as region, bride's employment, and dowry assistance monetarily; yet, dowry and bride's education are inversely correlated. Furthermore, the results revealed that work in both sectors has a beneficial impact on dowry, implying that educated women with jobs can support themselves financially and economically more in their married lives.

Makino (2019) conducted a study about the status of women, dowries, and marriage in rural Punjab, Pakistan. Empirical studies on dowry are scarce in comparison to public interest and theoretical studies, owing to data scarcity and insufficiency. The data set is unique in that it collected data on disaggregated wedding expenses, allowing to look into the connection between each component of the categorized dowry and the position of women. The findings demonstrated that a larger dowry, particularly in terms of kitchenware, electronics, and furniture was linked to female's standing in the household. The favorable correlation of these expensive things added to the argument that dowry functions as a gift of a wedding outfit from the bride's parents to their daughter in rural Punjab, Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

The researcher linked the present study with theoretical framework of Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1963). The ideal of people learning through socialization with others forms the cornerstone of the social learning theory. Distinctly, most of the people pick up similar tendencies through copying the conduct of others. People imitate and adopt other people's behavior after seeing it, notably if the observed behavior is rewarded during the observational experience. According to Bandura, imitation requires a true duplication of the observed motor actions. And some of the most widely accepted theories of development and learning is the SLT. The literature serves as the foundation for the three SLT ideas. First of all, individuals have the option of engaging in observational learning, sometimes referred to as learning by doing. Second, mental states sometimes described as included with play a significant role in learning. Finally, it alludes to the notion that mimicking is a crucial phase in the process and that knowledge does not necessarily lead to a change in behavior. Children behave in a manner that is similar to that of their parents. Nabavi (2012) offers a significant contribution when she claims that through seeing other individuals, people might learn new ideas and actions. Based on the Social Learning Theory, male and female perceptions toward the dowry setup are so different.

METHODS

In the current study a quantitative research design was employed to examine how gender and caste disparities affect attitudes regarding the dowry system.

Sample: There were 300 respondents in the present research sample selected purposively, 150 of whom were men and 150 of whom were women. The sample consisted of married and single respondents from a wide range of occupations, castes, educational status, ages (18 to 50), and socioeconomic statuses and 7 castes e.g. Butt, Jutt, Rajpoot, Sheikh, Mughal, Gujjar, and Qureshi.

Hypotheses

1. There is significant difference in attitude towards dowry system between males and females.
2. There is significant difference in attitude towards dowry system in different caste systems.
3. There is significant difference in attitude towards dowry system across people with different income groups.
4. There is significant difference in attitude towards dowry system of the younger and older generation.

Tool: Data gathered using a common questionnaire. Data were gathered using the Dowry System Assessment Inventory (Gulzar 2012), which was comprised of closed-ended questions and is based on a Likert Scale.

Procedure: Firstly, the consent form and questionnaire were given out to gather data on the participants' age, education, gender, caste, and family income, a demographic sheet was created. To improve the measurement tool, pilot testing was indeed carried out. Ensure that participants' information will be kept confidential as well. Participants were made aware of the aims and objectives of the study. The information was gathered through both offline and online survey from different regions of Punjab.

RESULTS

By utilizing the Dowry System Assessment Inventory (Gulzar 2012), quantitative analysis of the data was carried out. Gender differences and attitudes toward the dowry system were examined across castes in order to analyse the data. Higher scores reflect a more positive attitude toward the dowry system, while lower scores reflect a negative attitude. ANOVA and the independent sample T-test were used to evaluate the data.

Figure 1 Percentage of the reasons for dowry practice (N=300).

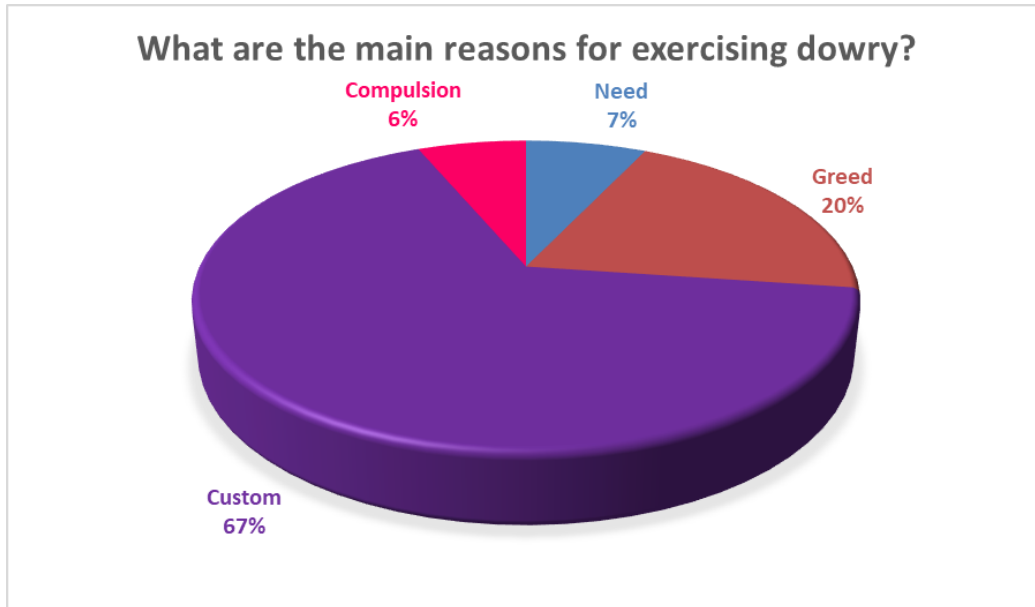


Fig 1: Reason of exercising dowry system

Figure 1 illustrated the primary justification for dowry. The findings indicated that practice is the primary driver of dowry. As 67% of respondents claimed, custom is the primary cause of dowry. Following custom, 20% of participants showed that greed is the cause of putting down dowry for payoff. Compulsion and necessity, however, get the worst ratings as causes.

Figure 2 Percentage of who can control the expansion of dowry (N=300).

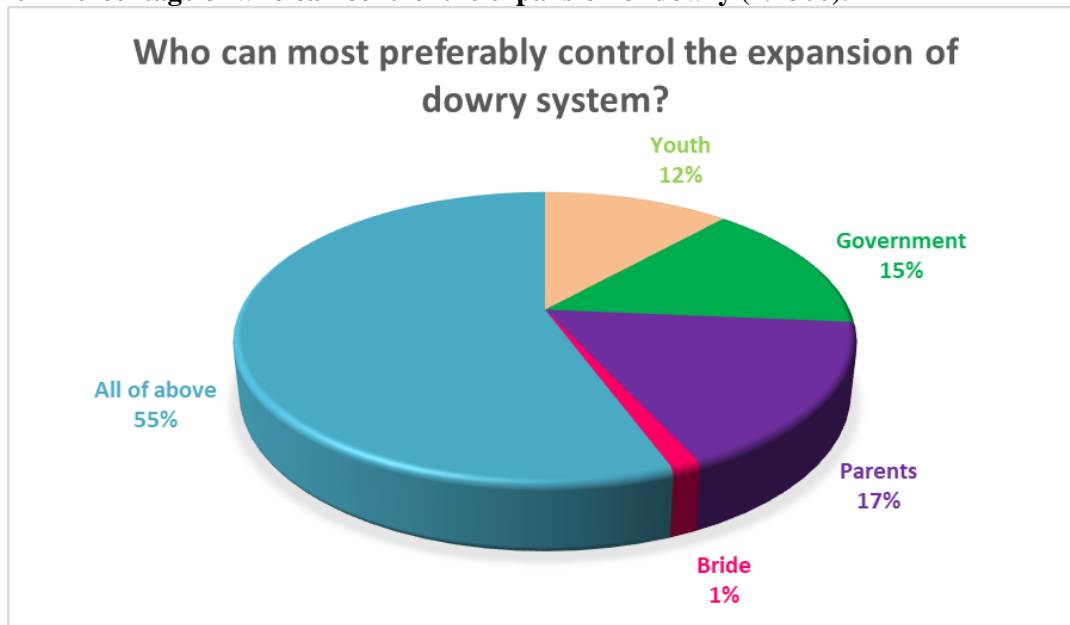


Fig 2: Control the expansion of dowry system

According to Figure 2, when asked which group they thought would be most able to stop the dowry system from growing, 55% of respondents said that all of them were the most effective forces. The government also has the authority to control and stop the expansion of the dowry system, as do the family of the husband and wife. Fewer respondents stated that NGO's and brides are the causes of the expansion of dowry, with 0% believing that an NGO and 1% believing that a bride is the one who can.

Figure 3 Percentage of which class is more involved in dowry (N=300).

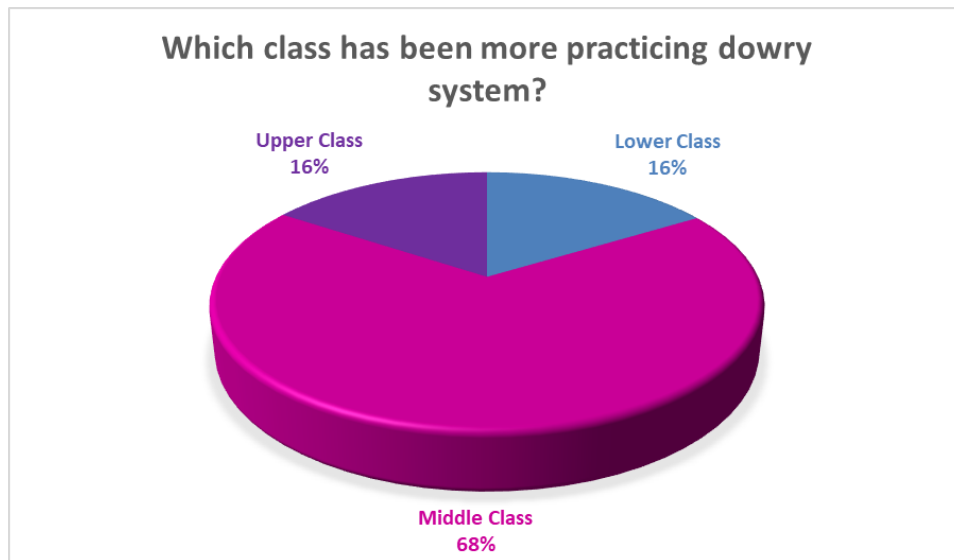


Figure 3: Class involved in dowry system

The income distribution shows that there are mainly three classes. The results showed that the middle class is the class that is more active in the dowry practice compared to the lower and higher income classes.

There will be a significant difference in attitudes regarding the dowry system between males and females, according to first hypothesis. Independent sample T test was used to assess the hypothesis. The results are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table No. 1 To measure the attitude of male and females towards dowry. Independent t test was used (N=300)

Variables	Males		Females		<i>t(d)</i>	<i>p</i>	95% confidence level of difference	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Attitude	11.9	2.26	11.8	2.19	.198(298)	.84	-.47	.58

$p > .05$

For evaluating how men and women feel about dowries. The independent sample t-test was employed, and the results showed that there was statistically minimal significant difference in the attitudes of men and women about dowries. The investigation of the dowry system and differences between castes was done in the current study.

Table No. 2 Frequency and percentage of castes

Caste	<i>F</i>	%
Butt	34	11.3
Jutt	15	5.0
Rajpoot	62	20.7
Sheikh	49	16.3
Mughal	27	9.0
Gujjar	29	9.7
Qureshi	15	5.0
Arain	27	9.0
Syed	42	14.0

Table 2 demonstrates that Rajpoot has a greater proportion than all other castes (20.7). And among all castes, the Jutt and Qureshi populations are the smallest. The second hypothesis was that "various caste systems will have very varied attitudes regarding the dowry system." ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis, and the outcomes are shown in (table 3).

Table No. 3 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring attitude towards dowry system in different caste systems (N=300).

Variable	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Between groups	51.30	8	6.41	1.18	.30
Within groups	1570.44	291	5.39		

F values is non significance at $p > .05$

The findings showed that attitudes about the dowry system were the same across caste systems $F(8,299) = 1.18, p = .30$. The results showed that Arain ($M=12.93, SD=2.48$) had the highest score, followed by Rajpoot ($M=12.12, SD=2.01$), Jutt ($M=12.06, SD=2.01$), Syed ($M=11.90, SD=2.32$), Butt ($M=11.82, SD=2.13$), Qureshi ($M=11.73, SD=1.48$), Sheikh ($M=11.67, SD=2.18$), Mughal ($M=11.66, SD=2.43$) and Gujjar ($M=11.24, SD=2.61$).

The third hypothesis was that "the younger and older generation's attitudes regarding the dowry system will differ significantly." ANOVA was employed to evaluate the hypothesis in one way. The findings are shown in (Table 4).

Table No. 4 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring attitude towards dowry system across people with different income groups (N=300).

Variable	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Between groups	14.55	2	7.2	1.34	.26
Within groups	1607.19	297	5.4		

F values is non significance at $p > .05$

The findings showed that there isn't any significant difference in attitudes against dowry between income groups $F(2,299)=1.34, p=.26$. The results showed that those in income categories of under 5500 ($M=12.16, SD=2.35$) had higher scores than those between 56000 and 150000 ($M=11.71, SD=2.04$) and above 150000 ($M=12.13, SD=3.09$).

The fourth hypothesis was that "the younger and older generation's attitudes toward the dowry system will differ significantly." ANOVA was used to evaluate the hypothesis in one way, and the outcomes are shown in (table 5).

Table No. 5 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring attitude towards dowry system of the younger and older generation (N=300).

Variable	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Between groups	3.39	2	1.69	.312	.733
Within groups	1618.35	297	5.44		

F values is non significance at $p > .05$

According to analysis, the results of the ANOVA show that there was no significant difference in attitudes toward dowry between the younger and older generations. $F(2,299) = .312, p = .733$. According to the results, those between the ages of 42 and 50 ($M=12.22, SD=2.50$) had a higher score than those between the ages of 26 and 41 ($M=11.95, SD=2.06$) and 18 to 25 ($M=11.83, SD=2.48$).

Table No. 6 The Chi-square test has been used to look at how demographics and research problems relate.

	Items	p-value
Gender	Girls become mentally affected due to dowry system	.001
	Dowry system creates imbalance in the status of woman	.027
Caste	Muslims are distressing their religion due to dowry system	.009
Age	Our youth should stand against the dowry system	.045
Education	Dowry system is more common among educated people as compared to illiterate	.008
Family Income	Dowry system leads the girl's family to earn from unethical ways	0.11
	Dowry system leads to suicide	.001
	Dowry is a cause of increasing conflicts in society	.001
	Dowry system can share the economic burdens in society	.001

The link of demographics and research questions have been investigated using the Chi-square test. Only important values have been picked for quick conclusions. Table 6 displayed the correlation between gender, caste, age, education, and family income.

Gender and women's position and mental health are related. Additionally, caste and religion are related. A correlation of degree and the variable is further shown by the fact that "Dowry culture is more

widespread among educated folks as compare to uneducated." The government's policy to outlaw the dowry system is connected to age. Family income is influenced by the dowry system that distributed the economic burden in the society. Furthermore, dowry is linked to conflicts in communities and suicide.

DISCUSSION

The first concern was the rationale behind the dowry system. It was clarified that the main justification for the dowry's installation was custom. Greed is another potential element. The least effective causes, however, are compulsion and need. Additionally, the findings of Ali, Arnadóttir, and Kulane (2013) corroborated perceived negative consequences of dowry and perspectives of women living in urban Karachi, Pakistan. Due to dowry practices, everywhere women were aware about the problems, even they belong to different socioeconomic classes in Karachi. A number of negative consequences of these practices created in Karachi society.

The second query concerned the growth of dowry. The results show that every young person, including parents, brides, and the government, has a responsibility to prevent Pakistan's dowry practice from becoming more widespread. However, NGOs were the group that received the least support. The next query concerned the class that is most affected by the dowry system. There are essentially three classes in Pakistan, which are separated based on wealth. Research has shown that the middle class is the group that practice the dowry system most frequently, as opposed to the lower and upper classes. A research notified that majority of the participants were practicing dowry whether they are educated or illiterate, which created imbalance in the status of women and affected women mentally and physically by endorsing greed and conflicts among people (Gulzar et al., 2012).

The study's initial premise was that attitudes regarding the dowry system would differ significantly between males and females. The findings demonstrated that males have slightly more negative attitudes toward dowry than females which meant dowry system has been practicing socio-cultural custom. The current study found that both men and women had negative attitudes regarding the dowry system. The fact that the bulk of the research respondents were educated may be the explanation of these results. According to literature, education is the one factor that has greatly altered the dowry system. In contrast to boys and other members of society who were considered as repressive, confined, violent, and characterized by fractured affective ties, the findings showed that youth particularly girls perceived the dowry system offer the possibility of protection, and status for them (Mwemezi, 2012).

The second hypothesis for this study was that attitudes regarding the dowry system would differ significantly among caste systems. The findings demonstrated that attitudes regarding the dowry system in various caste systems did not differ much. This may be because dowry is now accepted in Pakistan as a tradition. Dowry is influenced by general cultural norms rather than any caste-specific practices. The findings of (Ali, Arnadóttir, & Kulane, 2013) that dowry gifts have been customary in numerous cultures and communities throughout history were also validated by this research. This idea is further backed by the results of the current study, which revealed that 64% of respondents cited custom as the primary driver behind the use of the dowry system.

The third hypothesis was that persons from different socioeconomic classes would have significantly different attitudes regarding the dowry system. The findings indicated that there wasn't a statistically significant variation in attitudes regarding the dowry system among those in various socioeconomic categories. The implication here is that the dowry system affects people from all socioeconomic classes equally. For all socioeconomic categories, dowry is a concern. The current study also supports this claim, with 34% of participants agreeing and 30% strongly agreeing that it spreads the financial pressure in society. Another study by Gowda (2014) in a neighboring nation, focused on the social, cultural, and religious variables that affect women's rights as well as the root causes of a variety of problems for female dowry survivors. The results of their study demonstrated that despite the teeth provided by the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, Article 51-A of the constitution, which forbade the giving or receiving of dowries, remained ineffective because dowry-related sociocultural practices have not changed.

The fourth hypothesis was that attitudes on the dowry system between the younger and the older generations would differ significantly. The findings showed to be no discernible difference in the attitudes of the young and old generations on the dowry system. The underlying idea here is maybe that it is a hardship for all generations, which explains why attitudes from Gen X to Generation Z are consistent. The chi-square analysis further demonstrated the relationship among age, gender, economic

status, and educational attainment. Keeping in mind gender differences and attitude towards dowry system across castes Rao & Rao's (1980) looked at how students thought about the dowry in terms of its importance and survival as well as how they felt about equal rights, property inheritance, and financial control. It took gender disparities and attitudes about the dowry system across castes into consideration. Despite the fact that three-quarters of the sample believed money was unimportant in settling a marriage, while nearly one-third of the males and about 40% of their parents expected to get dowry when the respondents got married.

On the basis of recent data, it is considered that dowry in Pakistan has become customary in addition to being motivated by greed. The majority of people oppose dowries, although they are nevertheless used due of tradition. It is a custom that is also followed by people from other caste systems. The current study concludes that the dowry system is mostly used by the middle class. According to the findings of the current research, the dowry system is used by both educated and uneducated people. Both men and women are employed in our modern urban culture, both of whom make financial contributions and are acutely aware of the financial challenges one may encounter. Participants in the current survey think that in order to regulate this system, both the state and young people need to take action.

CONCLUSION

Dowry is also called jahez that has been practicing in many forms worldwide, when a girl get married off various gifts, household items, parental property or money is transferred with her to in-laws. In most of the Muslim countries, dowry has been allowed and amended due to societal demands and acceptance. In Pakistan, most of the females have been facing dowry related violence at their husbands' home. In the light of recent research, gender differences, attitude, and other aspects towards dowry system across castes were identified. On the bases of current findings it was concluded that other than greed dowry has become custom in Pakistan. Most of the people are not in the favor of dowry, but they practice it because of social pressure. People with different caste system also practices it as a custom. The present research summarizes that mostly middle class was more involved in practicing dowry system. Both educated and illiterate individuals exercise and male and female in urban areas are in work force and they both are contributing financially and very much aware of the economic burden. In present study participants believed that both the government and youth should take action in order to control this prevailing system.

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