

**DOWRY IN 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY***Authors: Dhruv Khurana and Vaidehi Bhatia*

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the dowry system in India. To know the root purpose of this system and if it's still being practised in rural India even being banned in 1961. This paper attempts to investigate the reason behind the dowry growth in India and how women are being affected by this system in India. The paper uses case-studies, planning provisions, and data on the dowry system that are available on the internet. Primary as well as secondary data will be used to collect information for the areas of study.

The result indicated that the findings of the study show that section 498- A and section 304-B have provided teeth to the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, but Article 51-A of the constitution remains ineffective because the socio-cultural norms related to the practice of dowry have remained unchanged and therefore, the practice of giving and receiving dowry continues as such.

Even otherwise law-abiding citizens are giving and receiving dowry. Adequate social awareness and education are necessary, along with legal punishment, to do away with this evil practice.

The practice of dowry is the worst social practise that has affected our culture. In independent India, one of the landmark legislations is the passing of the Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961 by the Government of India. Even though the practice of both giving as well as accepting dowry is banned by law and such acts are punishable offences, the system is so thoroughly embedded in our culture that it continues unabated. Even otherwise law-abiding citizens are giving and receiving dowry. Adequate social awareness and education are necessary, along with legal punishment, to do away with this evil practice.

### **Introduction**

The practice of dowry is one of the worst social practises that have affected our culture. Of all the problems faced by the women in our society, Dowry becomes first and firmest as a social challenge. Though other problems like rape, child marriage, murder and kidnapping are happening in society, they will not affect as strong as the dowry system has its influence. The dowry system in India refers to the durable goods, cash, and real or movable property that the bride's family gives to the groom, his parents and his relatives as a condition of the marriage. Dowry is essentially like payment in cash or some kind of gifts given to the groom's family along with the bride and includes cash, jewellery, electrical appliances, furniture, bedding, crockery, utensils, vehicles and other household items that help the newlyweds set up their home. Dowry is referred to as “**Dahez**” in Arabic. In the far eastern parts of India, dowry is called “**Aaunnpot**”.

The dowry system can put a great financial burden on the bride's family. In some cases, the dowry system leads to crime against women, ranging from emotional abuse and injury to even deaths. The payment of dowry has long been prohibited under specific Indian laws including the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 and subsequently by Sections 304B and 498A of the Indian Penal Code. The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 defines dowry: "Dowry means any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly - (a) by one party in a marriage to the other party in marriage; or (b) by the parents of either party to a marriage or by any other person to either party to the marriage or any other persons; at or before or after the marriage as consideration for the marriage of the said parties, but does not include dower or mahr in the case of persons to whom the Muslim Personal law applies. The Dowry system in Indian Marriages can be called the commercial aspect of the marriage. The practice of giving dowry is still very common among all societies in India & this Dowry system is prevalent in India since the Vedic period. A girl gets all the domestic utensils that are necessary to set up a family. . In the Epic period gifts from parents, brothers and relatives to the bride were recognized as women's property-" Stridhan". According to Kautilya, means of subsistence or jewellery used to constitute property of the woman. It is no guilt for a wife to make use of this property for upbringing her children, daughter-in-law or herself if her absent husband has made no provision for her maintenance. Reasons behind huge dowry demands are counted by experts mainly due to lack of economic rights of women, denial of property rights and basic civil rights such as the right of the marriage of own choice, land

rights and education. Social mental setup also works behind it such as in Indian society girls are considered a liability while boys as assets. Roots of dowry date back to the time when man started living a civilized life. Originally it was intended just to give support and security to the new couple who start their married life. It also signified an alternative to inheritance for the woman. In periods, it distorted its face but its worst face comes to the fore in a present society where parents pass their whole life under debt to pay dowry in the marriages of their daughters which also results in murders and suicides of the daughters. The rising dowry death toll in recent years reflects the grimness of the problem.

### **Background**

Even though MANUSHI played a leading role in bringing national attention to domestic violence and the role dowry has come to play in making women's lives vulnerable, after nearly 28 years of experience with these issues, I have come to the firm conclusion that the terms 'dowry death' and 'dowry violence' are misleading. They contribute towards making domestic violence in India appear as a unique, exotic phenomenon by giving the impression that Indian men are the only ones in the world to use violence based on astute and rational calculations. By this logic, it would appear that men in all other parts of the world are truly stupid because they beat and kill their wives without any benefit accruing to them, whereas Indian men attack their spouses in the expectation of extorting financial rewards from their in-laws.

Domestic violence is about using brute force to establish power relations in the family whereby women are taught and conditioned to accept a subservient status. Domestic violence is a way of trying to get women to believe that they can only live at men's mercy. It is often committed by men with low self-esteem who destroy a woman's sense of self-worth because they feel inadequate to cope with a woman who thinks and acts as a free human being with a mind of her own. Like rape, wife battering points to the common predicament of women across nations, castes, classes, religions and regions.

The culture of dowry-giving is spreading even to communities, which had no such tradition a generation or two ago. This even though in the last two decades the anti-dowry laws have been made very stringent and draconian. Many interpret the failure of these laws to lessen dowry giving as a sign of their poor implementation. However, these laws have so many

inherent flaws that their honest implementation is well-nigh impossible. These laws have created more problems than they have solved. You cannot combat a 'crime' that is as ill-defined as the anti-dowry laws of India.

Marriage in India is steeped in traditions and deep-rooted cultural beliefs. Practices are passed down by word of mouth and in some cases, re-interpreted to align with the changing times. There is, however, one custom that stubbornly resists change: the dowry system.

In India, it has its roots in medieval times when a gift in cash or kind was given to a bride by her family to maintain her independence after marriage. During the colonial period, it became the only legal way to get married, with the British making the practice of dowry mandatory. The trend in present India, with its booming economy, is now encouraging ever-higher bride prices among all socioeconomic strata. But the rising bride price has brought with it an increase in violence against women.

Dowry violence is usually perpetrated by the husband or the in-laws in a bid to extract a higher dowry from the bride's family. The dowry price paid at the time of marriage may be significant, but the greed of husbands and in-laws can grow after marriage. This frequently translates into physical, mental or sexual violence against the bride. The violence ranges from slashing genitalia or breasts with razors to burning her alive by pouring kerosene on her. In some cases, women are driven to suicide.

Although seeking a dowry has been outlawed in India since 1961, the ban has been a challenge to enforce. An amendment to the law in 1986 mandated that any death or violence within the first seven years of marriage would be tried as related to dowry. The reality is that most cases of dowry violence go unreported.

### **Deaths by dowry**

Dowry deaths are deaths of married women who are murdered or driven to suicide by continuous harassment and torture by their husbands and in-laws over a dispute about their dowry, making the women's homes the most dangerous place for them to be. Dowry deaths are found predominantly in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Iran. India reports the highest total number of dowry deaths with 8,391 such deaths reported in 2010, meaning there are 1.4 deaths per 100,000 women. Female dowry deaths account for 40 to 50 percent of all female homicides recorded annually in India, representing a stable trend over the period 1999 to

2016. Adjusted for population, Pakistan, with 2,000 reported deaths per year, has the highest rate of dowry death at 2.45 per 100,000 women.

India has an alarming trend that sees 20 women die every day as a result of harassment over a dowry – either murdered or compelled to commit suicide. The National Crime Bureau of India, as recently as 2017, recorded nearly 7000 dowry linked deaths. Dowry deaths rose from about 19 per day in 2001 to 21 per day in 2016. And we are yet talking about reported dowry deaths here. Many go unreported. Taking or giving dowry has been criminalized by law as early as 1961. But it is still a significant part of Indian marriage and is openly defying laws and failing women empowerment. The issue is not limited to the number of deaths only. The magnitude of the morbidity in terms of deterioration of physical and mental health due to dowry-related conflicts is enormous. The family-level conflicts and associated violence have a significant role in determining many social and health conditions of women as well as children.<sup>13–20</sup> There are cases of poor utilisation of antenatal care and child immunisation due to the inferior consideration of the women and conflicts within the family.

As per the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2018, India was placed at 142nd rank out of 149 countries in the economic opportunity and participation subindex. The gender gap was measured across 4 key pillars - economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, and health and survival. WEF noted that 'India needs to make improvements across the board, from women's participation in getting more women into senior and professional roles. India widens the gender gap on this sub-index this year.' India continues to rank third-lowest in the world on health and survival, remaining the world's least improved country on this subindex over the past decade.

In January 2019, before the opening of the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, Oxfam released a report and said that the face of inequality in India is female. According to the report, the gender pay gap in India is currently at 34%. (EPW Engage, 2019) Oxfam said inequality has a "female face" in India, where women are less likely to have paid work when compared to men, while even among the richest there are only 9 women in the country's 119-member billionaires club. One thing that can be noted by looking at data and literature related to the field, is that women who are regularly exposed to media and with more access to modern educational systems challenge conventional thinking and lifestyles. Employed women are more likely to be exposed to media, and their financial resources allow them to

question traditional practices which make them a burden to their families and undermine their status. However, the efforts of the secular women's movement have ensured that the debates on family laws are no longer framed in terms of uniformity, but gender justice. Progressive and forward-looking laws addressing familial violence, a range of partnerships and living arrangements, property and inheritance, divorce and maintenance, guardianship and custody, and disenfranchisement within families, will serve as an impetus for social change. (Forum against Oppression of Women, 2017)

Almost 72 years after independence, one thing that can be noted by looking at data and literature related to the field is that women who are regularly exposed to media and with more access to modern educational systems challenge conventional thinking and lifestyles. Employed women are more likely to be exposed to media, and their financial resources allow them to question traditional practices which make them a burden to their families and undermine their status. However, the efforts of the secular women's movement have ensured that the debates on family laws are no longer framed in terms of uniformity, but gender justice. Progressive and forward-looking laws addressing familial violence, a range of partnerships and living arrangements, property and inheritance, divorce and maintenance, guardianship and custody, and disenfranchisement within families, will serve as an impetus for social change. (Forum against Oppression of Women, 2017)

Even now, almost 72 years after independence, women are still fighting for their freedom, liberty, and justice. What is tragic is that they are fighting for not just themselves but are also fighting their family and society, who still do not always see them as equal to men. Dowry deaths are one of the most shameful arrows in our quiver of embarrassment as a nation and it would still require huge effort to fight them. Although female education and exposure have some effect in reducing the occurrence of this devious act, a change at the mindset level of the people is what is required to fight this evil. Going by the quote by Ambedkar, looking at the progress of women in our nation shows that we as a nation still have a long way to go before we could become progressive. women are still fighting for their freedom, liberty, and justice. What is tragic is that they are fighting for not just themselves but are also fighting their family and society, who still do not always see them as equal to men. Dowry deaths are one of the most shameful arrows in our quiver of embarrassment as a nation and it would still require huge effort to fight them. Although female education and exposure have some effect in reducing the occurrence of this devious act, a change at the mindset level of the people is

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### **Is the Dowry prohibition Act Ineffective?**

Dowry Prohibition Act, Indian law, enacted on May 1, 1961, intended to prevent the giving or receiving of a dowry. Under the Dowry Prohibition Act, dowry includes property, goods, or money given by either party to the marriage, by the parents of either party or by anyone else in connection with the marriage. The Dowry Prohibition Act applies to persons of all religions in India. The original text of the Dowry Prohibition Act was widely judged to be ineffective in curbing the practice of dowry. Moreover, specific forms of violence against women continued to be linked to a failure to meet dowry demands. As a result, the legislation underwent subsequent amendment. In 1984, for example, it was changed to specify that presents given to a bride or a groom at the time of a wedding are allowed. The law required, however, that a list be maintained describing each gift, its value, the identity of the person giving it, and the person's relation to either party to the marriage. The act and relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code were further amended to protect female victims of dowry-related violence. Another layer of legal protection was provided in 2005 under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.

Amendments to the original Dowry Prohibition Act also established minimum and maximum punishments for giving and receiving dowry and created a penalty for demanding dowry or advertising offers of money or property in connection with a marriage. The Indian Penal Code was also modified in 1983 to establish specific crimes of dowry-related cruelty, dowry death, and abetment of suicide. These enactments punished violence against women by their husbands or their relatives when proof of dowry demands or dowry harassment could be shown. Despite the revisions, however, the practice of dowry and dowry-related violence still occurs in varying degrees within several communities and socioeconomic groups of India.

In India, 21 women die every day due to dowry-related violence. The cultural practice of dowry perpetuates the oppression, torture, and murder of countless women. The earliest laws to address the issue of dowry were passed in 1961. However, it is the 1983 statute – known as the “Anti Cruelty” statute or Section 498A of the IPC – which remains the most widely implemented, discussed, and controversial. The law was set up as a reactionary measure to

immediately address the dowry problem and create distance between the victim and the alleged abusers. However, reactionary laws – often meant to appease the public – are rarely crafted after careful analysis of what is needed and what will work.

Several decades later, Section 498A remains extremely ineffective at addressing dowry-related crimes against women. Further, the misuse of the law has led to an alarming number of innocent women (and men) getting caught in the criminal justice system.

### **Dowry death-related Laws**

#### **Understanding Section 498A**

Section 498A criminalizes the act of cruelty toward a wife. Under the law, the offence of dowry harassment is cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable. The law requires the victim's testimony to be taken as evidence entirely and gives the power of arrest to the police at the request of the complainant. This means that no investigation or evidence is required before the arrest. Based on this flawed premise, Section 498A inevitably falls short on various fronts, with enormous consequences for those who get trapped by it.

Further, since dowry is embedded within the social fabric of India, the law fails on the fundamental basis upon which it was created: protecting women from dowry-related harassment, violence, and death. Since the inception of the laws, many people have been arrested; however, conviction rates have remained consistently low. In 2012, nearly 200,000 people were charged with dowry offences, with only 15% of the accused convicted.

#### **IPC SECTION 304-B**

At the point when the passing of a wedded lady is caused by any consumes or substantial damage or happens under irregular or suspicious conditions inside seven years of her marriage span and it has appeared that soon before her demise she was subjected to cold-bloodedness or badgering or torment by her better half or any relative of her spouse or in-laws for, or in association with, any interest for settlement, such passing should be called as "settlement passing", and such spouse or relative or in law s esteemed to have caused her demise. Whoever confers endowment passing might be rebuffed with detainment for a term least of seven years which may reach out to detainment forever.

#### **IEA SECTION 113-A**



This section deals with the presumption of abetment of suicide of married women. At the point when the inquiry is whether the commission of suicide by lady had been abetted by her better half or any relative her better half and it is demonstrated that she had conferred suicide inside a time of even a long time from the date of her oversee and her spouse or such relative of her better half had subjected to remorselessness, the court may assume, having respect to the various conditions of the case, that such suicide had been abetted by her better half or by such relative of her better half.

### IEA SECTION 113-B

This section deals with the presumption of dowry death. At the point when the inquiry is whether a man has conferred the share passing of a lady and it is demonstrated that soon before her demise, such lady had been subjected by such individual to remorselessness or provocation for, or in association with, any interest for endowment, the court might assume that such individual had caused the share passing.

### Misuse of the law

Owing to its premise of the case is based entirely on the victim's testimony, there is the critical issue of the law being misused. With the rise of divorce rates in India, dowry laws have long been suspected for misuse by women aided by their lawyers to harass their husbands and relatives. In 2011, a trial court termed the misuse of provisions of dowry harassment by women as "legal terrorism." Kamini Lau (an Additional Sessions Judge) stated, "The provisions of Section 498A are not a law to take revenge, seek recovery of dowry or to force a divorce but a penal provision to punish the wrongdoers. The victims (women) are often misguided into exaggerating the facts by adding those persons as accused who are unconnected with the harassment under a mistaken belief that by doing so, they are making a strong case. "So began a series of attempts to address the misuse of Section 498A. In 2014, the Supreme Court ordered the police to follow a nine-point checklist before arresting anyone on a dowry complaint. The court introduced this to avoid Section 498A from being misused as a weapon by "disgruntled wives" and for it to serve its main purpose of protecting women from dowry abuse and harassment. These changes stipulated that any individual accused would not be automatically subjected to arrest, there would be a prior investigation. This was met with strong opposition because the victims of dowry harassment and their experiences had been ignored while deciding these changes. By introducing this

nine-point checklist, the swiftness and immediacy of action from the police would be compromised.

The law is not working; not only is it an inadequate measure to address the problem of dowry, its misuse leads to innocent people being arrested and incarcerated. Currently, the battle to prevent such misuse is being lobbied by Men's Rights Activists, whose focus remains on the rights of men being violated. However, some entire families are potentially facing wrongful arrest and conviction. Fixing the law is a feminist issue. Changes to the law need to protect the rights of the victim and the accused.

### **Dowry as a Factor of Violence in Marriage**

Violence is a vast topic which includes all sort of cruelty done to a woman like pressure for dowry, marital rape the violence and deaths associated with dowry demands constitute domestic violence. Similar to acts of domestic violence, the acts used in dowry-related offences include physical, emotional, and economic violence, as well as harassment as a means to exact compliance or to punish the victim. Victims will be best served when protected by an expansive domestic violence legislative framework that encompasses dowry-related violence. Drafters should define the scope of prohibited acts within a domestic violence framework, taking into account the dynamics of dowry-related violence. Lawmakers should include violence and harassment related to dowry demands in a definition of domestic violence. Demands for dowry should not be a requisite element in domestic violence laws, however, because of their subtle and often implicit nature.

Yes, Dowry-related abuse is often associated with the wider family but takes the form of domestic abuse and can include all form of violence including domestic violence, sexual violence, acid throwing, burning and other forms of violence. In extreme cases, it involves murders that are often masked by the perpetrators as suicides or accidents – often through burning. Dowry abuse has been particularly noted when a husband or his family believe the dowry to be inadequate or where the dowry has not been paid. Excessive dowry demands can include the requirement for the bride's family to provide large amounts of cash, jewellery, property or other expensive goods.

The patriarchal setup has been deeply rooted in Indian society since time immemorial. It may be believed that this system laid the foundation stone for the abuse of women. Domestic

violence affects women from every social background irrespective of their age, religion, caste, or class. It is a violent crime that not only affects a person and her children but also has wider implications for society. Although the root behind the crime is hard to decipher, certain reasons behind the violence can be traced to the stereotyping of gender roles, and the distribution of power.

The definition of violence has evolved over the years to an extent it not only includes physical forms of violence but also emotional, mental, financial, and other forms of cruelty. Thus, the term domestic violence includes acts that harm or endangers the health, safety, life, limb, or wellbeing (mental or physical) of the victim, or tends to do so, and includes causing: physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, and economic abuse, perpetrated by any person who is or was in a domestic relationship with the victim. Before the enactment of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (“DV Act”), the victim could approach the court under Section 498-A of the Penal Code, 1860 which provides for ‘husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty’ wherein only a certain set of offence dealing with cruelty to married women was the only recourse. All other instances of domestic violence within the household had to be dealt with under the offences that the respective acts of violence constituted under the IPC without any regard to the gender of the victim.

## BRILLOPEDIA

Indian Penal Code, 1860 is the first and foremost substantive criminal law to impose certain amendments in itself regarding cruelties against women, mainly married women. Section 498 A deals with certain definitions of the term cruelty which read as:

1. Any willful conduct which is likely to drive the woman to commit suicide or to cause grave injury or danger to life, limb or health of the woman; or
2. Harassment of the women with a view of coercing her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any property or any valuable security or is on account of her failure by her or any person related to her to meet any demands.

The provision of the Dowry Prohibition Act mainly deals with issues relating to dowry and its related offences in general. Dowry means the transfer of parental property at the time of marriage of their daughter.

- It is a system of providing a certain amount of financial assistance to the groom’s family either in the form of money, property, gold etc. Demanding and acceptance of

a dowry, even though banned in India, is still seen in many parts of the country as the people are not willing to stop the prevailing customary practice.

- The Act provides various provisions relating to the term 'dowry' as well as provisions relating to the punishment for the offence of dowry and the concerned officers who are entitled to the authority to look into such matters.
- The Act also provides certain powers to make rules and regulations regarding giving and accepting dowry. But the fact is that almost all the marriages are taking place in the certain assurance given by the family of both the spouses mainly the bride.

Apart from this Act, we have the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

- This Act deals with certain special provisions mainly for married women who are facing certain cruelties from their husband as well as his relatives and other members of the family.
- It states that any physical or mental harm, injury or harassment to women for any unlawful demands or dowry or any other property may be termed as domestic violence. Chapter III deals with the duties of various protection officers, security officers as well as magistrates in preventing them from any such offences. It also provides for the importance and needs of medical facilities for the aggrieved person.
- The Act also deals with certain provisions such as duties of Government in such issues, nature of compensation as well as liabilities of the accused person if found guilty.

Dowry being a socio-legal problem cannot be tackled by law alone unless members of the society come forward and actively co-operate with the law-enforcement agencies. There is an urgent need to create social awareness and mobilize public opinion against dowry through an intensive educational programme at all levels, particularly in the rural pockets. More recently, several voluntary (non-governmental) agencies and social organizations are doing a commendable job in helping the dowry victims and exposing the perpetrators of this crime with the necessary help of community assistance and guidance. The legal aid workers, including the law teachers and students, should also take the initiative in the dowry eradication campaigns through an intensive legal literacy programme not only in the cities and the towns but in remote village areas as well. Of late, with the growing importance of human rights jurisprudence, the Human Rights Commission is also seized with the problem of crime against women and its expanding dimensions. Timely intervention by the local

agencies of the commission in dowry-related crimes would certainly contribute to improving women's conditions and bringing about peace in the matrimonial homes. The Women Commission, established in 1993, should also take a lead in this direction. The Commission should, however, be endowed with statutory powers and authority to bring the culprits of dowry crimes to book and provide adequate to dowry victims.

Mahalingappa was arrested under sections 498(A), 304(B), 306 & provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act, in April 2008 following the death of his wife Narasamma. Narasamma allegedly died by suicide in their matrimonial house on Apr 21, 2008. Her parents registered a police complaint alleging that their daughter was mentally & physically harassed by Mahalingappa for dowry during the four years of their marriage. While the Trial Court convicted Mahalingappa for dowry death & cruelty, he was acquitted under charges of Abetment (section 306 of IPC). Mahalingappa moved to High Court in late 2010 after a Tumkuru Fast Track Court convicted him in Oct 2010 & handed over various sentences of simple imprisonment, which were to run simultaneously.

Representing Mahalingappa, advocate R Srinivasa Gowda, an Amicus Curie (friend of the Court) argued that evidence given by Narasamma's parents & her brothers was 'inconsistent & filled with contradictions in respect of the allegations made in the complaint & the prosecution had failed to establish the guilt'.

"The prosecution is required to prove the guilt of the accused & also establish the ingredients of the offences levelled against the accused with material documents," argued advocate Gowda. Govt pleader M Diwakar Maddur representing the prosecution told the Court that 'harassment meted out to deceased Narasamma by her husband was inside the four corners of the wall & it can't be said that the accused hadn't abetted her to consume poison.'

### **Misuse of the Law**

There is growing criticism that the laws governing dowry are often being misused, particularly the section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 which is observed by many people of the society as being subject to misuse. According to the NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau), in 2015, nearly 300,000 people including 48,951 women, were arrested regarding dowry offences. However, only 20% of the accused were convicted.

In the case of Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar & Anr., it was stated by the Supreme Court that the Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 had become a deadly weapon in the hands of disgruntled wives where innocent people were charged and arrested without any

evidence due to non-bailable and cognizable nature of the law. The decision was received with mixed reviews from both sectors of the society as the feminists thought it weakened the negotiating power of women and Others welcomed the decision as a landmark judgment to uphold the human rights of innocent people.

**Nisha Sharma Lawsuit:** The case of Nisha Sharma was an anti-dowry lawsuit in India. It began in 2003 when Nisha Sharma accused her prospective husband, Munish Dalal, of demanding dowry. The case got much coverage from national and international media. Nisha Sharma was portrayed as a youth icon and a role model for other women. However, it was later discovered that Nisha had forged the charges to wiggle out of the wedlock, and in 2012 all accused were acquitted.

Dowry is a cultural and social problem that cannot be eradicated by law alone. For its eradication, society will need to fight from the grassroots level. The rapid increase in dowry deaths among newly married females has drawn the eye of the masses and various socio-welfare organisations. This has forced the government of India to adopt certain anti-dowry measures but they are not sufficient to fight this social devil whose roots are very deeply set in the country. Besides, old socio-cultural sanctions for the dowry system and near-complete dependence of Hindu women on their husbands and in-laws in all matters create further problems.

### **Scope and Limitation of the study**

The focus of the present study is on the Socio-Economic, Cultural and religious aspects that affect or influence women's rights and the reasons for causing various problems for women victims of Dowry. For a better understanding of the present study, it would be necessary to grasp the information regarding the offences related to dowry imposing major obstacles to lead a healthy family life in the familial atmosphere. The rising incidences of crimes and violence's against women are compounded by the massive challenges of caste, ethnic, conflict, religious and revivalist forces. Because of illiteracy and poor out-reach of legal services; women are more often than not ignorant about their rights. There are overwhelming shreds of evidence to indicate a wide gap between the constitutional mandates and disturbing trends in social reality. The governmental apparatus and society do not appear to have come to terms with the implications of this study area. Since the scope of domestic violence against

women is very wide, the researcher has confined the study only to the dowry-related offences covered under sections 302,304-B, 306, 34,498-A of IPC and the relevant provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act and the new laws on the Dowry violence

### **Conclusion**

Settlement demise is a consuming everyday issue of the Indian culture. It ought to be acknowledged that the needed outcome can't be picked up by sanctioning of law alone against share. This social revile must be assaulted by a multipronged and composed approach by police, lady's welfare associations, presumed open workers, and legal and by granting hindrance discipline to all guilty parties. In any case, a change in the instructive status of the females and giving fewer demanding openings for work at the entryway step or independent work offices will help to confine the occurrences of share. Likewise, instructive cum mindfulness projects ought to be composed comfortable time of marriage to stop the spouse from devouring mixers, drugs or on the other hand betting, confining to monogamy and gaining cash sincerely by sheer diligent work instead of creating the desire for income sans work. As we would see it, a sane and common-sense approach on the previously mentioned issue will be useful. The settlement is paid as money and products, for example, adornments, family unit apparatuses and autos to the husband or his folks by the lady's family. It has been illicit in India since 1961 yet stays ordinary – with awful results. Ladies have submitted suicide since they couldn't confront badgering over endowment instalment. Others have been killed by their significant other or in-laws for not taking care of their settlement requests. Around 8,000 settlements are recorded every year in India, as indicated by the national wrongdoing's insights agency. Two ladies in their 20s submitted suicide over endowment badgering around the same time a month ago in Gurgaon, a cutting-edge satellite city of Delhi, where the quantity of settlement ascended from 12 of every 2015 to 20 a year ago, as per the Times of India, an expansion of 66.7 for each penny. For another situation detailed a month ago in Hyderabad, a 21-year-old lady kicked the bucket after her better half and guardian's in-law poured lamp fuel on her and set fire to her in light of an argument about the settlement. On Monday, a product build in Hyderabad was accounted for to have hanged her in the wake of being hassled for settlement instalments by her better half, even even though her family had officially given him arrive and generous measures of gold and money at the season of marriage. There is no significant decrease in matrimonial crime rates even after the legislation of dowry prohibition laws in India Hence hypothesis is proved.

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