D

Dowry System: Unequalizing Gender Equality



Rajeev Kumar
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, Kharagpur, WB, India

Definitions

Dowry is an asset provided by a father or guardian to a daughter during her marriage; on the other hand, bride price is an amount of money or property or an asset provided by the family of the groom to the family of the bride during the marriage.

The tradition of dower (*meher*) is very different from dowry or bride price – in *meher*, a husband is supposed to provide an amount of money or asset to a wife, which is a token of respect as well as social security during the dissolution of marriage (Singh 2010).

Introduction

A Global Perspective of the Gender Distribution of Wealth

Dowry was considered a social security to women during a post-marriage crisis such as alienation by a husband or another marital conflict (Goody 1976). Similarly, the bride price is still prevalent in many indigenous cultures (Anderson et al. 2018). However, in Muslim marriages, dowry is also in practice along with meher, whereas meher is just a social formality. Dowry custom is prevalent across the world, and it is known by different names in various geographical and cultural locations – in Hindi (*Dahej*), Tamil (*Varadhachanai*), Urdu and Arabic (*Jahez*), Bengali (*Joutuk*), Mandarin (*Jiazhuang*), Turkish (*Ceyiz*), French (*Dot*), and Nepali (*Daijo*) (Harrell and Dickey 1985) – and in African countries it is known as *Idana* (Comaroff and Roberts 1986).

Primarily dowry is related to gender and ownership of the asset and gradually evolved as gender ownership and distribution of wealth. Gender distribution of wealth varies across various countries and cultures. Before marriage, possession of property and assets among women widely varies across different cultures and nations – such distribution of wealth is largely mediated by inheritance law of societal pattern and dowry system (Deere and Doss 2006).

Dowry Culture in European and American Countries

From the medieval period to the early nineteenth century, dowry custom was common in European countries. In the sixteenth century, clandestine marriages in Europe and administration of Catholic churches promoted the dowry system in marriages by mandating parental consent, which mainly violated the right of brides to choose their partner (Sperling 2004). In Italy, this practice of

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020
W.Leal Filho et al. (eds.), *Gender Equality*, Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70060-1_21-1

dowry in marriages was widespread; however, in the Iberian Peninsula, mutual consent in marriages was in practice because of joint ownership in the property and equal inheritance (Sperling 2004). Records of court cases revealed that dowry was widely prevalent in the thirteenth century in England (Steinberg et al. 1971). During those periods in England, marriageable daughters used to be a valuable asset for their guardians because noble families were enhancing their social status by expanding their alliances with royal families (Harris 1993). However, the scenario of dowry customs in the early nineteenth century in Romania was distinct. Though similar to other cultures, dowry was a part of an inheritance to a daughter in Romania – but the assets of dowry were under control of male members of the paternal family of the bride, and they had several legal rights in this regard; eventually, legal empowerment of women provided social security to abandoned, divorced women and their children (Jianu 2009). In the indigenous cultures of America, dowry custom was already in practice, but European colonies greatly influenced it, but unlike European cultures, it was a mutual exchange of gifts between families of bride and groom (Deogaonkar and Deogaonkar 2002; Ferraro and Andreatta 2011). In Mexico, Spanish colonial rules imported dowry culture; however, after marriage, assets and amount of dowry used to go under control of the bride (Mangan 2005).

Similarly in Russian culture, during the sixteenth century, dowry custom was in practice; however, property transferred in the name of dowry was completely under ownership of the bride only – after death or any mishap happened to bride, the amount of dowry would be spent for charitable causes only; and the family of the groom has no right over it (Olga 1993). There is a distinct culture of dowry practiced in Tajikistan, and there is no transfer of property in the name of dowry, somewhat reciprocal gift of traditional dresses to both the families of bride and groom (BBC 2011).

Dowry in Middle East Countries

Iranian tradition of dowry is 1000 years old, there *Jahez* (dowry in Urdu and Arabic language) included materials useful for household life, but jazz was different from meher, which is given by the groom's family to the bride's family according to Sharia law (Ghorayshi 1996). In other Islamic countries, Turkey (Samli 2011), Egypt (Amin and Al-Bassusi 2004), and Morocco (Mir-Hosseini 2000), there was a uniform pattern of dowry custom similar to Iranian dowry custom. Consequently, dowry-related crimes are reported in Turkey (Sallan Gül 2013).

Dowry in Southeast Asian Countries

Dowry practice in China is very similar to India. Daughters would not hold right in property sharing; property would equally be divided among sons. However, the share of a daughter would be given in the form of dowry (Brown 2009). Currently, in modern times, the custom of dowry is diminishing. Pakistan and Afghanistan follow the nature and pattern of dowry system similar to other Islamic countries such as Iran, Turkey, Egypt, and Morocco, and likewise, dowry-related violence occurs in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Gulzar et al. 2012).

In contrast to other Islamic countries, Bangladesh had a custom of joutuk (bride price): according to this, the family of the groom would give dowry to the bride's family, but gradually the tradition of joutuk converted into dowry (Jones 1997). Because of dowry crime against women are often reported in Bangladesh (Huda 2006). Similar to the Indian scenario, in Nepal, dowry demand is on the rise; in fact, this demand is much higher among educated and prosperous classes (Rankin 2003). As a result of the dowry system, sex-selective abortions (Sapkota et al. 2019) and domestic violence against females (Paudel 2007) are reported in Nepal.

However, a progressive change is observed in Sri Lanka regarding dowry tradition – it is declining rapidly compared to other South Asian countries – although dowry custom was deep-rooted in the social fabric of Sri Lanka and witnessed dowry-related offenses too (Pieris and Caldwell 1997).

An Indian Scenario of Dowry Custom

Considering the population, geographical area, and cultural diversity, India is the largest country after China in Southeast Asia. Dowry is followed in the social culture of India. Because of sociocultural, linguistic, and regional diversity in India, an interregional analysis of dowry practice with the perspective of socioeconomic and legal perspective can give an enriched insight to dowry issue and its relation to gender equality. This more in-depth insight into the Indian scenario of dowry custom can be generalized at the global level.

In India, dowry is defined as a material in the form of cash, goods, and movable or immovable property, which is provided by the family of the bride to the family of the groom as one condition of marriage. This practice is being continued from many centuries in India (Gaganpreet and Sukhdev 2013). The definition of "dowry" is not restricted to agreement or demand for payment of dowry before and at the marriage but also includes demands made after marriage (*The State Of Andhra Pradesh* vs. *Raj Gopal Asawa And Anr on 17 March* 2004). However, the word "dowry" should be any property or valuable material given or agreed to be presented in connection with the marriage. The customary payments in connection with the birth of a child or other ceremonies are not involved in the ambit of dowry (*Satvir Singh And Ors* vs. *the State Of Punjab And Anr on 27 September 2001* 2001).

Origin of dowry can be traced back to the tradition to provide the gift in the form of jewelry, electrical appliances, furniture, bedding, crockery, utensil, or other materials needed for household use for newly wedded couple to start their married life (Diwan and Diwan 1997; Gaganpreet and Sukhdev 2013). However, concerning the presence of dowry culture in ancient and medieval India, there are various remarks of authors which are conflicting to each other and unable to produce any consistent fact (Tambiah and Goody 1973; Witzel 1996).

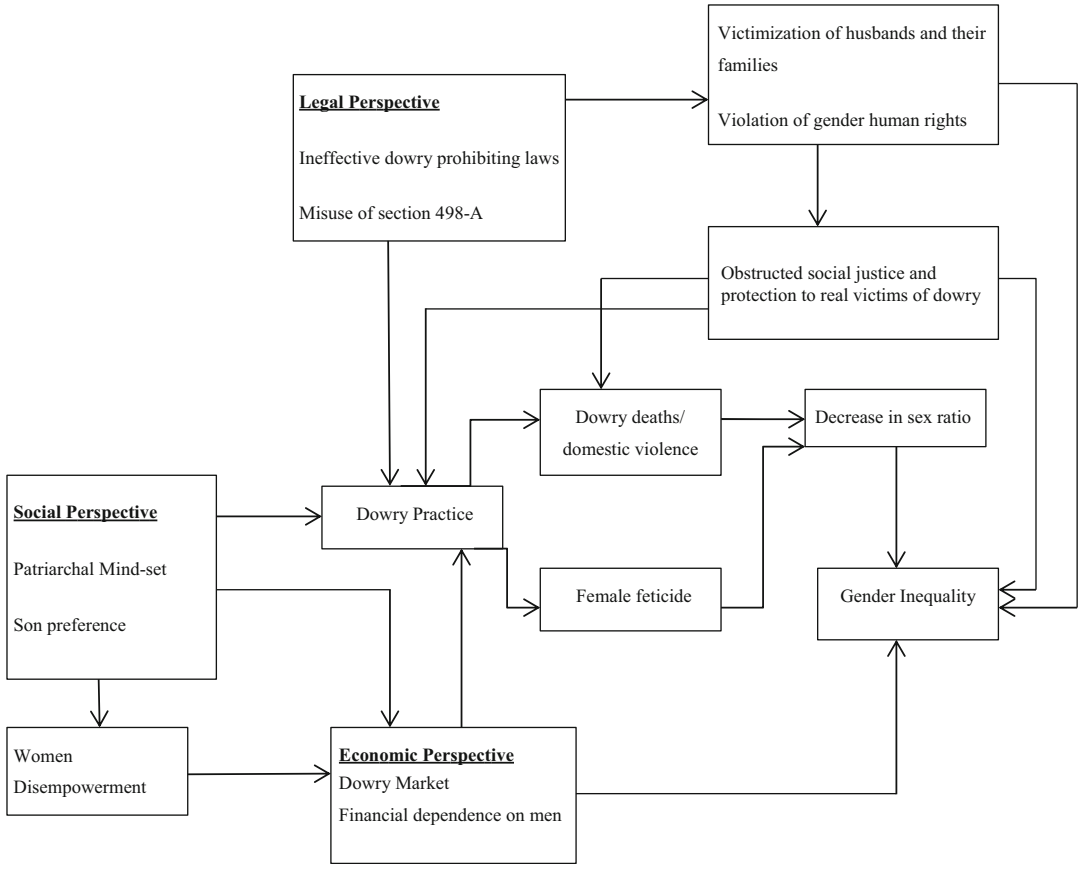
Regional and Community Variation of Dowry in India

The practice of dowry is prevalent across most of the cultures, religions, castes, and regions of India (Sachdeva 1998). However, cultural and community differences don't discourage this practice because of direct monetary benefits. In the Indian states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Odisha, the practice of dowry is highly prevalent; even high rates of dowry-related deaths are reported from these states (Babu and Babu 2011). In both north and south regions, the tradition of dowry is practiced, even among Muslim and Christian societies also; however, in the north region, dowry is practiced among both high and lower class, but in south regions, it is mostly among high-class people (Caplan 1984).

The demand for dowry amount is increasing in Punjab, where the sex ratio is very low and there are high rates of reported cases of female infanticides (Makino 2018). On the other hand, dowry is practiced at a very large level in Kerala, which holds the highest sex ratio and literacy rate in India (Kodoth 2008). However, dowry-related deaths occur much lower in Kerala because of the highest literacy rate among women (Babu and Babu 2011). Though divorce doesn't sound a healthy practice for matrimonial alliances, nevertheless it may be a remedy for women stuck in abusive marital bond. In the Kerala state, smooth facilitation of divorce and awareness of women's right prevent women from dowry-related deaths (Vasudevan et al. 2015). Both Punjab and Kerala share one common trend – high immigration to foreign countries (Walton-Roberts 2014) – which increases the wealth and family status and, consequently, dowry price of grooms (Biao 2005).

Gender Inequality and Association with a Dowry

Gender equality is an essential goal of Sustainable Development Goals. Across the globe, many countries are meeting the goal of gender equality, though girls' enrollment in schools and women's participation in politics are noticeably observed which are one of the markers of gender equality (Sachs 2012). Dowry custom is closely related to gender inequality, and it is synonymous of the gender distribution of wealth (Deere and Doss 2006) and correlated with gender discrimination and gender disempowerment; thus in dowry or



Dowry System: Unequalizing Gender Equality, Fig. 1 Conceptual diagram of the antecedent, perpetuating factors, and adverse outcome of dowry practice and its association with gender inequality

bride price system, the bride and groom are considered only a commodity (Riley 1997).

The dowry system is a complex social phenomenon. An issue of gender equality and women empowerment is closely associated with the practice of dowry. In this entry, I will discuss the issue of dowry system in India in a regional, economic, social, demographic, and legal perspective (Fig. 1).

Dowry-Related Crimes in India

Initially, dowry was a social tradition, but with time, it became a social evil, and a voluntary gift turned into a forceful demand (Gaganpreet and Sukhdev 2013). When the dowry demands were not met, consequently, the deaths of brides began to come in light (Sachdeva 1998). There is no available database on specific dowry deaths. However, hospital data reported fire-related deaths in India; all those deaths shared the common cause: kitchen accidents, self-immolation, and domestic violence. Most of these deaths occurred to married females of 15–34 years of age group. These deaths directly suggested its association with dowry demand (Sanghavi et al. 2009). Because after the death of one wife, men had the option to marry again and fetch a dowry from the family of a new bride (Jutla and Heimbach 2004). A bride burning is not only a social and legal issue but a significant public health concern also and demands intervention from a health perspective too (Kumar and Kanth 2004). Despite strict legal enforcement, dowry demand is still in practice and taking away lives of brides (Nigam 2017). These dowry-related deaths share a significant portion of all cases of

female homicide; surprisingly, it was noticed that most of the perpetrators are either intimate partner or family member (Singh 2018b).

Initially, it was hypothesized that dowry problems are due to poor awareness of the law, the lower position of women, and less education of women (Sachdeva 1998). However, with the increasing modernization and escalated workforce participation of women and their pivotal role in the economy, the practice of dowry is still prevalent in society, and it is increasing, mainly because of growing materialism (Srinivasan and Lee 2004).

Economic Perspective

Formation of the Marriage Market

According to the hierarchy of human needs, a human being has its social obligation and a need for procreation and to form his/her own family (Maslow 1943). An institution of marriage was evolved to meet this need. Gradually this institution of marriage is converted into a marriage market (Kodoth 2008). The marriage market was automatically established to cater to the necessity of matching the compatible bride and groom for forming a family of procreation. With this market, a chain of demand and supply was also created. Economics of dowry is deeply rooted in the sociocultural system of India. With the growing economy, societies are getting modernized, but due to lack of respect toward rights and individual identity of women, and narrow mindset, and with considerably enhanced materialism, this is merely a pseudo-modernization, which is further perpetuating devaluation of women. The foundation of the dowry market lies in the overvaluation of grooms and depreciation of the brides. The devaluation of women is the result of consistent disempowerment through various phases which lies deep in the social fabrics (Esteve-Volart 2004).

Social Perspective

Gender Stereotype and Discrimination

In India, there is a patriarchal social system; therefore, the socioeconomic condition of women has been inferior to men (Figes 1970). This disempowered position of women begets further disempowerment. On the other hand, culturally, women are considered deity or Shakti symbolically in the Indian religious system (Wadley 1977) because, in the ancient period, women were having a high position in society (Bader 2013). However, from the medieval period onward, the status of women began to decline.

In Indian societies, sons are given prime importance, and girls are often neglected. Daughters are even poorly fed and given less immunization, which further leads to poor health and early mortality of girl children (Raymond 1994).

Consequently, women, from their childhood itself, have been subjected to discrimination in their own family. They were given food of lower nutritional quality compared to the male child in the same family (Pande 2003); women have been deprived of participating in sports or other activities involving physical activities, as these activities were considered the men's arena (Harrison et al. 2009). As a result, their physical and psychological development was lower than males (Johnson and Johnson 2001).

There have been many gender stereotypes in Indian societies – the husband will be a breadearner, and women will be a housewife. A narrow meaning of housewife was devised – a woman who doesn't hold her own independent identity, she is merely a caretaker of household activities, because she can't cope with men in the competitive world, she is just dependent on the earnings of her husband. This narrow meaning of housewife was furthermore widened – bringing up children, taking care of other members of the family, and executing other household activities holds no value compared to duties performed by men (Dasgupta and Basu 2011).

This gender stereotype began to reflect in every arena of life. Women were not encouraged for higher studies. Their education was just for

formality, thinking that their career has no meaning; they have to manage only household duties. A prejudice against girls was developed that they cannot study the complex science subject like boys (Tomasetto et al. 2011). Even those girls were educated, they were not encouraged to do the job or make their career (Correll 2004).

Because of those reasons, girls have been physically, educationally, and economically weaker than men and became dependent on men for their life. Their husband became their lifesaver rather than a life partner. And gradually, it became a tradition (Greenstein 2000; Carr 2004).

After getting a good education, males got opportunities to do a job and build their careers. On the contrary, a disempowered girl became a burden to her parents. To get rid of this burden, the parents of the girl began to find a suitable life partner-cum-lifesaver for them (Babu and Babu 2011).

Socioeconomic Factors of Dowry Practice

Here the political economy of the marriage market depends on multiple factors that decide the markers of compatibility. Those factors are age, income, socioeconomic status of parents, and caste.

The age of marriage is an essential factor in deciding the amount of dowry. To avoid huge payment in the form of dowry, parents marry their daughters at an early age and sometimes below marriageable age; they do so to get rid of their liability at a lower payment of dowry. Girls who are married before the age of 18 years have poor coping skills, feel helpless, and more likely to commit suicide than girls of mature age (Babu and Babu 2011). A study conducted by Kodoth (2008) described the parameters of the dowry market of Kerala; there to marry an overage girl, i.e., above 30 years, parents have to pay a higher amount of dowry, because overage is considered a deficit in the girl.

Poverty is another factor in reinforcing the dowry market. Families who have lower socioeconomic background find dowry as an opportunity to enhance their socioeconomic status. When they receive an insufficient amount of dowry, they pressurize the bride and her family and inflict violence (Babu and Kar 2009), whereas it has also been noted that an economic-dependence of women decreases the dowry-demand, and bride-price increases due to the disempowered position of women (Randeria and Visaria 1984).

Caste-Based Societies and Dowry Demand

Casteism is an active promoter of dowry practice. A tendency in marriage within caste and subcaste is encouraged by leaders of particular caste associations. There is a variation of numbers of suitable brides and grooms across a diversity of caste and community. There is also variation in the dowry price across various castes and communities (Kodoth 2008). Because of a limited number of boys who were educated, financially sound, and having origin from reputed families, their demand in the sphere of particular community and caste increased. Thus a competition emerged among the families of brides to get an alliance with the suitable groom. Economically well-off families decided to offer a higher price to win such race. And in this way, the dowry market is formed (Caplan 1984).

Social pressure is a strong deterrent to solemnize intercaste marriage. People belong to a particular caste or community; they are bound to follow the norms of that community; each member is affiliated with the community, and affiliation is the need of human beings (Rofe 1984). In the case of nonadherence to community norms, there is always a fear of ostracization from the community. Giving dowry and marriage within caste or community are also such pressure. Many times the need for social affiliation is converted into affiliation dependency, and this affiliation dependency is exploited, and thus, community members are pressurized to give dowry. The practice of dowry is glorified by those stakeholders of the marriage market who have benefited from it. Some parents with high socioeconomic status afford to offer a dowry to seek an alliance with a reputed family and compatible groom. These people glorify the practice of dowry because it shows their socioeconomic reputation. This phenomenon of glorification of dowry can be explained by social labeling theory, where the behavior of the individual is controlled

by the superior people of the community (Adam 1978). When various caste and communities are merged, then their equation of demand and supply of compatible brides and grooms are somewhat equalized, and dowry market loses their impact. The incidences of dowry practices occur less in intercaste marriage or casteless societies than the same caste or caste-oriented societies (Anderson 2003).

Female Feticide and Dowry

Female feticide or female infanticides are the adverse repercussions of the dowry system. It is because sons hold functional value in the dowry market; the male child is primarily preferred in families. And because of widely prevalent son preference in Indian societies, girls are generally killed in the womb of mothers, so the burden of dowry can be avoided (Saravanan 2002; Garg and Nath 2008; Bhalotra et al. 2018). If sex ration continues to fall, there will be a shortage of marriageable girls, which may either reduce the demand for dowry or reverse the dowry system (Jeffery 2014). Girls are perceived as a financial burden on the family (Yadav et al. 2018), because money spent on her education and bringing up will not be repaid as sons do in the form of dowry; even women who give birth to a female child are looked down upon in family and society (Muzamil and Farhat 2016). Another reason is that women hailing from the lower socioeconomic background suffer domestic violence on account of not bringing robust dowry amount; thereby, some parents prefer to kill the girl in the womb to avoid humiliation in later life (Chander et al. 2018). Despite growing modernization, an educational campaign, and strict legislation against fetus detection and selective abortion, still a sizeable group of people seeking preference of son have devised new technology to do female feticide through the mobile van and portable ultrasound (Bhattacharya and Singh 2016). Because outwardly people may show so-called modernism and broadmindedness, but they can't leave their narrow, patriarchal mindset.

Legal Aspect

Inheritance Rights of Women

According to Hindu law, the streedhan – a gift provided by relatives to her during the marriage – was her only asset, which she could utilize (Srinivasan 1984).

Hindu Succession Act was enacted in 1956 to provide equal rights of property to daughters and sons, but, it would not give full power to daughters, whereas sons hold coparcenary rights by birth, but daughters are deprived of it. Later the amendment made in 2005 in the Hindu Succession Act, daughters were given equal rights in the paternal property (Deininger et al. 2013).

The property rights of tribal women are governed by customary laws, which almost deny her of succession; she doesn't hold share even in agriculture land. A majority of Indian Christians were still governed by the customary laws, which prohibited daughters from inheriting rights in the parental property (Khan 2000).

Inheritance laws of almost all the communities of India have gender bias with regard to property rights of daughters. Therefore in many cases, the daughter demanded dowry as part of their share of the property. Thus, this unjust situation of property shares somewhat promotes the dowry system in India.

Legislation Against Dowry and Domestic Violence in India

To curb the menace of dowry-related crimes, the government of India enacted the Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961. Section 498-A was added in the Indian Penal Code to deal with the dowry-related offense, domestic violence, and mental cruelty. It is a cognizable, non-bailable, non-compoundable act. However, there are certain conditions when dowry law is not violated: if gifts in marriage are given voluntarily by parents of the bride and if the list of gifts with its cost is maintained on a paper with the signature of both the parties. Therefore there is a generalized notion in the families that every dowry is voluntary, and it is well accepted in the society. Dowry exchange in families is not considered an offense or violation of the law. Instead, it is taken as private familial matter

Dowry System: Unequalizing Gender Equality, Table 1 Crime against women and their conviction rate

Crime against women	Number of incidences reported	Conviction rate (%)
Cruelty by husband or family members (Section 498A)	1,10,378	12.2
Assault on women/outraging modesty (Section 354)	84,746	21.8
Kidnapping	64, 519	21.4
Rape (Section 376)	38,947	25.5
Dowry Prohibition Act	9,683	15.3
Total crime against women	3,38,954	18.4

Source: *National Crime Record Bureau, 2016 (Government of India)*

(Vindhya 2000; Rao 2007). Several studies concluded that anti-dowry law in India has been ineffective and failed to deliver justice to victims; despite the enactment of such legislation, there is no significant reduction in the phenomenon of dowry taking and violence against women (Ghosh and Choudhuri 2011; Shenk 2007). Mere enactment is not sufficient; its enforcement is weak; there is a need of new strategy to empower women so that their economic dependence on men can be reduced (Rocca et al. 2009).

Furthermore, considering rising cases of violence against women, the government of India made new laws – Domestic Violence Act-2005 – it broadened the definition of violence and encompassed physical, psychological, emotional, and economic violence. Any female living on the premises of home: mother, sister, wife, live-in partner, a female relative, friend, and housemaid come in the purview of the domestic violence act (Singh 2018a).

Misuse of Domestic Violence Act

Though domestic violence act in India did not bring any revolutionized change in the lives of victimized women, somewhat, it suffered a gross misuse in the hand of the upper class and financially well-off women, who filed fabricated cases against their husbands (Ahamad and Mishra 2016). They misuse the Domestic Violence Act and Section 498-A of Indian Penal Code out of vengeance against their husband and other family members (Shetty et al. 2012) (Table 1).

An analysis based on data released by National Crime Record Bureau, New Delhi, revealed that of the total crimes against women, the highest number of cases are filed under Section 498-A, which is one-third of total offense against women. However, the conviction rate is lowest for Section 498-A and Dowry Prohibition Act compared to other crimes against women.

It was further noted that conviction under other IPC crimes is increasing. However, it is declining rapidly in the cases under Section 498-A (Dubbudu 2017). The Honourable Supreme Court, in its decision, even called misuse of Section 498-A is legal terrorism (*Sushil Kumar Sharma* Vs. *Union of India (UOI) and Ors – Jul 19, 2005* 2005).

Even violence against men in India is rising, but those are unreported and hidden because domestic violence laws of India are gender-biased (Kumar 2012). A study conducted by HelpAge India concluded that misuse of Section 498-A causes harassment of elderly people, because finding the loophole in the law police unnecessarily harassed even older members also, and do physical, psychological, emotional, and economic exploitation (Soneja 2011).

From 1990 onward, an emergence of men's rights groups such as Save the Indian Family Foundation are seen; these groups are formed to provide support to victimized husbands of false 498-A and dowry cases (Basu 2016); even women activists are also joining their hand in this movement (Sengar 2018). Through the lenses of human rights, rampant misuse of 498-A and Dowry Prohibition Act was viewed as a severe violation of gender human rights, which is the prime condition of gender equality (Abeyratne and Jain 2012). As a result, amid this game of feministic vengeance, real victims of domestic violence and dowry-related crimes are getting away from justice and protection (Agnes 2015). In Indian

judicial system, now there is a generalized opinion formed about false nature of dowry and domestic violence-related complaints, which can cause further hindrances to protect genuine female victims of dowry and domestic violence; they may give up their effort to get justice and protection in the complicated legal system.

A Way Forward

Although the data and fact revealed dowry is a continual process, a dim light at the end of the tunnel can be seen. Through the determination of people either at the individual or at the collective level, there are few illustrations that challenged an old-aged custom of dowry. The Government of India launched a nationwide program to save and educate girls (*Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*); under this program, strict enforcement of preconception and prenatal diagnostic technique act was done. A study conducted in Haryana revealed the significant effectiveness of *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* program (Gupta et al. 2018). Kerala – an infamous state for its dowry demand – has a model village, which is dowry-free, thought consistent effort of people's movement (Anand 2014). Northeastern states of India created another example of dowry-free communities and dignified women to the societies of rest of the country, who are encountering the pain of this social evil (Think Change India 2017). Official records show that there are four states reported no case of dowry death in the year 2014; those states are Goa, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim. However, some states reported very few cases of dowry deaths such as Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Manipur (Webindia 2015).

Conclusion

Dowry is deeply rooted in the Indian social fabric. It is deeply rooted in the patriarchal mindset of society. Increasing consumerism made women as a commodity. Because of the disempowerment of women, male dominance, and financial dependence on men, dowry is promoted. Inability to give dowry causes victimization of brides; on the other hand, the glorification of dowry generates son preference, which encourages female feticide, disturbs the sex ratio, and eventually results in gender inequality. Legislations prohibiting dowry and domestic violence remained ineffective to reduce crime against women; contrastingly, these laws were grossly misused to victimize husbands and their families. As a result, genuine victims of dowry face hurdles in accessing legal service, justice, and protection. Women's disempowerment is the antecedent of dowry, and it leads to gender inequality. Gender equality and women empowerment in a holistic way are the antidote to curb the menace of dowry.

Cross-References

- ▶ Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
- ▶ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women (Istanbul Convention) (2014)
- ▶ Domestic Violence Against Women: Relevance, Reflections and Public Policies
- ▶ Family Law: Path Toward Achieving Gender Equality in India
- ▶ Femicide and the Continuum of Gender Based Violence
- ▶ Forced Marriage
- ▶ Gender Power Relations
- ▶ Gender Stereotypes
- ▶ Violence Against Women
- ▶ Zero-Tolerance Policy Towards Gender Based Abuse and Violence

References

Abeyratne R, Jain D (2012) Domestic violence legislation in India: the pitfalls of a human rights approach to gender equality. Am Univ J Gend Soc Pol Law 21 (2):333–378

Adam BD (1978) The survival of domination: inferiorization and everyday life. Elsevier, New York

Agnes F (2015) Section 498A, Marital rape and adverse propaganda. Econ Polit Wkly 1(23):12–15
Ahamad T, Mishra AK (2016) Legal status and rights of women in the Indian constitution. Int J Adv Res Dev 1 (1):30–33
Amin S, Al-Bassusi NH (2004) Education, wage work, and marriage: perspectives of Egyptian working women. J Marriage Fam 66(5):1287–1299. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00093.x. Wiley
Anand K (2014) Here's how this became India's first 100% Dowry-Free Village. https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/from-almost-going-bankrupt-due-to-dowry-heres-how-nilambur-became-indias-first-100-dowryfree-village-228397.html. Accessed 28 Mar 2019
Anderson S (2003) Why dowry payments declined with modernization in Europe but are rising in India. J Polit Econ 111(2):269–310. https://doi.org/10.1086/367679. The University of Chicago Press
Anderson S, Beaman L, Platteau J-P (eds) (2018) Towards gender equity in development. Oxford University Press, Oxford. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198829591.001.0001
Babu GR, Babu BV (2011) Dowry deaths: a neglected public health issue in India. Int Health 3(1):35–43. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.inhe.2010.12.002. Oxford University Press
Babu BV, Kar SK (2009) Domestic violence against women in eastern India: a population-based study on prevalence and related issues. BMC Public Health 9 (1):129. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-9-129
Bader C (2013) Women in ancient India: moral and literary studies. Routledge, London
Basu S (2016) Looking through misogyny: Indian Men's Rights Activists, law, and challenges for feminism. Can J Women Law 28(1):45–68. https://doi.org/10.3138/cjwl.28.1.45. University of Toronto Press
BBC (2011) Tajik weddings hit by austerity law. BBC News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13065495. Accessed 22 May 2019
Bhalotra S, Chakravarty A, Gulesci S (2018) Dowry and death in India. London. https://cepr.org/active/publications/discussion_papers/dp.php?dpno=12712. Accessed 28 Mar 2019
Bhattacharya S, Singh A (2016) Changing strategies of female foeticide in India: a never-ending story. Int J Community Med Public Health 3(9):2672–2676. https://doi.org/10.18203/2394-6040.ijcmph20163094.
Biao X (2005) Gender, dowry and the migration system of Indian Information Technology professionals. Indian J Gend Stud 12(2–3):357–380. https://doi.org/10.1177/097152150501200209. SAGE, New Delhi
Brown PH (2009) Dowry and intrahousehold bargaining. J Hum Resour 44(1):25–46. https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.44.1.25. University of Wisconsin Press
Caplan L (1984) Bridegroom price in urban India: class, caste and 'dowry evil' among Christians in Madras. Man 19(2):216. https://doi.org/10.2307/2802278
Carr D (2004) Gender, preloss marital dependence, and older adults' adjustment to widowhood. J Marriage Fam 66(1):220–235. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00016.x. Wiley
Chander S, Kathpalia J, Kumari V (2018) Socio-economic factors affecting the problem of dowry among rural women of Haryana. Indian J Health Well Being 9 (5):789–792
Comaroff JL, Roberts S (1986) Rules and processes: the cultural logic of dispute in an African context. University of Chicago Press, Chicago
Correll SJ (2004) Constraints into preferences: gender, status, and emerging career aspirations. Am Sociol Rev 69(1):93–113. https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240406900106. SAGE, Los Angeles, CA
Dasgupta S, Basu J (2011) Marital quality and gender role stereotype. Psychol Stud 56(4):360–367. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-011-0105-y. Springer
Deere CD, Doss CR (2006) Gender and the distribution of wealth in developing countries. The United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), Helsinki. http://hdl.handle.net/10419/63540
Deininger K, Goyal A, Nagarajan H (2013) Women's inheritance rights and intergenerational transmission of resources in India. J Hum Resour 48(1):114–141. https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.48.1.114. University of Wisconsin Press
Deogaonkar SG, Deogaonkar SS (2002) Native Americans and native Indians. Concept Publication Company, New Delhi
Diwan P, Diwan P (1997) Law relating to dowry, dowry deaths, bride burning, rape, and related offences. Universal Law Publication, New Delhi
Dubbudu R (2017) Conviction rate of Sec 498-A cases is among the lowest of all IPC crimes. https://factly.in/conviction-rate-for-cases-registered-under-sec-498a-ipc-is-among-the-lowest-for-all-ipc-crimes/. Accessed 26 Mar 2019
Esteve-Volart B (2004) Gender discrimination and growth: theory and evidence from India. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1127011. Accessed 25 Mar 2019
Ferraro G, Andreatta S (2011) Cultural anthropology: an applied perspective. Nelson Foundation. Wadsworth Publishing, California (USA)
Figes E (1970) Patriarchal attitudes: women in society. Macmillan, London
Gaganpreet K, Sukhdev S (2013) Causes and consequences of dowry in Indian society-an overview. Indian J Econ Dev 8(3):75–82. Sdu Uitgevers
Garg S, Nath A (2008) Female feticide in India: issues and concerns. J Postgrad Med 54(4):276–279. Medknow Publications
Ghorayshi P (1996) Women in developing countries: methodological and theoretical considerations. Women Polit 16(3):89–111
Ghosh B, Choudhuri T (2011) Legal protection against domestic violence in India: scope and limitations. J Fam Violence 26(4):319–330. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-011-9369-1. Springer US

Goody J (1976) Production and reproduction : a comparative study of the domestic domain. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Greenstein TN (2000) Economic dependence, gender, and the division of labor in the home: a replication and extension. J Marriage Fam 62(2):322–335. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00322.x. Wiley

Gulzar S et al (2012) Dowry system in Pakistan. Asian Econ Financ Rev 2(7):784–794. http://aessweb.com/journal-detail.php?id=5002. Accessed 25 May 2019

Gupta R et al (2018) Effectiveness of India's National Programme to save the girl child: experience of Beti Bachao Beti Padao (B3P) program from Haryana State. Health Policy Plan 33(7):870–876. https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czy065. Narnia

Harrell S, Dickey SA (1985) Dowry systems in complex societies. Ethnology 24(2):105. https://doi.org/10.2307/3773553. University of Pittsburgh- of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education

Harris BJ (1993) A new look at the reformation: Aristocratic women and Nunneries, 1450–1540. J Br Stud 32(2):89–113. https://doi.org/10.1086/386024. Cambridge University Press

Harrison CK et al (2009) The role of gender identities and stereotype salience with the academic performance of male and female college athletes. J Sport Soc Issues 33 (1):78–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723508328902

Huda S (2006) Dowry in Bangladesh: compromising women's rights. South Asia Res 26(3):249–268. https://doi.org/10.1177/0262728006071707

Jeffery P (2014) Supply-and-demand demographics: dowry, daughter aversion and marriage markets in contemporary north India. Contemp South Asia 22 (2):171–188. https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2014.899982. Routledge

Jianu A (2009) Women, dowries, and patrimonial law in old regime Romania (c. 1750–1830). J Fam Hist 34 (2):189–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/0363199008330732

Johnson PS, Johnson JA (2001) The oppression of women in India. Violence Against Women 7(9):1051–1068. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778010122182893

Jones GW (1997) The continuing demographic transition. Clarendon Press, Oxford

Jutla RK, Heimbach D (2004) Love burns: an essay about bride burning in India. J Burn Care Rehabil 25 (2):165–170. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.BCR.0000111929.70876.1F. Oxford University Press

Khan S (2000) Inheritance of Indian women: a perspective on JSTOR. India Int Centre Q 27(2):139–154

Kodoth P (2008) Gender, caste, and matchmaking in Kerala: a rationale for dowry. Dev Chang 39 (2):263–283. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2008.00479.x. Wiley

Kumar A (2012) Domestic violence against men in India: a perspective. J Hum Behav Soc Environ 22(3):290–296. https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2012.655988

Kumar V, Kanth S (2004) Bride burning. Lancet 364:18–19. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(04)17625-3. Elsevier

Makino M (2018) Marriage, dowry, and women's status in rural Punjab, Pakistan. J Popul Econ 32:1–29. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-018-0713-0.. Springer, Berlin/Heidelberg

Mangan JE (2005) Trading roles: gender, ethnicity, and the urban economy in colonial Potosí. Duke University Press

Maslow AH (1943) A theory of human motivation. Psychol Rev 50(4):370–396. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346

Mir-Hosseini Z (2000) Marriage on trial: Islamic family law in Iran and Morocco. I.B. Tauris. https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/marriage-on-trial-9781860646089/. Accessed 22 May 2019

Muzamil J, Farhat J (2016) Causes of female foeticide among males and females in Kashmir Valley. Int J Res Soc Sci 6(5):639–650

Nigam C (2017) 21 lives lost to dowry every day across India; conviction rate less than 35 percent. Mail Today News. https://www.indiatoday.in/mail-today/story/dowry-deaths-national-crime-records-bureau-conviction-rate-972874-2017-04-22. Accessed 13 Mar 2019

Olga ST-S (1993) Village life in late tsarist Russia. Indiana University Press, Bloomington. https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/34987335?selectedversion=NBD9201082 Accessed 22 May 2019

Pande R (2003) Selective gender differences in childhood nutrition and immunization in rural India: the role of siblings. Demography 40(3):395–418. https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.2003.0029. Springer

Paudel GS (2007) Domestic violence against women in Nepal. Gend Technol Dev 11(2):199–233. https://doi.org/10.1177/097185240701100204

Pieris I, Caldwell B (1997) Gender and health in Sri Lanka. Health Transit Rev 7:171–185

Randeria S, Visaria L (1984) No title. Econ Polit Wkly 19 (15):648–652

Rankin KN (2003) Cultures of economies: gender and socio-spatial change in Nepal. Gend Place Cult 10 (2):111–129. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369032000079514.. Taylor & Francis Group

Rao V (2007) The economics of dowries in India. Oxford University Press, London

Raymond JG (1994) Women as wombs: reproductive technologies and the battle over women's freedom. Spinifex Press, Melbourne

Riley N (1997) Gender power and population change. Popul Bull 52(1):1–48. https://www.popline.org/node/267968 Accessed 27 May 2019

Rocca CH et al (2009) Challenging assumptions about women's empowerment: social and economic resources and domestic violence among young married women in urban South India. Int J Epidemiol 38 (2):577–585. https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyn226. Narnia

Rofe Y (1984) Stress and affiliation: a utility theory. Psychol Rev 91(2):235–250. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.91.2.235
Sachdeva DDR (1998) Social welfare administration in India. Kitab Mahal, Allahabad
Sachs JD (2012) From millennium development goals to sustainable development goals. Lancet (London, England) 379(9832):2206–2211. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60685-0. Elsevier
Sallan Gül S (2013) The role of the state in protecting women against domestic violence and women's shelters in Turkey. Women's Stud Int Forum 38:107–116. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.WSIF.2013.01.018. Pergamon
Samli SA (2011) Containing the future: modern identities as material negotiation in the urban Turkish Ceyiz. Rice University, Houston
Sanghavi P, Bhalla K, Das V (2009) Fire-related deaths in India in 2001: a retrospective analysis of data. Lancet 373(9671):1282–1288. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60235-X. Elsevier
Sapkota JB et al (2019) Preference for sex of children among women in Nepal. Global Soc Welf 6(2):69–78. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40609-018-0117-9. Springer International Publishing
Saravanan S (2002) Female infanticide in India: a review of literature. Social Change 32(1–2):58–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/004908570203200205. SAGE, New Delhi
Satvir Singh and Ors vs. the State of Punjab and Anr on 27 September 2001 (2001). https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1521945/. Accessed 13 Mar 2019
Sengar S (2018) This woman is fighting for the rights of men implicated in false dowry cases by their wives. Indiatimes.com. https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/this-woman-is-fighting-for-the-rights-of-men-implicated-in-false-dowry-cases-by-their-wives-349261.html. Accessed 26 Mar 2019
Shenk MK (2007) Dowry and public policy in contemporary India. Hum Nat 18(3):242–263. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-007-9006-0. Springer US
Shetty BSK, Rao JP, Shetty AS (2012) Legal terrorism in domestic violence. An Indian Outlook. Med Leg J 80:33
Singh RK (2010) Law of dower (Mahr) in India. J Islam Law Cult 12(1):58–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/1528817X.2010.528594. Routledge
Singh S (2018a) Violence on women and the constitutional safeguards with remedies in India. Int J Res Anal Rev 5 (3):317a–323a. http://ijrar.com/. Accessed: 26 Mar 2019
Singh Y (2018b) Dowry deaths account for 40–50% of female homicides in India: report. Rediff.com India News. https://www.rediff.com/news/report/dowry-deaths-account-for-40-50-of-female-homicides-in-india-report/20181127.htm. Accessed 13 Mar 2019
Soneja S (2011) Elder abuse in India: country report for the World Health Organization. New Delhi. https://www.who.int/ageing/projects/elder_abuse/alc_ea_ind.pdf. Accessed 26 Mar 2019
Sperling J (2004) Marriage at the time of the Council of Trent (1560–70): Clandestine marriages, kinship prohibitions, and dowry exchange in European Comparison. J Early Mod Hist. Brill 8(1):67–108. https://doi.org/10.1163/1570065041268951
Srinivasan (1984) Some reflections on dowry. Oxford University Press, New Delhi
Srinivasan P, Lee GR (2004) The dowry system in northern India: women's attitudes and social change. J Marriage Fam 66(5):1108–1117. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00081.x
Steinberg SH, Evans IH, Barnes PM (1971) Steinberg's dictionary of British history. St. Martin's Press
Sushil Kumar Sharma Vs. Union of India (UOI) and Ors – Jul 19 2005 (2005) Supreme Court of India. http://www.saveindianfamily.org/misuse-of-498a-is-like-legal-terrorism-sc/. Accessed 26 Mar 2019
Tambiah S, Goody J (1973) Bridewealth and dowry. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
The State of Andhra Pradesh vs. Raj Gopal Asawa And Anr on 17 March 2004 (2004). https://indiankanoon.org/doc/736865/. Accessed 13 Mar 2019
Think Change India (2017) Northeast India sets an example by steering clear of the dowry system. https://yourstory.com/2017/09/northeast-india-dowry-free. Accessed 28 Mar 28 2019
Tomasetto C, Alparone FR, Cadinu M (2011) Girls' math performance under stereotype threat: the moderating role of mothers' gender stereotypes. Dev Psychol 47 (4):943–949. https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2011-13792-002. Accessed 25 Mar 2019
Vasudevan B et al (2015) Causes of divorce: a descriptive study from Central Kerala. J Evol Med Dent Sci 4 (20):3418–3427. Akshantala Enterprises Private Limited
Vindhya U (2000) 'Dowry deaths' in Andhra Pradesh, India. Violence Against Women. SAGE Periodicals Press, Thousand Oaks 6(10):1085–1108. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778010022183532
Wadley SS (1977) Women and the Hindu tradition. Signs J Women Cult Soc 3(1):113–125. https://doi.org/10.1086/493444
Walton-Roberts M (2014) Diasporas and divergent development in Kerala and Punjab. In: Global diasporas and development. Springer, New Delhi, pp 69–85. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-81-322-1047-4_4
Webindia (2015) 4 states free of the evil of dowry. https://news.webindia123.com/news/articles/india/20150426/2579894.html Accessed 29 Mar 2019
Witzel M (1996) Little dowry, no sati: the lot of women in the vedic period. J South Asia Women Stud 2(4):4
Yadav KJ et al (2018) Awareness and perception regarding female foeticide among adolescents in a rural community of Nalgonda district, Telangana. Int J Community Med Public Health 5(7):3106. https://doi.org/10.18203/2394-6040.ijcmph20182656