

Dowry considerations in rural Punjab: Cause and effect syndrome

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Received: 08.02.2017; Revised: 24.03.2017; Accepted: 10.04.2017

■ **ABSTRACT** : Dowry is considered to be an integral part of marriage ceremony. The present investigation was carried out in rural areas of Punjab to determine the causes and consequences of dowry in Rural Punjab. The data were collected personally from the two generations *i.e.* Mother-in-laws (G1) and daughter-in-laws (G2). The findings depicted that majority of mother-in-laws were in the age group of 50-57 years and daughter-in-laws were in age group 26-33 years. Most of the respondents reported that dowry was important in settling of the marriage in both the generations. Majority of G1 respondents had no indication of dowry from the groom side whereas G2 respondents had complete indication of dowry before marriage. It was noted that mother-in-laws demanded the dowry in both the generations. The findings further revealed that dowry is practiced as a tradition and more land holding of groom/ bride are important factors contributing to the dowry payments. Also, a large number of G2 respondents highlighted that abroad settled groom aspire more dowries. All the respondents reported female foeticide as the main irony of dowry system. Other consequences felt by the respondents were the domestic violence, divorce, burden on the bride's parents and ill-treatment by in-laws. Both the respondents perceived dowry as a medium to enhance status of bride in the in-laws families followed by feeling of confidence by bride after receiving dowry from parents. However, it is ironic that the cruel cultural practice has deeply enrooted in marriage institution.

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■ **KEY WORDS**: Dowry, Cause, Effect syndrome

■ **HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER** : Kaur, Gaganpreet and Kaur, Lakhwinder (2017). Dowry considerations in rural Punjab: Cause and effect syndrome. *Asian J. Home Sci.*, 12 (1) : 53-59, DOI: 10.15740/HAS/AJHS/12.1/53-59.