

Lesson Title: Dowry practice in local communities

Level: Grade 9

Number of students: 20--30

Teaching items: Reading + grammar + speaking

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

The students will:

- Critically reflect on issues of dowry practice in their society
- Read and understand this dowry system as a social problem
- Critically engage in dialogs after reading the text
- Practice using 'imperatives' in their writings

Instructional materials

Newspaper article "Dowry: A social burden?"

Pictures

Worksheets

Lesson Plan

Time (60 minutes)	Teaching/learning activity	Materials	Student Learning Outcomes
5 minutes	Warm-up and announcement of lesson and objectives		Familiarize students with the agenda and goal of the lesson
10 minutes	Individual and Pair work: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students fill in the worksheets by noting down points from the pictures• Students share with a classmate sitting next to them	Worksheet Pictures	Students reflect on dowry practice in their community drawing on their previous experiences

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and teacher discuss in the class 		
20 minutes	<p>Individual/group work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read a newspaper article on 'Dowry: A social burden?' and mark and answer the questions Teacher visits individual groups to ensure participation and assist for the understanding of the text Students discuss answers to the questions 	Newspaper article	Students understand the social problem of dowry practice
20 minutes	<p>Individual and Pair work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students examine the examples of 'imperatives' in the reading text Teacher illustrates with more examples and helps them discover the grammar rule Students practice using 'imperatives' in designing placards and post them on the wall 	Newspaper article Worksheet table	Students learn to use imperatives Students use their own ideas to address the social problem of dowry practice
5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigning homework (Read the news articles at home and collect opinions from your parents) Closing 		Students further explore the issue of dowry practice in their community

Pre-lesson activities

Show pictures related to wedding and ask students to note down in word(s) based on what they observe using the worksheet provided. Download pictures from [here](#).

Based on the photographs, ask some quick-response questions to the class:

1. Who are the people to buy those items?
2. Why do they buy them?
3. How do you make connection of these pictures to your experience in your society? Use the following worksheet.

Whose wedding?	What were the items?	Why were the people doing this?

Ask the students to share in the class while the teacher goes around the groups to ensure that they understand the meaning of the task. Share a few answers from the students to the whole class. Ask them what positive/negative meanings these pictures carry in our society.

Reading

Students read a newspaper article on 'Dowry: A social burden?' and answer questions asked at the end of the text. While the students read it individually, the teacher goes around the class and ensures students' reading, helps them with difficult vocabulary items and answers any questions the students may have.

Dowry: A Social Burden?

Have you heard of stories of dowry in the Nepalese society? Read the following news report.

Dhan Bahadur Thapa, 54, a resident of Devitar village of Nuwakot district spent Rs. 18,000 to conduct wedding ceremony of his 16-year-old daughter. To perform the marriage, he used the money borrowed to buy a buffalo from the Agriculture Development Bank (ADB). "I had to use

the loan amount because I did not have enough money," said Thapa, father of two daughters. "It will take me another two or three years to pay back my loan through other means."



Shree Krishna Shrestha, 65, a father of one son and two daughters, had spent all his life saving money to marry-off his children. "I have to organize lavish ceremonies to retain my social status and maintain my ego. When all of my relatives and neighbors have been organizing such ceremonies, how can I alone avoid it?" asked Shrestha. Shrestha, a retired official, has already sold out his one ropani land for the purpose.

Sambhu Krishna, (name changed) spent three million rupees to perform weddings of his two daughters. Sambhu, a senior officer living in Lalitpur, gave away Maruti Car each for his two daughters as dowry. "It was a simple affair compared to what I have seen around. I only invited about 2000 guests," said Shrestha.

Examine the above three cases. They are typical examples to show how our traditional rituals are getting commercialized and how much our middle class mentality has changed to associate lavish weddings with social status and prestige. The cases of higher class elites including businessmen are altogether different.

In the wedding of Prince Paras Shah, the son ex-King Gyanendra, it was reported that the marriage expenses crossed over 125 million rupees. Consider how many weddings have been conducted like this in the royal family and relatives until today.

According to sociologists, marriage is an institution that creates families but today it has become a means to exchange money and human between two families. Such is the mentality that parents of bride think more gifts (read dowry) they offer, better will be the life of their daughters.

Give it a minute and think who suffers most from this practice. Particularly, the family of bride has to bear the burden of wedding cost. They have to provide jewelry and money as gift. These days families of brides giving away expensive gifts like television, motorcycles and even cars are not uncommon. The condition is further worse in Terai region. Here, families of bridegroom openly ask for "tilak" -- often high amounts of cash, as a precondition for the marriage. Better

educated the men, higher the amount for Tilak. Doctors and engineers have a large "market value" often getting millions of rupees.

The emergence of dowry and Tilak culture has also invited a disturbing trend. Incidents of newly-wed brides being burnt alive by families of bridegroom are frequent in Terai region. Mostly these innocent girls are killed because their parents fail to deliver the promised amount or gift to their in-laws.



Therefore, don't follow the practice if that is not good. Discuss openly with your parents for such issues. Bring positive changes in your society.

(<http://www.nepalnews.com/contents/englishweekly/spotlight/2000/feb/feb18/coverstory.htm>)

Words: ceremony, social status, lavish, ego, million, commercialize, elites, pre-condition, market-value, innocent, in-laws,

After reading the passage, answer the questions given below and share them with your group members.

Instructions: Students discuss the answers with their group members first. And then the teacher asks students to report their discussion to the whole class. Students and teachers discuss the issue in the class. The purpose of this activity is to understand dowry practice as a social problem and engage the students in dialogs. The reading introduces the issue that the students are familiar with and help them understand it more critically and consciously.

1. Compare three cases of wedding (Dhana Bahadur Thapa, Sri Krishna Shrestha and Shambhu Krishna) in the reading text above. Discuss how the children's weddings can impact their parents' lives in terms of money, social status or prestige.
2. What is the meaning of marriage according to the sociologists? Is it necessary to offer expensive gifts to the bridegroom and his family? Why?

3. According to the passage, who are the people that have higher “market value” for getting good “tilak” (dowry)? Do you think it is a good thing to compare education with the amount of dowry?
4. Have you heard any bad incidents that are connected to the issue of dowry in your community? Who is responsible for such incidents?

Grammar: Imperatives

1. Give some examples of imperatives from routine classroom activities: E.g. Look at the blackboard; Answer the questions; Stop talking; Listen to me.
2. Ask them to underline the imperative sentences in the reading text. Ask them why the author has used them. Move around the class and assist individual students.
3. Ask them to design placards in groups and write slogans on “Anti-dowry Campaign” to stop dowry practice on large sheet of papers to be posted on the wall. Encourage them to use the words from the vocabulary list wherever possible.

Homework: Assignment

Ask students to read the following news stories from newspaper at home. In order to make their activities more productive, students can interview their parents about ‘dowry practice’ and report that in the next class.

One killed over dowry row

Source: (<http://www.ekantipur.com/2010/01/29/top-story/one-killed-over-dowry-row/307297/>)

RAUTAHAT, JAN 29 - A woman has been killed by her family members including her husband in Santapur VDC of Rautahat over a dowry issue.

Manju Devi Sah ,19, of Naya Basti in Santapur-6 was killed and burnt on Wednesday night for not bringing dowry, as promised before her marriage.

Manju’s parents have alleged that her in-laws killed her after they failed to provide Rs 15,000 cash in dowry because of poverty. They said they had paid Rs 10,000 though. Manju’s brother Shambhu said she was mentally and physically tortured by her in-laws in the past over the issue.

A team of policemen that reached the village after the report of her murder could recover only the pieces of almost-burnt bones of the slain girl. Police said she was killed at home and was burnt some 1 km from the house.

The accused husband, his father and mother have been absconding after the incident.

A local, Upendra Rauniyar, said her in-laws had been torturing her, demanding Rs 5,000 cash due in the promised dowry, in the past. He said she was staying with her parents after the torture but she was later called by the in-laws and was murdered when she had come home.

Man kills wife over dowry row

Source: (<http://www.ekantipur.com/2009/10/02/top-story/man-kills-wife-over-dowry-row/300929/>)

ARGHAKHANCHI, OCT 02 - A man murdered his wife by running a jeep over her in an apparent dowry dispute in Sandhikharka, district headquarters of Arghakhachi.

Rishiram Bhusal killed his wife, Usha, on Tuesday evening following a fight, which the victim's family claim was over dowry issue.

Bhushal allegedly ran his jeep over Usha's body numerous times and killed her. Usha's father, Salikram Poudel, said Bhushal had texted him numerous times in the past threatening to kill his daughter, demanding dowry.

He said Usha had called him just a day before her death pleading to save life.

Police arrested Friday.