

“Legislative and Judicial Aspects of Dowry Death”

Vandana Jain¹

BBA LLB

*School of Excellence in Law,
TNADLU*

ABSTRACT

“..Here I lie,
Here I lie-
Burnt, whipped, thrashed-
Punished appropriately for the birth of the nuisance,
Punished appropriately for the years I served.
Punished for I could not give you more”

When a woman is married she enters into a new relationship where she has to leave all her maternal house and spend rest of her life at matrimonial house. Every woman when she gets married has ample of expectations as to her conjugal life. She demands the respect and dignity which she has received all her life.

Even after a lot of sacrifices she is subjected to lot of harassments and prejudices. In this era of woman empowerment, she is prone to various injustice, one of which is Dowry Death. It is one of most serious crimes where a woman loses her life because she is not able to fulfil the demands of her in laws’.

This Article aims to provide an insight into dowry death and various legislations and judicial interpretation on it. It also aims to show how legal reforms have their effect on social reforms.

Keywords: dowry, death, woman, crime

DOWRY DEATH – ALL ABOUT IT!!!

Death can be of two types- natural and unnatural. The question to be considered under this Article is whether the death of the bride at her matrimonial house is a natural death or unnatural death. Can it be treated as a normal death? Well, to answer this question we would look into the Indian Penal Code where in under Section 304-B they have laid down that, for a death to be taken as dowry death the following requirements are to be fulfilled.

(i) If the death of a woman is caused by any burns or bodily injury or occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances within seven years of her marriage.

¹ Student, B.B.A., LL.B(Hons) IV year, School of Excellence in Law, TNADLU.

- (ii) Before her death she was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or any relative of her husband.
- (iii) Such cruelty or harassment relates to demand for dowry.

If the above conditions are satisfied, it is directly presumed that the death of the bride is caused due to her husband or his relatives. The law is presumed to protect the interest of the women. Also, there is lack of direct evidence to such cases of bride burning and it difficult to prove the nature of death.

PRESUMPTION AS TO DOWRY DEATH:

When the question is whether a person has committed the dowry death of a **women** and it is shown that soon before her death such woman had been subjected by such person to cruelty or harassment for, or in connection with, any demand for dowry; the court shall presume that such person had caused the dowry death.

In the case of **State of Punjab v. Iqbal Singh**². The Supreme Court clarified the position as to why the necessity to introduce Section 113-B in the Indian Evidence Act was felt – “The legislative intent is clear to curb the menace of dowry deaths, etc. with a firm hand. It must be remembered that since crimes are generally committed in privacy of residential houses and in secrecy, independent and direct evidence is not easy to get. That is why the legislature has by introducing Section 113-B³ in the Evidence Act tried to strengthen the prosecution hands by permitting a presumption to be raised if certain foundation facts are established and the unfortunate event has taken place within seven years of marriage”.

This period of seven years is considered to be the turbulent one after which the legislature assumes that the couple would have settled down in life.

When the question at issue is whether a person is guilty of dowry death of a woman and the evidence discloses that immediately before her death she was subjected by such person to cruelty and/or harassment for, or in connection with, any demand for dowry.

In **Ram Kumar vs State of Punjab** it was submitted that the presumption shall be raised only if:

- (1) the question before the court must be whether the accused has committed the dowry death of a woman.
- (2) The woman was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or his relatives.
- (3) Such cruelty or harassment was for, or in connection with any demand for dowry.

² **AIR 1991 SC 1532**

³ Presumption as to dowry death.—When the question is whether a person has committed the dowry death of a woman and it is shown that soon before her death such woman has been subjected by such person to cruelty or harassment for, or in connection with, any demand for dowry, the Court shall presume that such person had caused the dowry death. Explanation.—For the purposes of this section, “dowry death” shall have the same meaning as in section 304B, of the Indian Penal Code, (45 of 1860).

(4) Such cruelty or harassment was soon before her death.

A conjoint reading of Section 113-B of the Act and 304-B⁴ I.P.C. shows that there must be material to show that soon before her death the victim was subjected to cruelty or harassment. Prosecution has to rule out the possibility of a natural or accidental death so as to bring it within the purview of the 'death occurring otherwise than in normal circumstances'. 'Soon before' is a relative term and it would depend upon circumstances of each case and no straitjacket formula can be laid down as to what would constitute a period soon before the occurrence. There must be existence of a proximate and live link between the effect of cruelty based on dowry demand and the concerned death

In Shindo and Ors. v. State of Punjab⁵, the Supreme Court set aside the high court decision and held that the presumption is relatable to the fact that the prosecution must first spell out the ingredients of the offence and then only can a presumption arise. In the present case we find that the death was an unnatural one and had taken place within seven years of the marriage but the third ingredient that any demand for dowry had been made soon before the death has not been proved. Therefore they cannot invoke section 113B of the Indian Evidence Act.

In the **Om Prakash v. State of Punjab**⁶, the Supreme Court held that while judging the evidence and the circumstances of the case the court has to be conscious of the fact that a death connected with dowry take place inside the house, where outsiders who can be said to be independent witnesses in the traditional change are not expected to be present. Thus it is cleared that there has to be a close proximity between the incidents of cruelty of harassment for demand of dowry and the death of the woman. If the two are distant the presumption will not apply.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE: BASIS OF PUNISHING PERSON FOR CAUSING DOWRY DEATH

In a recent judgement the Supreme Court held that even circumstantial evidence also maybe the basis for punishing a person for causing dowry death.

⁴ 304B. Dowry death.—

(1) Where the death of a woman is caused by any burns or bodily injury or occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances within seven years of her marriage and it is shown that soon before her death she was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or any relative of her husband for, or in connection with, any demand for dowry, such death shall be called "dowry death", and such husband or relative shall be deemed to have caused her death. Explanation.—For the purpose of this sub-section, "dowry" shall have the same meaning as in section 2 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961).

(2) Whoever commits dowry death shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may extend to imprisonment for life.

⁵ Criminal Appeal No. 1902 of 2010

⁶ 1961 AIR 1782, 1962 SCR (2) 254

The Supreme Court Division Bench in **Baldev Krishan v. State of Punjab**⁷, held that where a young house wife died due to burn injuries in her matrimonial home and her dead body was found in the kitchen room and the husband was the only other person staying in the house could not give proper explanation for the burn injury. The circumstances under which the deceased sustained burn injuries show that it was a dowry death especially when the physical and mental ill treatment and harassment done by husband or relative of husband on account of insufficient dowry. But fact is that though circumstantial evidence is the basis of awarding punishment to accused, the circumstantial evidence is not independent evidence and so court should be strict in that case, so that innocent might not be punished.

Paniben v. State of Gujarat⁸, is a case where mother-in-law killed her daughter-in-law by pouring kerosene oil on her body when she was asleep. She ignited her. When she was blazed she cried for help. Husband and the neighbouring people reached there and tried to save her but she had received excessive burns. After that she was removed to the hospital. In the dying declaration she said that her mother in law poured the kerosene oil on her and set her ablaze.

The Supreme Court declared that there was no possibility other coming to a conclusion that she must end her life.

In the **State of Uttar-Pradesh v. Ashoke Kumar Srivastava**⁹, his Lordship said that a caution approach should be made in cases of circumstantial evidence. The court observed- ‘While appreciating circumstantial evidence the court must adopt a very cautious approach and should record a conviction only if all the links in the chain are completely pointing to the guilt of the accused and every hypothesis of innocence is capable of being negative on evidence. Great care must be taken in evaluating circumstantial evidence and if it is relied on reasonably capable of two inferences, the one in favour of the accused must be accepted...’

DOWRY DEATH LAWS IN INDIA:

- UNDER INDIAN PENAL CODE:
- UNDER CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE
- UNDER DOWRY PROHIBITION ACT
- OTHER RELEVANT LAWS

INDIAN PENAL CODE, 1860

Till 1983, there were no provisions for prohibition of offences against married women in The Indian Penal Code 1860. The need to have a proper law to deal with violence against women within the matrimonial home and particularly dowry related offences was needed. The guilty husband and the in-laws could be prosecuted under the general provisions of Indian Penal

⁷ Civil Writ Petition No. 12828 of 2009

⁸ (1992) 2 SCC 474,

⁹ 1992 AIR 840, 1992 SCR (1) 37

code relating to murder, attempt to commit murder, abetment to suicide, causing hurt, assault, or use of criminal force, outraging the modesty of a women, wrongful confinement and causing disappearance of evidence etc. but could not be prosecuted for such grievous offences against married women.

The Criminal law Amendment Act, 1983 created a new offence unknown to criminal law in India. Chapter XX-A entitled ‘**of cruelty by husband or relatives of husband**’ which contains only one section 498-A, was inserted in IPC to deal with increasing instances of dowry demand and such offence was made punishable with imprisonment which may extend up to three years.

- Section 498A

Section-498A¹⁰ was inserted into the Indian penal code in 1983. The object of this section 498A is to deal with a situation when coercion is used for demanding dowry after marriage by husband and in-laws. It also includes physical or mental cruelty. The wordings of this section are enough to apply to other situations of domestic violence”

Despite the dowry prohibition act and section 498-A these laws could not handle the dowry related offences and the constant increase in dowry death attracted the attention of the concerned persons. On the recommendation of the law commission¹¹ the parliament passed a new law in 1986 relating to the offence of dowry death by introducing section 304-B in the IPC. Such deaths were made punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may extend to imprisonment for life.

The Criminal law was amended to create special categories of offence to deal with dowry harassment, cruelty to married women and dowry death.

Section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code itself has further limitations on its scope and does not take cognizance of a woman’s day to day experience of violation in the household. The Section takes cognizance of cruelty only by the husband and his relatives, precluding imposition of any liability if an unmarried, widowed or separated woman is subjected to cruelty by members of her natal family.¹²

In the matter of **Pradeep Kumar Dey and others v. State of West Bengal**¹³, the accused persons-husband and the parents-in-law allegedly killed the deceased for non-fulfilment of

¹⁰ 498A. Husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty.—Whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine. Explanation.—For the purpose of this section, “cruelty” means—

(a) any wilful conduct which is of such a nature as is likely to drive the woman to commit suicide or to cause grave injury or danger to life, limb or health (whether mental or physical) of the woman; or

(b) harassment of the woman where such harassment is with a view to coercing her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any property or valuable security or is on account of failure by her or any person related to her to meet such demand.

¹¹ <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports/report202.pdf>

¹² Ved Kumari, “Gender Analysis of Indian Penal Code”, Eastern Book Company

¹³ W.P. 12555 (W) of 2016

dowry demand by setting her on fire. There was an evidence of brother of the deceased that the deceased was tortured for money. The fact that no one was at home when the parents of the deceased went to her house and the dead body was lying all alone also showed cruel behaviour of the in laws towards the deceased. Accordingly. The court held that the husband and parents-in law are liable to be convicted under Section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code.

- **Section-304-B:-**

Where the death of a woman is caused by any burns or bodily injury or occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances within seven years of her marriage and it is shown that soon before her death she was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or any relative of her husband for, or in connection with, any demand for dowry, such death shall be called "dowry death", and such husband or relative shall be deemed to have caused her death. Whoever commits dowry death shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may extend to imprisonment for life"¹⁴

The object to enact this section was to combat the menace of Dowry-Death.

State of Orissa vs. Ganesh Chandra Jew¹⁵

Section 304-B would be attracted if (a) death of the women caused otherwise under normal circumstances (b) within seven years of her marriage (c) she was subjected to cruelty or harassment before her death by her husband or husband relatives in connection with any demand for dowry

Shanti v. State of Haryana¹⁶

It was held that death by drowning, by poisoning, due to burns, by hanging, by strangulation etc. are the instances of abnormal circumstances of death of a woman. If it takes place within the seven years of her marriage, where the death is unnatural, it is not important whether it was caused due to suicide or homicide and Section 304B will be attracted in either case.

Biswajit Haider @ Babu Haider v. State of West Bengal, the Apex Court held that mere evidence of cruelty and harassment is sufficient to bring an application u/s 304B IPC. It was also said that such cruelty or harassment was for or in connection with the demand for dowry.

Waghmare v. State of Maharashtra¹⁷, for instance the court held that since the applicant had not established that the beating and harassment was with a view to forcing her to commit suicide, or to fulfil the illegal demands of the husband, it did not amount to the offence of cruelty as defined under section 498A of IPC. In this case, the applicant had alleged that her husband and in-laws had started harassing her to obtain a motor cycle, and on one occasion, two months after the marriage, her brother-in-law had poured kerosene on her and set her on fire. The court, after taking note of the fact that the brother-in-law had not been accused in

¹⁴ "<http://www.legalblog.in/2011/02/dowry-death-meaningsupreme-court.htm>

¹⁵ [2004 (8) SCC 40]

¹⁶ AIR 1991 SC 1226

¹⁷ Sessions Case No. 133 of 2001

the case, held that since the incident had occurred prior to the insertion of Section 498A in the IPC, this evidence would not help the complainant/ applicant.

These decisions of the Courts show how courts have misinterpreted Section 498A so as to exonerate perpetrators of violence against women. Several cases also indicate that it is only while setting aside a conviction for dowry death or other grave offences that the courts have held that cruelty under section 498A has not been proved.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE

Section 174 and 176 of Code of Criminal Code, deals with the investigations and inquiry into the causes of unnatural deaths, by the police and magistrate respectively.

Section 174 deals with the inquiry procedure when any case of suicide is reported. Subsection (3) of section 174 was added by the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act. 1983. This amendment was enacted to deal with the increasing incidents of dowry deaths or cases of cruelty to married women by their in-laws. Provision was made for inquest by Executive Magistrates for post-mortem in all cases where a woman has within seven years of her marriage committed suicide (I died in circumstances raising a reasonable suspicion that some other person has committed an offence under s. 498-A of the Indian Penal Code (of Cruelty by husband or relatives of husband). Post-mortem is also provided for in all cases where a married woman has died within seven years of her marriage and a relevance of such women has made a request in this behalf.

DOWRY PROHIBITION ACT:

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF DOWRY PROHIBITION ACT

During the modern times, when India became independent, the Indian women were caught up in the shekels of socio-evils like dowry, sati etc. However, social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Renade, Ishwar Chandra VidyaSagar and Mahatma Gandhi dedicated their lives to the abolition of these social evils like dowry, the fruitful result of their efforts were perceived first in Sind, called the Sind Deti – Leti Act in the year 1939. But this act however, failed.

After independence, however, the two states of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh enacted their own state laws, to stamp out the evil of dowry system. **"The Bihar Dowry Restraint Act, 1950"** and **"The Andhra Pradesh Dowry Prohibition Act, 1958"** for the respective States, but both these enactments failed to achieve the objectives for which they were enacted.

The matter was raised in the Parliament in very first session of the Lok Sabha. Many proposals for restraining dowry were placed in the Parliament in the form of Private Members Bills. During the course of discussions on a non-official Bill in the Lok Sabha in 1953. The Cabinet then decided that the proposal might be held in abeyance till the enactment of the Hindu Succession Act.

After the enactment of the Hindu Succession Act in 1956, the Government felt that a separate legislation to prohibit dowry was not a matter of urgency. On account of pressure both at political and social levels, the Government finally decided to process the legislation.

On 24th April, 1959 the Dowry Prohibition Bill, 1959 was introduced in the Lok Sabha. The Joint Committee presented its report with some amendments in the Bill. Both the Houses of Parliament did not agree with the amendments as reported by the Joint Committee and ultimately the Bill was considered at the Joint Sittings of both the Houses of Parliament held on 6th and 9th May, 1961. The Dowry Prohibition Bill was passed in the Joint Sittings of both the Houses of Parliament and it became an Act - The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961) and it received the assent of the President on 20th May, 1961.

Thus, this Act has given definitions as to what constitutes dowry and under section 8 of the Act provisions related to dowry death is given.

OTHER RELEVANT LAWS:

(1) **THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT 2005** includes actual abuse or the threat of abuse whether physical, verbal, emotional. It also covers harassment for dowry or any other unlawful demands. In 1983, domestic violence was recognized as a specific criminal offence by the introduction of section 498A of the Indian penal code.

(2) **SECTION 113 B OF THE INDIAN EVIDENCE ACT:**

S. 113-B raises a presumption of guilt against any person who has been proved to have subjected the deceased woman, soon before her death, to cruelty or harassment, in connection with dowry.

State of M.P. v. Sk. Lallu¹⁸

A newly wedded wife was subjected to severe beating by her in-laws right from the date of marriage, until she died with 100 per cent burn injuries. It was held that the presumption under this section could be invoked to sentence the accused.

Arun Garg vs. State of Punjab¹⁹

Any set of facts satisfying condition laid down in Section 304-B of IPC would attract Section 113-B of Evidence Act. Section 113-B is rule of evidence introduced to obviate the difficulty of prosecution to prove as to who caused the death of the victim. Section 113-B creates a reputable presumption and accused can rebut the same by adding satisfactory evidence. Under section 498-A and section 304-B would attract only if the death is caused within seven years of marriage.

¹⁸ **1990 Cri. L.J. 129**

¹⁹ [2004 (5) CTC 150 (SC)]

LAW COMMISSION REPORT ON DOWRY DEATH:

The Commission examined Section 304-B IPC in the light of various judicial pronouncements and critically dealt with the substantive as well as procedural aspects of dowry death. The Commission after a detail study submitted that the offence of murder is not the same thing as the offence of dowry death. Though death of bride may be a common element in both the offences, the absence of direct connection between the husband and the death of wife distinguished the offence of dowry death from the offence of murder and is a strong mitigating factor.

Besides, the presumptive character of the offence of dowry death and cardinal principle of proportionality as well as the underlying scheme of the Penal Code would go against the proposed prescription of death sentence in case of dowry death. It was also pointed out that where a case of dowry death also falls within the ambit of the offence of murder, awarding death sentence is legally permissible. According to the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court for award of death sentence, especially, the dictum of 'rarest of rare case, may have to be adhered to in such cases as well.

Therefore, after looking in to the aspects given above, the Commission reached the conclusion that there is no warrant for amending Section 304-B IPC to provide for death sentence. The Commission was seized of this aspect especially, having regard to the fact that the 3 present reference has been a fall out of a Court's Order. However, the Commission found a lot of misgivings and misapprehension associated with the subject of dowry death. Dowry death is quite often confused with the offence of murder. There may be instances where the two may overlap with each other. This gives rise to demand for parity in the matter of sentence in both these cases.

Therefore, the law commission under its 22nd report on dowry death has recommended for increase in the punishment from seven years to ten years on imprisonment.

JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION ON DOWRY DEATH:

Smt. Shanti and Anr vs State of Haryana²⁰ held that:

...where the death of a woman is caused by any burns or bodily injury or occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances within seven years of her marriage and it is shown that soon before the death of the woman she was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or his relations for or in connection with any demand for dowry, such death shall be called 'dowry death' and the husband or relatives shall be deemed to have caused her death and shall be punishable with imprisonment for a minimum of seven years but which may extend to life imprisonment.

State of AP vs. Rajgopal Asawa and others²¹

²⁰ 1991CriLJ1713

²¹ [AIR 2004 (SC) 1933]

The investigating officer recording dying declaration during the course of investigation has to be discouraged.

Dalip Singh vs. State of Punjab²²

In exceptional circumstances, High Court has got powers u/s. 482 of Cr.P.C. to permit the parties in matrimonial cases to compound the offence or to direct Magistrate to give permission to compound the offences.

D. Jayalakshmi vs. State²³

Quashing of criminal proceeding to be in very rare cases. If the complaint involves mala fide with inherent improbabilities, then continuance of the proceedings in such case would amount to abuse of the processes of law. Hence High Court erred in rejecting the petition u/s. 482 of Cr.P.C. Judgement of the High Court set aside. Proceedings quashed.

Narayana Saha vs. State of Punjab²⁴

Prosecution should prove in dowry death case that a little prior to death on issue of demand of dowry by her husband or relatives of husband have subject her to cruelty.

Saruan Kumar Korel and others v. State of West Bengal”, the deceased wife committed suicide within two years of marriage. The evidence of the complaint as regards the act of dowry and harassment inflicted upon the deceased l’or demand of dowry was corroborated by the evidence of other witnesses which were relatives of the deceased. The recovery of suicidal note and its seizure by the police was admitted by the accused. Confirmed that the suicide note was authored by the deceased. Therefore, the court while observing that the charges against the accused have been duly proved, held that the order convicting the accused persons is proper.

Ram Ranjan Maji v. State of West Bengal ' ', the allegations were that the victim committed suicide because of the fact that she was subjected to physical and mental ill-treatment and torture on demands of more dowry by the accused husband and in-laws. The letters written by the victim to her relatives stating about the persistent demand of dowry by the accused persons. The medical evidence also showed that the victim died as a result of burns. The court observed that the theory of victim catching fire in the course of doing household works is untenable. It is proved that the victim died as unnatural death in her matrimonial home. In view of this, the court held that the conviction of the accused persons is proper.

Montu Sk v. State of West Bengal“. The deceased, who was pregnant, was murdered by the accused. Her death took place within three years of her marriage. It was observed that the deceased was continuously tortured. Both physically and mentally, by the accused. The

²² [1979 Cr. L.J. 700]

²³ [1993 Cr.L.J. 3162]

²⁴ (2004(7)SCC 775)

accused continued to raise various demands for money as well as cereals from his in-laws. The deceased was severely beaten up which was evident from the inquest report. Further, the evidence at autopsy surgeon established that the deceased was put to death by the rattling. Her tongue was protruded.

In **Puspawati v. State**²⁵ it was alleged that the husband, mother in law and the brother in law had put to death a young bride by burning her. It was established on facts that after the marriage the young bride was harassed and maltreated for not bringing adequate dowry. Rejecting the bail application, the Delhi H.C. held that there was sufficient prima facie evidence that a gruesome murder had taken place in which the accused appellant were directly involved.

Report of National Commission of Women on Dowry Death

The National Commission for Women in India in one of its annual reports states that 'everyday, almost every six hours, somewhere at some place, in India, a young married woman is being burnt alive or beaten to death or being pushed to commit suicide. Over the past few years, the cases of bride burning have registered a sharp increase throughout India. It was stated that as women make steady progress in all fields, demolishing the so-called male bastions one by one the one thing that seems to elude them is respite from the strangle-hold of dowry.

The overall cases of crime against women have increased to 2, 95,896 in 2013 from 2, 28,650 in 2011²⁶. The proportion of crimes committed against women towards total IPC crimes has increased continually and has reached 11.2 % during 2013. In India 22 women were killed each day in dowry related murders in 2007²⁷. Dowry deaths have increased to 8083 in 2013 from 4648 in 2008. In merely three years the cases of cruelty by husband and relatives have increased to 1, 18,866 in 2013 from 99,135 in 2010. The National Crime Bureau figures reveal that the incidents of cruelty against a wife have continuously increased from 2002 to 2013 and accounted for a large. According to the NCRB records of 2013, in comparison to 28579 reported cases of cruelty by husband and relatives in 1995, the cases have increased to 1, 18,866 by 2013. This is, by any standard a significant increase. However, the conviction rate in cases of cruelty by husband and relatives has gone down from 20.2 in 2011 to 16.0 in 2013. Unfortunately, the conviction rate is the least in cases of cruelty if this is compared with various crimes committed against women.

A STEP TOWARDS REDUCING IT!

This era has continued to witness increase in the number of dowry death. Despite of having numerous laws and guidelines to eradicate this social evil practice, it has strongly set his foot

²⁵ (1992) 2 Crimes 1101 (All): 1992 Cr LJ 3634. 66. (1986) 2 CrLJ 1532

²⁶ National Crime Records Bureau : Crimes in India, 2013

²⁷ UNIFEM Factsheet: Violence Against Women Worldwide

in the country. Here are some suggestion which we can take up to contribute towards changing the existing scenario;

1. Education: Education is the step towards revolution. It is highly important that girls are educated and financially independent. They do not have to depend on their spouse for financial support. This will reduce the dominance of male over female and reduce offences under dowry.
2. Legal awareness:- Law and order plays an important role. It is not to make laws but to implement them for which it is necessary to educate the public about their rights. Therefore, campaigns and legal aid services can help towards it.
3. Equality:- When you treat your son and daughter equally, you will automatically stop demanding dowry. If you treat your daughter and daughter in law the same it will make you realise that demanding dowry is a crime. Imagine your daughter in place of the victim, you will die of shame if you still continue such practice.
4. Easy access to court:- Most cases of dowry death go unreported and justice is not served for a sole reason that access to court is difficult as it involves a complex process. It is necessary that the process is simplified and justice is served.
5. Speedy trial:- It is a common perception among the public that court process is long tiring and time consuming and hence they avoid it. It is necessary to have speedy disposal of these cases.
6. Compensation in form of punishment:-Strict enforcement of punishments towards such crimes is need for the hour.
7. Fight and not bend:- Last not the least, it is an earnest appeal to all the parents and the daughters that please do not be a part of such practice and invite death. If we show a negative response towards their demand, they would not demand at the first place. Giving dowry is punishable the same way demanding it.

CONCLUSION

Women are the embodiment of sacrifice and suffering and her advent to public life should, therefore, result in purifying it, in restraining unbridled ambition and accumulation of property. They are exposed to many offences and one of such is Dowry Death. Greed for money and wealth increases to such a grave state that it takes away the life of innocent girls. The girl who is brought up like a princess and deserves happiness throughout her life under goes so much of pain and sufferings until she loses her dignity and life. It is an alarming need of the hour that we stop this evil practices from increasing more and eating away these beautiful soul.

The rapid social changes in terms of industrialization, urbanization, new avenues of education, new employment opportunities, higher standard of living, soon have increased the incidence and the dimension and magnitude of dowry. It is now important that concrete steps are taken towards reducing this social evil and walk towards a path which protects the life of these girls.