When men are oppressed, it is a tragedy and when women are oppressed it is a tradition.

This chapter deals with the harassment related to the demand of dowry from the bride and her parents. Sometimes such harassments lead to the death of the girl known as ‘dowry death’. The question as to how dowry becomes a violence against women is probed here. The death of the bride by her husband, in-laws and other relatives due to burning or suicide by the bride is discussed in this chapter. The data in Jammu district related to dowry harassment and dowry deaths is also attempted. The Case Studies of women who are sufferers of harassments by their husbands and in-laws are also discussed.

Every day in the newspaper the news in connection with dowry is seen. The headlines say it all: ‘Woman suffers 90% burns; mother-in-law, sister-in-law held’ (Himalayan Mail, 08.10.2005), ‘Dowry deaths are Rear Head in Valley’ (Kashmir Times, 8.10.2006), ‘Women tortured for dowry in US’ (Daily Excelsior, 20.11.2007), ‘Andhra Minister in dowry harassment case’ (Hindustan Times, 02.07.2007), ‘Dowry is an evil to be eradicated anyhow’ (Greater Kashmir, 27.08.2007), ‘Dowry on rise among Muslims’ (Times of India, 11.9.2007), ‘Come online to declare ‘I don’t want dowry’’ (Hindustan Times, 10.10.2007), ‘Avoid acquittals on flimsy grounds in dowry death cases’ (Daily Excelsior, 15.10.2007), ‘Deceased committed suicide on Karvachouth’ (Early Times, 22.11.2007), ‘Women beaten for dowry, loses vision’ (Indo Asian News Service, 28.08.2010), ‘Dowry a curse, that’s why girls are killed: President Patil’ (Indo Asian News Service, 06.10.2010). News in Daily Excelsior, 7 May 2008, entitled “Dowry claims life of young house-wife”:

Bharti Sharma a resident of Gandhi Nagar got married to Dimple Singh Jamwal in court against the wishes of Dimple’s parents. Her husband along with other family members started harassing her for want of more dowry and at times resorted to physical assault on her. Her sister-in-law gave her poison and told her to either bring dowry or consume this poison. Bharti went to her parental home but was unable to ask dowry from her parents so she ended her life after consuming poison.
There was also disturbing news in *The Hindu*, dated, 02.07.2007 that in the state of Andhra Pradesh, Razia Sultan, wife of Cooperation Minister Mohd. Fareeduddin’s brother-in-law has filed a petition alleging that the minister, his wife and her in-laws are harassing her for an additional ₹5 lakh in dowry.

This shows that the system of our nation is so weak that even the law makers are breaking the laws which are made by them for the welfare of the people.

In a recent news, a woman in Delhi lost vision of one eye after being beaten by her husband and in-laws over dowry demands. “*Geeta, 23 was asked to get ₹1 lakh by her husband, Vinod and in-laws. As she did not oblige them, they beat her up and one of her eyes got damaged by a sharp-edged weapon*”. She had delivered a baby girl ten days ago (Indo Asian News service, 28.08.2010).

At this point, parents are unhappy when a girl child is born because the widespread assumption is that they will need to pay a dowry when she marries. If they are lucky enough to have a son as well, they will see his marriage as an opportunity to bring in the money for the dowry of their daughter. Inevitably, for some grooms’ families, marriage becomes a way to make money. Greed for more leads to the harassment of brides.

We talk about dowry issues in India only but similar news are reported from outside the country also. A woman tortured for dowry in US who was 25 years old Chennai (Trichy) girl Smirlin Jenith. The torture started from the day she was married to a US based software engineer. When the woman in advanced pregnancy stage, landed from US in a special ambulance flight, the bruises all over her body were testimony to the harassment she has been subjected to by her greedy husband Christy Damius and his parents. She was beaten up and shoved off a moving car by her in-laws (Daily Excelsior, 20.11.2007). This shows the menace of dowry has gone abroad also.

Shocking news in *Dainak Jagran*, a Hindi Newspaper, 22nd September 2007 is: *In Sarsa, a boy Sanjay was married to Anita in 2005. His father along with other family members used to harass Anita for more dowry and made her to leave the house. One day Sanjay asked for some money from his father but he said to him to ask his father-in-law for it, Sanjay didn’t agree so his father along with other relatives killed him and burnt his body*. Thus a father killed his son for not making a dowry
demand. This shows that for just material things one can kill his own son too.

Thus from these news reports it is seen that dowry-related harassment, sometimes resulting in so-called ‘dowry death’ or ‘bride burning’, become an increasing burden faced by women from all castes and classes in India as well as by the Indian diasporas. What was once a practice largely confined to upper caste Hindus in the north of India has now spread to other castes, religious and regions. The reasons for this are complex and are, at least partially, dependent upon a combination of Sanskritisation (upper caste emulation by the common caste groups), neo-liberalisation and rise of cash incomes. Moreover, there is some perception that the size of dowries has grown in recent decades putting increased pressure on families to prefer sons to daughters, thereby exacerbating an existing tendency towards son preference. The impact of this upon the ‘reversed sex-ratio’ in India is well documented with the numbers of ‘missing’ females due to sex selective abortion and female infanticide on the increase in many regions (Tommalin, 2009:1).

The conundrum of dowry

The dowry-related violence is not an inevitable consequence of dowry transactions. It only arises in particular situations, which can be referred to in terms of a breakdown of the customary concepts and contracts of exchange on the occasion of marriage. Problems appear to arise mainly in three types of scenario:

If the wife's family promises too much dowry, perhaps as a kind of 'sweetener' for the groom, and afterwards cannot deliver what was agreed to be given. To take a British Asian example, the bride's father may have offered (for reasons good or bad) to buy the bridegroom a BMW car as part of the marriage transactions, but he ultimately produces a Ford instead. Why such offers are made in the first place. Or are they, not real offers but promises made under the duress of extortionate expectations? So much is certain: disputes get even more complicated if so many gold sets of jewellery or sets of clothes were agreed to be given and the other side then claims that these were not of high enough quality. Madhu Kishwar (1988), among others, has made it clear that by criticising the dowry in such a way, the husband's side is indirectly criticising the woman, or rather, the 'package deal that she represents'. There may be ritual elements of 'putting the other side down'
involved in such disputes, but if the repercussions of such strategic bargaining turn into violence against the woman, something has gone seriously wrong (Menski, 1999:18).

A variation of this theme is found when the girl's family did not actually offer to provide all kinds of dowry items but there exists an unspoken, silent expectation that certain gifts will be made as part of the dowry. Thus, as indicated, the young man or his family in the example above may simply have expected to receive a BMW (for whatever reason) and if that expectation is frustrated then the young bride may be made to suffer. The same goes, more so in practice, for the quantity and quality of jewellery and clothes that are commonly exchanged in South Asian marriages (Ibid).

Dowry problems also arise when the groom's side, after an agreement about exchanges has been reached actually violates that contract once the girl is married, or even during the marriage ceremonies, themselves, by continuing to demand more and more.

Dowry deaths are numerically and statistically few, and the dowry problem is still largely restricted to the wealthier urban middle classes, especially in the North of India. The father of Nation regarded dowry as a middle-class phenomenon. As back as 1928, for example, M. K. Gandhi had written in Young India (21 June 1928):

“A correspondent sends me a newspaper cutting showing that recently in Hyderabad, Sindh, the demand for bridegrooms has been increasing at an alarming rate, an employee of the Imperial Telegraph Engineering Service having exacted ₹20,000 as cash dowry during betrothal, and promises of heavy payments on the wedding day and on special occasions thereafter. Any young man who makes dowry a condition of marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonours womankind” (Menski, 1999:25).

Apart from the actual figures of the cash transaction, Gandhi could have been describing an agreement made today. The dowry system, termed ‘marriage by purchase’ by Gandhi, was considered heartless and he argued that it should be abolished:

“There is no doubt that the custom is heartless. But so far as I am aware, it does not touch the millions. The custom is confined to the middle class who are but a
drop in the ocean of Indian humanity... This, however, does not mean that one may ignore the dowry evil because it is confined to a comparatively small number of the people of this country” (Menski, 1999: 25-26).

People cannot get rid of dowry because they have to marry their daughters too.

Compulsory marriage, compulsory dowry and pauperization

It is viewed in our society that in order to marry a girl her father makes arrangements for her dowry; even if he is poor he takes debt from others. In many poor families loans are taken and land and other assets are mortgaged. Indebtedness in order to meet the expenses of a daughter’s marriage is widespread among, across most states, communities, and classes. A striking feature is that many poor families had taken loans and mortgaged their land and other assets and thereby their own future to get a daughter married. The compulsions of dowry no longer operated only among upper castes and classes, even agricultural labour families in Assam and in Tamil Nadu reported dowry requirements. In Bengal, a range of methods were adopted to pay for the wedding and dowry of daughters like: sale or mortgage of land (including that received as sharecroppers under Operation Barga), flat, jewellery or other valuable assets, or loans at a high rate of interest from moneylenders (Parliwala, 2009:162). The figure below shows whatever dowry is given to the girl still dowry is considered as lesser than the girl.

![Fig.5.1: Comparison between woman and dowry](image-url)
On the other hand, those in public sector employment took loans against their Provident and Pension Funds or opted for ‘voluntary retirement’ to obtain the linked annuity, though it meant that after the wedding they would have neither income nor savings. Some poor families went door-to-door to collect money and/or requested clubs and mass organizations for assistance. With dowry, the cycle of poverty and debt is renewed as families lose their productive assets, maybe even their homes. It adds to the assets not only of those who receive dowry, but the local elite who encourage the practice and from whom the poor takes loan against their own assets, including land (Ibid). Many times it becomes difficult for the parents to arrange dowry themselves, so they have to take help of the relatives also. The relatives give the dowry items as gifts. It has been seen in the present study how respondents managed dowry for their daughters. The Graph below depicts the same:

Fig.5.2: Graph showing management of dowry by the respondents
Chapter-V: Dowry Harassment and Dowry Deaths

Table 5.1: Management of dowry by the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Managed easily</th>
<th>Relatives helped</th>
<th>Took credit</th>
<th>Dowry not given</th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talab Tillo</td>
<td>22 (22%)</td>
<td>15 (15%)</td>
<td>21 (21%)</td>
<td>30 (30%)</td>
<td>12 (12%)</td>
<td>100 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthi-Domana</td>
<td>35 (35%)</td>
<td>28 (28%)</td>
<td>24 (24%)</td>
<td>10 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>100 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data collected from the field

In the Graph above out of 100 respondents each in Talab Tillo and Muthi-Domana, 22 respondents in Talab Tillo and 35 in Muthi-Domana answered that they managed dowry easily, 15 in Talab Tillo and 28 in Muthi-Domana answered their relatives helped to give dowry, 21 in Talab Tillo and 24 in Muthi-Domana said they took money on credit to give dowry in marriage, 30 in Talab Tillo and 10 in Muthi-Domana did not give dowry and 12 in Talab Tillo and 3 in Muthi-Domana were unmarried.

Thus this Table (5.1) shows that majority of people who took money from others i.e. from relatives and on credit put together are more than who managed to give dowry easily.

The present day Indian states of Punjab and Haryana (which was part of the Indian Punjab until 1966) continue to have the most adverse female to male ratios, or 879 and 870 per 1,000 males respectively in the 1981 census. Female infanticide is treated as an aberration of the past because the British Government set up a department to deal with it in 1870 and closed the department in 1906, claiming total success in their campaign to suppress the practice and make the Punjabis less improvident about dowries. They were wrong on both counts: Sex ratios have steadily worsened nationwide in the twentieth century. In 1901, there were 972 females for every 1,000 males while in 1971 and 1991, the ratios have declined to 930 and 927 females per 1,000 males respectively (Sharma, 1998: 285). It arose in 2001 to 933 and declined in recent census of 2011 to 914 females per 1,000 males.

When the British encountered the practice of dowry in Punjab, they collected opinions on the nature of the custom. None of the reports describe dowry as gifts that could be demanded by the groom’s family. They found it to be a collection of voluntary gifts of clothes, jewellery, household goods, and cash bestowed on the bride.
by family and friends at the time of the wedding. In forty–nine separate volumes of customary law of an equal number of districts in the vast territory that constituted colonial Punjab—present-day Pakistan and Indian Punjab, Haryana, Jammu, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh—this definition of dowry has been reiterated as many times. Nowhere was it treated as the prerogative of the groom and his family to demand specific consumer goods and large sums of cash for the groom’s business, education, or mobility; it was voluntary and depended on the pecuniary circumstances of the bride’s parents. The British charge of ‘improvidence’ was not based on the expense for dowry but on wedding celebrations. These latter costs were strictly itemized and evaluated in cash for three economic tiers in society and became part of the bureaucrats’ handbook for enforcement. Wedding expenses did not mean only a daughter’s wedding expenses; many cases cited as evidence of proficacy in the handbooks of refer to the weddings of sons (Ibid: 286–287).

The marriage of daughters is a primary parental duty carrying both social and ritual connotations in most parts of India and among most communities. Unmarried women are viewed with pity and sexual suspicion, a burden on their parents and or their brothers. Furthermore, social adulthood and relative ‘freedom’ from parental constraints depend on marriage, more so for young women. This fuels their desire for and is taken-for-granted of marriage and all that accompanies it being it dowry and/or abuse in the marital home. One option before poor parents, who wish to avoid debt in the face of spiraling dowry, is to arrange a match with a man who cannot command dowry: he may be mesh older; this may be his second or third marriage with children from earlier marriages to be taken care of; he may have no work or income; or be known as undesirable due to his habits. A 17-year old girl in Uttarakhand, where dowry has not reached the proportions as it has elsewhere, said, ‘marry a poor man and do not pay’. In all these cases, the daughter is destined for a life of hardship, deprivation, and possibly violence, but this is considered preferable to her remaining single (Parliwala, 2009:163).

To get rid of the pauperization one can go for dowryless marriage which is also accomplished by marrying the daughter at a great distance, through a matchmaker/agent, the unsaid being that the man is not an eligible match due to the reasons given above. It can be exemplified by a research conducted by Ravinder Kaur...
which shows that Bengali brides are to be found in almost all parts of the country today, especially in the northern region, stretching from Kashmir down to Haryana, Punjab, towards the west in Gujarat and Rajasthan and across to Uttar Pradesh (U.P) in the north. When Kaur went to Srinagar, her shikara owner told her that the previous night he had been attending the wedding of a friend who was the offspring of a Kashmiri man and a Bengali woman. He proceeded to tell that Bengali wives were not in the Valley earlier. According to him, the first marriages could have taken place through peripatetic Kashmiri shawl sellers who visit every part of the country (Kaur, 2010: 16).

Is it that Bengal has a better sex ratio, and hence, a surplus of women compared to the states to which it is sending brides? Does Kashmir have a poor sex ratio as do Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana? Jammu and Kashmir's sex ratio is 900 while West Bengal's is 934 - better than Kashmir's but still below the norm of 950 women for a 1,000 men. The sex ratios of Census Report of 2001 of Haryana, Punjab and U.P are 861, 887 and 898, respectively making it transparent that these are the states in desperate need of brides from elsewhere, but such brides could come from any part of the country - why are they predominantly from Bengal (Ibid: 17)?

The father of one Bengali bride from Hooghly district, married to a low caste man from a village in Etah district of U.P, explained that it was poverty that made them send their daughters away. Further, the demand for dowry by Bengali grooms made it impossible for them to marry their daughters locally. Another reason seemed to be the unattractiveness of local grooms. One mother who had sent two daughters to Uttar Pradesh (U.P) said that, she has to support financially the one daughter who was married locally to a Bengali groom (Ibid).

Very significantly, the long distance marriages that Bengali women enter into are "dowry less" and even the marriage expenditure is taken care of by the needy groom. Thus, economically, such marriages are nearly costless for the girl's parents while a local marriage would be a significant drain on household resources. The All-India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) has documented the rise of dowry in West Bengal and studies in Bangladesh also indicate the emergence and rise of dowry in the country (Ibid).
A more robust explanation, however, may lie in family livelihood strategies. In West Bengal, girl children have not been discriminated against as severely as in north Indian states. Hence, many families tend to have an excess of daughters whose marriage constitutes a large burden on family resources (Ravinder Kaur’s data show that women who are sent off in long-distance marriage are usually from families of several daughters). Under such circumstances, a consumption smoothing strategy of the family is to marry one daughter in a socially approved dowry marriage in West Bengal and send the rest out as marriage migrant (Ibid:16).

The distance weakens the possibilities of the girl turning to her natal family for help in a bad marriage. Further, on marrying into a region where dowry is otherwise prevalent, she may be made to believe that she has been ‘bought’ and hence cannot leave. While not many informants during a survey talked of this, the Haryana unit of AIDWA (and other reports) recorded several cases of mistreated and abused wives from other states, who had turned to local members and activists for help (Parliwala, 2009:164).

**Categorization of oppression of women**

The oppression of Indian women can be categorised into three manolateralistic forms. All these three take the form of victimization namely. (i) Patriarchal Victimisation (inter-gender: man vs woman): in this men are responsible for crimes like sexual harassment, wife battering, rape, dowry murders, and setting in processed like patriarchisation, genderisation (“a process of ossifying social differentiation based on gender”), commoditisation etc; (ii) Patriarchally propelled self-victimisation (extra-intra person): here the suicide committed by four girls of Kanpur (three sisters and the other drawing cue from the former) and the suicides committed by brides figure. Just 34 days prior to International Women’s Day 1995 year Poonam, Mamta and Alka three daughters of Mr. Gaya Prasad Sahu of Kanpur committed suicide to relieve him of his constant worry “about arranging a dowry of ₹ 70,000 and ₹ 80,000 each and footing the bill of other wedding expenses for the marriage of his five daughters….. Alka in her suicide note wrote “we are responsible for your troubles. We have been feeling helpless”. “Close on the heels of a mass suicide by (these) three sisters, one more girl (of Kanpur), 18 – years old Premlata “was found brooding
since three sisters committed suicide” and thus she too ended her life to relieve her father of the burden of dowry, which he was finding difficult to foot”.

In the former case it is the patriarchal forces which compelled the three sisters to commit suicide notwithstanding their being educated. They felt “helpless” because “woman even today remains a slave, a vassal in short an entity-with-no-entity and (iii) Victim propelled victimisation (intra-gender: women vs women): here the publicly celebrated rift between mother-in-law/sister-in-law versus daughter-in-law to discredit woman as oppressor of her own sex figures. Even man’s cruelty towards women is no match for the cruelty of women toward women” (Jha and Piyari, 1996: 267-268).

With such a view Ruth Vanita argues “every oppressed group perpetrated its own oppression. It was Indians who, at British orders fired on Indians. But in doing so, they strengthened British Imperialist. Women who oppress women increase the power of men as group. Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are forced to compete for the favour of a man on whom they are both dependent. If the dependence is disappeared, so would the competition” (Ibid: 269).

The death of three sisters of Kanpur is gruesome reminder of the force of patriarchy, which makes women themselves responsible for their parents’ problems. This brings to naught the celebration of the concept of “Indian Women” in opinions like “it is only in the Indian society that traditionally and culturally women get honour, dignity, glory, veneration and nobility. They are adored, loved and esteemed”. In fact of rampant sexual harassment, sexual crimes, dowry murders, woman battering etc. all rituals of adoration of woman is the road to cremation (Ibid: 270).

Emile Durkheim’s theory is structural- functional paradigm in which people treat social tension as a temporary sickness that can be cured by relatively small adjustment. During that time people knew about dowry system as an evil practice for the woman in the society. Lots of woman were getting victim and killed by this system. Society tried to justify the dowry system by the name of religion, tradition, ethnicity and some time self wished gift. Such suicides of dowry in Durkheim’s terminology can be related to fatalistic type of suicide where the regulation becomes so high and no scope of integration is left i.e. the in-laws force the bride to bring more
dowry again and again and bride has no one to support, so under these severe circumstances she finds no other way to escape than committing suicide.

It is pertinent to note here that in most cases neither the woman nor her family report the violence to the police or took legal action against the demand for dowry which is a punishable offence. Why do victims and their families fail to report dowry demands and violence that precedes death? It is possible that there is insufficient awareness of the Dowry Prohibition Act and its subsequent amendments. Moreover, the Act itself deters families from reporting because it makes the givers of dowry offenders too. Where there is no systematic information available as to why families fail to report dowry demands, it is worth the while to examine data available on lack of reporting in other kinds of crimes such as rape and robbery.

The woman’s immediate neighbours, her family and local residents are important bystanders and could minimize such victimization. The question is why haven’t they done so? Again looking at the literature it is clear that bystanders do not intervene if they perceive the situation as not serious enough. The neighbors may dismiss her screams as simply a family quarrel. They may not intervene if they believe the victim provoked the incident. In cases of domestic violence there is enough misconception that it occurs because she must have provoked it. Lastly, bystanders feel that the cost of intervention may be too high, neighbours may not act for fear of losing the goodwill of another neighbor, her family may not act for fear that they may not find grooms for their remaining daughters.

**DOWRY: A CRIME AGAINST WOMEN**

Although women may be victims of any of the general crimes such as ‘Murder’, ‘Robbery’, ‘Cheating’, etc, only the crimes which are directed specifically against women are characterised as ‘Crimes against Women’. Dowry also comes under it. Both giving and taking dowry is a crime. Various new legislations have been brought and amendments have been made in existing laws with a view to handle these crimes effectively. These are broadly classified under two categories (http://ncrb.nic.in/icII.2009):

1. **The Crimes under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**
   
   (i) Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)
(ii) Kidnapping & Abduction for specified purposes (Sec. 363-373 IPC)
(iii) Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec.302/304-B IPC)
(iv) Torture - both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)
(v) Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)
(vi) Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)
(vii) Importation of girls (up to 21 years of age) (Sec. 366-B IPC)

2. The Crimes under the Special & Local Laws (SLL)

Although all laws are not gender specific, the provisions of law affecting women significantly have been reviewed periodically and amendments carried out to keep pace with the emerging requirements. The gender specific laws for which crime statistics are recorded throughout the country are -

(i) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
(ii) Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
(iii) The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929
(iv) Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
(v) Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987

Reported Incidents of crime (Incidence...1,95,856)

A total of 1,95,856 incidents of crime against women (both under IPC and SLL) were reported in the country during 2008 as compared to 1,85,312 during 2007 recording an increase of 5.7% during 2008. These crimes have continuously increased during 2004 - 2008 with 1,54,333 cases in 2004, 1,55,553 in 2005, 1,64,765 cases in 2006, 1,85,312 cases in 2007 and 1,95,856 cases in 2008. Andhra Pradesh, accounting for nearly 7.1% of the country’s population, has accounted for 12.3% of total crimes against women in the country by reporting 24,111 cases. Uttar Pradesh, with nearly 16.6% share of country’s population has accounted for 12.0% of total crime against women by reporting 23,569 cases in 2008.
Crime Rate (Crime rate… 17.0)

The rate of crime has increased marginally from 16.3 during the year 2007 to 17.0 during 2008. Tripura reported the highest rate of crime against women at 40.2 during 2008.

Trend Analysis

The crime head-wise details of reported crimes during 2004 to 2008 along with percentage variation are presented in Table 5.2. The crime against women has increased by 5.7% over 2007 and by 26.9% over 2004. The IPC component of crimes against women has accounted for 95.3% of total crimes and the rest 4.7% were SLL crimes against women.

The proportion of IPC crimes committed against women towards total IPC crimes has increased continually during last 5 years from 7.8% in 2004 to 8.9% during 2008 (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Crime Head-wise incidents of crime against women during 2004 - 2008 and Percentage variation in 2008 over 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Crime Head</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage variation in 2008 over 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Table 5.3: Proportion of Crime against Women (IPC) towards total IPC crimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total IPC Crimes</th>
<th>Crime against women (IPC cases)</th>
<th>Percentage to total IPC crimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>18,32,015</td>
<td>1,43,615</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>18,22,602</td>
<td>1,43,523</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>18,78,293</td>
<td>1,54,158</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>19,89,673</td>
<td>1,74,921</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>20,93,379</td>
<td>1,86,617</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://ncrb.nic.in/icII.2009

Crime head-wise analysis (IPC)

Rape (Sec. 376 IPC) (Incidence…21,467 Rate…1.9)

An increasing trend in cases of rape has been observed during 2004-2008. These cases reported a marginal increase of 0.7% in 2005 over 2004, an increase of 5.4% in 2006 over 2005, an increase of 7.2% in 2007 over 2006 and an increase of 3.5% in 2008 over 2007 (Table 5.2). Madhya Pradesh has reported the highest number of Rape cases (2,937) accounting for 13.7% of total such cases reported in the country. However, Mizoram has reported the highest crime rate 7.8 as compared to National average of 1.9. Rape cases have been further categorised as Incest Rape and other Rape cases.
**Incest Rape (Incidence...309)**

Incest rape cases have decreased by 23.7% from 405 cases in 2007 to 309 cases in 2008 as compared to 3.5% increase in overall Rape cases. Madhya Pradesh (52) has accounted for the highest 16.8% of the total such cases reported in the country.

**Kidnapping & Abduction (Sec. 363-373 IPC) (Incidence...22,939 Rate...2.0)**

These cases have reported an increase of 12.4% as compared to 2007 (20,416) presented in Table 5.2. Uttar Pradesh (4,439) has accounted for 19.4% of the total cases at the National level. Delhi UT has reported the highest rate at 6.6 as compared to the National average of 2.0.

**Dowry Deaths (Sec. 302, 304B IPC) (Incidence...8,172 Rate...0.7)**

These cases have increased by 1.0% over 2007 (8,093) presented in Table 5.2. 27.4% of the total such cases reported in the country were reported from Uttar Pradesh (2,237) alone followed by Bihar (1,210) (14.8%). The highest rate of crime (1.3) was reported from Bihar and Haryana each as compared to the National average of 0.7.

**Torture (Cruelty by Husband & Relatives) (Sec. 498-A IPC) (Incidence...81,344 Rate...7.1)**

‘Torture’ cases in the country have increased by 7.1% over 2007 (75,930) presented in Table 5.2. 16.8% of these were reported from West Bengal (13,663). The highest rate of 20.9 was reported from Tripura as compared to the National rate at 7.1.

**Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC) (Incidence...40,413 Rate...3.5)**

Incidents of Molestation in the country have increased by 4.3% over 2007 (38,734) presented in Table 5.2 Madhya Pradesh has reported the highest incidence (6,445) amounting to 15.9% of total such cases. Tripura has reported the highest rate (9.8) as compared to the National average of 3.5.

**Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC) (Incidence...12,214 Rate...1.1)**

The number of such cases has increased by 11.5% over 2007 (10,950) presented in Table 5.2. Andhra Pradesh has reported 29.1% of cases (3,551) followed
by Uttar Pradesh 27.6% (3,374). Andhra Pradesh has reported the highest crime rate 4.3 as compared to the National average of 1.1.

**Importation of Girls (Sec. 366-B IPC) (Incidence…67)**

An increase of 9.8% has been observed in such cases as 67 cases were reported during the year 2008 as compared to 61 cases in 2007 presented in Table 5.2. Jharkhand (39) and Bihar (22) have reported the highest number of such cases accounting for 58.2% and 32.8% respectively of total such cases at the National level.

**Crime-head wise analysis (Special Laws) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (Incidence…1) (Incidence…2,659 Rate…0.2)**

Cases under this Act have registered a decline of 25.5% during the year as compared to 2007 (3,568) presented in Table 5.2. 25.8% (687) cases were reported from Tamil Nadu whereas Daman & Diu reported the highest crime rate of 3.2 as compared to the National average of 0.2.

**Sati Prevention Act (Incidence…1)**

The only case registered under this Act in 2008 was reported from Chhattisgarh. No case was reported in the country during 2007 presented in Table 5.2.

**Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (Incidence…1,025 Rate…0.1)**

A decline of 14.6% was noticed in cases under this Act as compared to 2007 (1,200) presented in Table 5.2. Andhra Pradesh with 889 cases has accounted for 86.7% of total such cases at the National level which has also reported the highest crime rate of 1.1 as compared to the National average rate of 0.1.

**Dowry Prohibition Act (Incidence…5,555 Rate…0.5)**

The cases under this Act have decreased by 1.2% as compared to 2007 (5,623) presented in Table 5.2. 23.7% cases were reported from Orissa (1,316) followed by Bihar (1,288) accounting for 23.2% of total cases at the National level. The highest crime rate was also reported from Orissa at 3.3 as compared to 0.5 at the National level.
There are a large number of cases of dowry harassments and dowry deaths in our society. Thus it is seen that dowry is regarded as a crime against women.

In the Indian Penal Code, dowry is considered as a violent crime. According to 2008, incidence of dowry deaths were 8,172 as presented in Table 5.4 which has increased by 17.2% over 1998 level (6,975), 14.4% over quinquennial average of 2003-2007 and 1.0% over 2007 (8,093). Uttar Pradesh has reported the highest number of such incidents in 2008 (2,237) like in 2007(2076) followed by Bihar (1,210) in 2007(1172). The crime rate for Dowry Deaths was highest in Bihar and Haryana (1.3 each) against the National rate of 0.7. The number of incidences of such crime that took place in India can be clarified by the tables below which give the figures of such heinous crime.

Table 5.4: All India Figures of Crime at a Glance-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>CRIME HEADS</th>
<th>CASES REPORTED</th>
<th>% TO TOTAL IPC CRIMES</th>
<th>RATE OF CRIME</th>
<th>CHARGING RATE</th>
<th>CONVICTION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>VIOLENT CRIMES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>32766</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Attempt To Commit Murder</td>
<td>28598</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>C.H. Not Amounting Murder</td>
<td>3863</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>21467</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kidnapping &amp; Abduction</td>
<td>30261</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Dacoity</td>
<td>4530</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Preparation &amp; Assembly For Dacoity</td>
<td>3217</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>20522</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Riots</td>
<td>66018</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>9249</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Dowry Deaths</td>
<td>8172</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Violent Crimes</td>
<td>228663</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>CRIME AGAINST WOMEN (IPC+SLL)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>KIDNAPPING &amp; ABDUCTION OF WOMEN &amp; GIRLS</td>
<td>22939</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>MOLESTATION</td>
<td>40413</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>SEXUAL HARASSMENT</td>
<td>12214</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Chapter-V: Dowry Harassment and Dowry Deaths

4. CRUELTY BY HUSBAND AND RELATIVES 81344 3.9 7.1 93.7 22.4
5. IMPORTATION OF GIRLS 67 0.0 0.0 72.2 12.3

| Total Crime Against Women (IPC+SLL) | 195856 | 9.4 | 17 | 92.5 | 30.1 |

(C) Economic Crimes

1. CRIMINAL BREACH OF TRUST 16487 0.8 1.4 70.6 30.2
2. CHEATING 66579 3.2 5.8 73.7 29.1
3. COUNTERFEITING 2991 0.1 0.3 48.9 38.3

| Total Economic Crimes | 86057 | 4.1 | 7.5 | 72.1 | 29.7 |

(D) PROPERTY CRIMES

1. Burglary 93742 4.5 8.1 41.8 36.1
2. Theft 316761 15.1 27.5 41.5 38.8

| Total Property Crimes | 410503 | 19.6 | 35.6 | 41.6 | 38.1 |

(E) CRIME AGAINST SC

| Total Crime Against Sc | 33615 | 1.6 | 2.9 | 90.4 | 31.7 |

(F) CRIME AGAINST ST

| Total Crime Against ST | 0.3 | 0.5 | 96.0 | 27.2 |

(G) CRIME AGAINST CHILDREN

| Total Crime Against Children | 22500 | 1.1 | 2.0 | 84.4 | 35.7 |

(H) COGNIZABLE CRIMES UNDER IPC

| Total Cognizable Crimes Under IPC | 2093379 | 181.5 | 79.8 | 42.6 |

(I) COGNIZABLE CRIMES UNDER SLL

| Total Cognizable Crimes Under SLL | 3844725 | 333.4 | 94.6 | 83.5 |

(J) COGNIZABLE CRIMES UNDER IPC + SLL

| Total Cognizable Crimes Under IPC + SLL | 5938104 | 515.0 | 89.5 | 73.9 |

Source: http://ncrb.nic.in/icII.2009

Note: A4, A11 are part of Crime against Women also; A6, A7 & A8 are part of Property Crimes also.

The Table 5.4 throws light on the all India figures of crime in India for the year 2008. Section (A) deals with violent crimes, under which comes murder, attempt to commit murder, C.H not amounting murder, rape, kidnapping and abduction, dacoity, preparation and assembly for dacoity, robbery, riots, arson and dowry deaths. Thus dowry is also a violent crime under Indian Penal Code. The total cases reported in
2008 were 8172, dowry’s percentage to total IPC crimes was 0.4%, rate of crime was 19.8, its charge sheeting rate was 84.2 and conviction rate was 27.8.

Annexure I shows the incidence of crimes committed against women during 2007. It represents the incidence of crimes committed against women during 2007, in dowry death cases the total incidences including all the states were 7950, rate of crime was 0.7 (i.e. total no of incidence in states / total population of states, 7950/11167.97=0.7). Uttar Pradesh has maximum cases of dowry deaths i.e. 2076 followed by Bihar 1172. No cases of dowry deaths were reported in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim. If the Union Territories are also included then all India figures of dowry deaths incidence were 8093, rate of crime was 0.7. No case of dowry death was reported in Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep.

In case of Jammu and Kashmir, dowry deaths incidences were 9, rate of crime was 0.1 and percentage share was 0.1(no. of cases of dowry in J&K/total no. of cases of dowry in India *100 i.e. 9/8093*100=0.1).

The Annexure I also represents the incidences of crime committed against women in the cities of India during 2007. It is seen that in dowry death cases the total incidences were 711 and the rate of crime was 0.7. The maximum number of cases were seen in Delhi (111), while no such case was reported in Kochi and Vadodara.

Thus it can be inferred from the above Tables and in the Annexure that different kinds of crime related to dowry are taking place all over India. These cases are prevalent more in North India than in South India and the North East states. They also occur over caste ridden patriarchal societies of North rather than tribal states of North East India.

**DOWRY VIOLENCE**

Dowry-related crimes like cruelty and death are clear violation of human rights of women. The women become victims of different types of violence perpetrated by various agencies like the state or the family in varied situations as those of armed conflict or poverty. They are also rendered vulnerable in cases of women specific crimes like rape, dowry death and sexual harassment. However, unlike other crimes, dowry – related crimes stem from an institutionalized social system of dowry payments at marriages. An attempt to curb the crime with legal measures from top without corresponding changes in society therefore, results not
only in its perpetuation but in its acquiring a more serious dimension (Chauhan, 1999:120).

However, awareness about the extent and nature of these issues came to the forefront during 1970s in USA as a result of the National Family Violence Surveys. In India, it was only during the early 1980s, in the wake of dowry and related problems, that crimes against women came to be recognized as an important social problem.

**Defining dowry-related violence**

Nominally, violence can be defined as an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of physically hurting another person. The hurt may be emotional injury or even material deprivation. This definition also includes harassment, cruelty as well as death caused by such behaviour. Thus persistent demands for dowry, even though unintentional, against the woman or her kin, leading to the oppressive conduct by the spouse and/or by the in-laws toward the woman resulting in her harassment, death, or in commission of suicide by her can be termed as dowry related violence (Jha and Piyari, 1996: 253).

In particular, a number of scholars have assessed the implications of the framing of dowry as an issue primarily concerned with violence typically leading to the death of women. For instance, the National Crime Records Bureau of the Government of India collects statistics on dowry deaths that in 2004 it recorded 7026 such deaths. However, these statistics are notorious slippery since we can assume that not all the actual cases of dowry deaths are recorded – some women’s group argue that the number is in fact many times higher. Moreover, acts of violence sustained by women as a result of dowry, but not resulting in death, are not systematically collated. As some are of the view, the collection of statistics on dowry deaths is the only area in which domestic violence of any sort is recorded statistically by the Indian Government. Thus, the way in which ‘dowry murder’ has come to be framed in India as a specific public issue has an impact upon the type of data that are collected, which in turn then has the effect of reinforcing the perception of ‘dowry murder’ as virtually is a form of domestic violence that women in India suffer (Tommalin,2009: 8).

In Jammu also the harassments related to dowry take place in everyday life. The cases related to dowry harassment in the Police Station Crime Branch, Jammu are seen in the Table below:
Chapter V: Dowry Harassment and Dowry Deaths

Table 5.5: Dowry harassment cases registered in Police Station Crime Branch, Jammu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of cases registered</th>
<th>FIR No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5/93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26/95, 38/95, 47/95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31/98, 35/98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2/02, 68/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>145/03, 373/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>No case till November</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Police Station Crime Branch, Jammu

In the Table above, in 1993, 1 case was registered; in 1994 again 1 dowry related case was reported; in 1995, 3 cases were registered; in 1996 and 1997 no such cases were registered; 2 cases were registered in 1998; no case was registered in 1999, 2000, 2001; in 2002 and 2003, 2 cases were registered each, no case was registered in 2004, 2005 and 2006 while only 1 case was registered in 2007 and after 2007 no case of dowry related harassment is reported here.

From FIR No. 5/1993 in 1993 to FIR No. 2/02 in 2002 all the cases were registered in Police Station Crime Branch whereas the case bearing FIR No. 68/02 in 2002 was registered in Police Station Poonch but it is untraced i.e. it is not proved
how the bride died; the case bearing FIR No. 145/03 was registered in Police Station Akhnoor, the case with FIR No. 373/03 was registered in Police Station Kathua and the case bearing FIR No. 55/07 was registered in Police Station Jammu city.

All the cases were challaned i.e. accused were punished and thus closed except the case in Poonch. As a lot of dowry related harassments are seen in the news papers, the cases reported here seem to be far lesser than they actually take place. It is due to the reason that either the parties hush up the matter or compromise it. The statement of complaints and disposal of cases related to the atrocities against the women registered in this Cell are given in the Table below:

**Table 5.6: Statement of complaints and disposal of cases registered in Women Cell, Jammu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Proceedings</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010 (till October)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total complaints</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIR (cases registered)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice to court</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total balance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Women Cell, Jammu

From the Table above, it can be analysed that in the year 2007 the total complaints registered in the Women Cell Jammu were 758 while in 2008 these figures decreased to 540, in 2009 there was a huge increase till 1165 and in 2010 cases were 896. The total FIR lodged were 42, 43, 42 and 48 in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively. In 2007 total cases as advice to court i.e. those cases in which the couple does not want to live together were 40, while these were 42 and 53 in 2008 and 2009 respectively and this figure decreased to 5 in 2010. It is seen that most of the cases are compromised in this Cell, these were 676 in 2007, 367 in 2008, many cases were compromised in 2009 i.e. 1070 and till October 2010 these were 715. In 2008 and in 2010 some of the cases remained balanced also i.e. proceeded to the next year; these were 88 and 128 respectively.

It does not consist the dowry cases separately but it is seen that most of the FIR’s registered are related to the dowry cases.
The dowry related cases are mostly under the ‘violence against women’. Therefore such cases are registered in the Women Cell. In an interview with Shakti Devi, Incharge Women Cell, she informed that there are two types of cases, one is FIR (First Hand Information Report) and the other is complaint. In the former, the case goes to the court and it lingers on for a long time viz. 10-15 years and in the latter the case is settled in this Cell and if not settled here then proceeded to the court. The Women Cell tries that the case should be settled here only as in case of FIR it leads to the separation of the couple which breaks the family.

As a police officer, Shakti Devi does not support dowry because it is easier for the rich to give dowry, poor will give dowry or feed his children? 50% of the cases are related to dowry, where mother and father of the groom want it. It has been seen that there are less cases of dowry among the Muslims. This is due to ‘mehr’ that bride can take back in case of dissolution of marriage.

Shakti Devi thinks that women are the weaker sections of society provided they are not empowered. They are also less seen in politics and have not much representation in this field. In the western society they are economically strong so they suffer less unlike in India.

As far as the police is concerned it cannot stop people from practising dowry if it is not reported but if the case of dowry harassment is reported then it takes action. No case of dowry death is reported in this Cell but such cases are reported in the concerned police station, which are about 2%-3%. No case of the girl asking her property rights from her parents has come here.

The social context related to violence

In India after Independence there has been marked increase in the social and economic inequalities as a result of the superimposition of the market economy and capitalist development on pre-capitalist structures. This led to the emergence of new sections of elite and status competitions among them where dowry, expenditure, rituals and conspicuous consumption assumed importance. Western education, and access to education and employment with a more positive bias towards the males, coupled with the growing urbanization made men socially and culturally advantageous to women thereby aggravating the dependency status of women. “Thus a marriage is a comparative weighing of status factor that is built into the process
(where) a woman takes heavy dowry along with her to minimize her dependency status” (Jha and Piyari, 1996: 254).

Now a days, dowry is mostly paid in cash to the groom’s parents and as a consequence the bride usually will have no control over the day the dowry she brought along. As a result, after misappropriating dowry, the in-laws may feel that they can make further demands to the girl for additional dowry. In fact, majority of the girl’s parents are not opposed to dowry and other payments in principal; complaints arise only when the parents are unable to meet or afford what is demanded. With the entire mass media oriented towards promoting the mindless consumerism, ‘marriages are made and broken for such items as cars, scooters, TVs, refrigerators, and washing machine’. A boy who does not get any of these is ridiculed by his friends and colleagues and inability to bring these things may give rise to the bride being harassed, sent to her parent’s place, or even burnt to death.

The Social pressures thus built up, play an important role and parents of the girls yield to the demands made by the groom’s family since they are aware that there lies behind the demands, the usually unspoken weapon, unspoken because it does not need to be spelt out, is harassment of the bride after marriage ……..’ (Jha and Piyari, 1996: 254 -255).

The specific contexts of dowry related violence

The dowry related problems usually arise out of three contexts such as failure to pay the remaining part of dowry, inability to fulfill extra demands made by the bridegroom’s family and the general dissatisfaction of groom’s family about the gifts or items given by the girl’s parents (Ibid:255).

Several other reasons may also contribute to exacerbate this problem. The fact that the bride is young, less educated, and dependent and is a stranger in the husband’s family, besides the external constraints, make her feel entrapped after marriage, leaving her with two options either to escape the persecution from husband and in-law, or to seek help from outside. Sometimes the girl’s parents may make false promises or part payments of dowry fearing that the girl may remain unmarried, resulting in delayed payments or failures to pay the remaining part of dowry. Hypergamy and high dowry are both ideologically and functionally linked. Moreover
an element of unpredictability cannot be ruled out in the demands made by groom’s family, thereby causing confusion and distress to bride’s parents (Ibid).

Background of the victims

Victims of dowry related crimes have certain common characteristics, Law Commission has identified certain factual components of ‘dowry’s death’ such as the brides are mostly young, dependent, less educated, and that in a majority of the cases the death or suicide of the bride are reported as accidents kitchen.

Persons participating in dowry related violence against the bride are found to be mostly husband, mother-in-law and sibs of husband. In a majority of the cases the husband and the mother-in-law of the victim had played a leading role in planning and executing the crime (Jha and Piyari, 1996: 258). This can be seen in a case in Patiala in Punjab, where Bhupinder Kour filed complaint against her husband, Jaspal Singh, mother-in-law and sister-in-law that they used to beat her as they wanted more dowry from her. She was married 5 years back, at that time Jaspal had a shop but after marriage he did not do any work. After one and a half year she was sent to her parents where she delivered a baby. Two months back Jaspal came to her and took her to his home by assuring that he won’t harass her anymore but after two days he started beating her and locked Bhupinder and his three and half year old daughter in the store. Bhupinder somehow managed to convey the matter to her brothers. When they came Jaspal beat them too. They admitted Bhupinder in the hospital (Danik Jagran, Punjab 10.09.2010). Thus the persons behind victim are the in-laws of the girl.

Wife beating for dowry

Wife beating is in fact one of the most accepted crimes committed against women. Wives are beaten for the want of dowry. It exists most in slums and amongst working class. In fact, now it is gradually creeping amongst middle class and rich families (Sharma, 1998: 592). In the present research, in a case study it was seen that Shalini’s husband used to beat her for dowry. The case is: Shalini got married with Rinku Singh a resident of Chinore. Unfortunately and to her great surprise this fellow turned to be a totally different person what he posed before engagement and marriage.

Rinku started using very rough and abusive language for her and even for her parents within the first week of the marriage. He used to torture her mentally and
physically. He used to beat her a lot and kick dowry items saying what third class and below standard dowry Shalini’s father had sent to his house. Even abusive remarks were given for the gold chain given to him. Thereby expressing an in direct dowry demand of highly expensive items. Although they had inquired from him before engagement to let them know about his any particular demand and whether they can meet it or not but he had replied that he had not demanded anything from his father till date then what to talk of Shalini’s father. He also said he is a self made person. But right after Shalini got into his clutches after marriage he started showing his real face in the shape of violence, greed and cruelty.

He often used to talk loose with girls on cell phone but Shalini was not allowed to talk with her parents even. He had taken away her mobile without her knowledge and disconnected the landline phone also. Shalini was not allowed to go to her parents’ home to know about their well being and was kept there as kitchen servant and slave only. He had never shown any sign of care or responsibility towards her. She was never given even a single penny by him rather he took away her purse along with ₹ 8500/- without her knowledge, which Shalini’s father had given her. He also man handled Shalini. He sold her brand new TV and washing machine even after her constant resentment.

A strange sort of fear and insecurity had been created by Rinku’s aggressive, harsh and violent behaviour. Once he threatened Shalini by saying that her photograph is already on the wall now only a garland is to be put over it. She felt it as a direct threat to her life.

All this made Shalini mentally and physically pressurized and compelled her to come to her parent’s house where he telephonically conveyed Shalini to tell her father to engage a lawyer for mutual separation as he would remain as he is. His behaviour is not going to change.

Shalini lodged a complaint against Rinku in Women Cell & requested SHO to get back all her dowry items, clothes and gold items and restore alimony before signing the papers for separation.

On the other hand Rinku wrote to the incharge Women Cell that Mr. Shri Ram (father of Shalini) keep changing his stand repeatedly and puts false allegation, it is
difficult to believe him on any other platform except in front of competent court of law. Kindly direct Shri Ram to stop threatening call on his cell phone through SMS.

Shalini under undue influence of her father and medical history had left the house twice along with jewellery given by them also, and now she is staying with her parents without his concern.

Rinku further requested Incharge Women Cell to find the mutual divorce deed copy, deed of compromise for gifts exchange and the list of their gold jewellery gifts items. He was pleased to intimate her the date when Shalini along with her father will be ready for execution of the said deeds in the competent court of law. Thus it is seen that how Rinku beat Shalini for the want of dowry which forced Shalini to go to court.

**DOWRY DEATHS**

The most dramatic form that violence against women has taken is what the Indian media labeled ‘bride-burning’ until in 1978 or so, feminists cut out the alliterative fuzz by redesignating it as ‘dowry murder’. The record in Headquarters of Crime and Railways J&K, Jammu reveals that the dowry deaths registered in 2001 were 13, in 2002 these were 18, in 2003, 2004 and 2005 these were 16, 12 and 5 respectively. It indicates that the deaths due to the menace of dowry are prevalent in this state of J&K too. As quoted, “It is one thing to pride over our past and it is other to make our present and future great. We have great progress in science and technology. We are now considered as a leading economic force in Asia. We have an observer status in G-8. Inspite of all this our social behaviour and our tendency to push women to the backstage and ask her to bring commodities is something that leaves a big question mark on our modernity” (Greater Images, 30.6.2007).

The term “dowry death” and “dowry murder” first began to be used around 1977-78 when investigations revealed that deaths of married women, which for years had been camouflaged by the police as accidents or suicides, were actually murders or abetted suicides, preceded by prolonged physical and mental torture by the husband and in-laws in connection with dowry demands. Instead of describing them as “wife murders” or “abetted suicides” women’s organizations began calling them “dowry deaths”(Sandanshiv & Mathew, 2005: 74- 75).

During the 1980s, urban north India has seen a growing number of murders of married women, variously called dowry murders or bride burnings. The dowry deaths
are regarded as crime. The figure below shows the percentage distribution of such crime against women in India.

![Pie Diagram showing percent distribution of crime against women during 2008.](http://ncrb.nic.in/icII.2009)

**Fig. 5.3: Pie Diagram showing percent distribution of crime against women during 2008.**

**Source:** [http://ncrb.nic.in/icII.2009](http://ncrb.nic.in/icII.2009)

The Pie Diagram, gives details about the percentage distribution of crime against women in the year 2008. 41.5% crime was of cruelty by husband and relatives, 20.6% was molestation, 11% were the cases of rape, 11.7% crime of kidnapping and abduction, 6.2% of sexual harassment, 4.2% of dowry deaths, 1.4% of immoral traffic(P) Act, 2.8% dowry prohibition cases and 0.6% other cases.

Thus this diagram depicts that there are many cases related to dowry harassment and dowry deaths. The percentage under cruelty by husband and relatives also involves the cases related to dowry as they become cruel due to the want of more and more dowry from their daughter-in-law.

It has been visioned that the dowry deaths take place in Jammu also. The Table below reflects the total number of dowry deaths that took place in Jammu province registered in Police Station Crime Branch Jammu:
Table 5.7: Dowry Deaths registered in Police Station Crime Branch Jammu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of deaths registered</th>
<th>FIR No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47/95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35/98</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>145/03,373/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55/07</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>No case till November</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Police Station Crime Branch, Jammu

In the above Table, in 1993 and 1994 no dowry death was reported; in 1995, 1 case was registered; in 1996 and 1997 no such case was registered; 1 case was registered in 1998, no case was registered in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002; 2 cases were registered in 2003, no case was registered in 2004, 2005 and 2006 while only 1 case was registered in 2007 and after 2007 no case of dowry death is reported in this Police station.

As far as the report of these cases is seen, the cases with FIR No. 47/95 in the year 1995 and FIR No. 35/98 in 1998 were registered in Police Station Crime Branch whereas the case bearing FIR No. 145/03 was registered in Police Station Aknnoor, the case with FIR No. 373/03 was registered in Police Station Kathua and the case...
bearing FIR No. 55/07 was registered in Police Station Jammu city. Thus the Table tells about the dowry deaths but in newspaper more deaths are seen than reported. The authorities say that people do not report such cases.

**Psychology behind bride-burning**

Dowry deaths are one of the most frequently publicized crimes in the media. It is seen that many brides are burnt after marriage because they did not bring sufficient dowry. “The same socialization strategies that prepare boys to be soldiers and policemen also co-opt women as mothers, wives and sisters into that preparation process. The concept of structural violence, that which frames behavioural violence refers to the organized institutional and structural patterning of the family and the economic, cultural and political systems that determine that some individuals shall be victimized through a withholding of society’s benefits, and be rendered more vulnerable to suffering and death than others. That structural patterning also determines the socialization practices that induce individuals to inflict or to endure according to their roles. This latter aspect of structural violence is conceptually related to the fact that structural violence establishes the cultural accepted threshold for physical violence in a society” (Jha and Piyari, 1996: 267). This is an apt analysis, which could be stretched to understanding of violence related to dowry. But one would still go beyond such an observation arguing that violence is not merely physical but mental as well. The trauma, anguish which the three sisters would have been facing before committing suicide. Violence is not merely an end product it is a process. Thus the whole process radiates violence (Ibid: 270).

Women have become favorite victims of home-fire. In regard to bride-burning tragedies the number of incidents rose progressively from 670 in 1975 to 1064 in 1979 in the whole country. Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh were ahead of other states in the number of cases but figures in respect of them include suicidal and accidental deaths. In 1979, the two states reported 362 and 249 cases respectively. Delhi reported 138 incidents and Rajasthan 98 (Majumdar, 2001: 252-253). The burning of wives is neither an extension of nor culturally related to the notorious practice of sati, the voluntary immolation of Bengali widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands. The resonances are startling – the burning of women, the thin line between suicide and murder – but the differences are significant because they point to
a serious further devaluation of women in present-day India in spite of a century of progressive legislation on women’s rights (Sharma, 1998:280).

*Sati* was socially countenanced suicide because the widow was perceived as having failed in her ritual duties to ensure the longevity of her husband by using her special female power or *shakti*; bride burning, however, is murder and equally culpable by social and legal standards (Ibid).

Burning a wife, a ritually auspicious person, is perhaps more appalling than the less sensational ways of doing her in (poisoning, drowning, strangling, shooting, or bludgeoning, among others) but is chosen chiefly for the forensic advantage it has over the others. It virtually destroys the evidence of murder along with the victim and can easily be made to look like an accident. Bride burning is also relatively simple to commit as it occurs in the kitchen, where the middle and lower middle-class housewife spends a large amount of time each day (Ibid: 281).

The bereaved widower, who has equipped himself with a cast-iron alibi, is soon in the marriage market again looking for a new bride with perhaps a more handsome dowry. Often it is the mother-in-law, with or without her son as accomplice, who will obligingly commit the murder. Dowry serves as the foundation on which explanation for discrimination against women have been built; it has the conceptual richness to satisfy a variety of analytical tastes over time. The colonialists stressed its cultural roots in a benighted Hinduism; Marxists see it as an economic institution, feminists view it as gender discrimination for daughters did not traditionally inherit land.

There were glaring contradictions in the explanations regarding the dowry deaths. Culture was blamed on the one hand, but so were Westernisation, which brought in gross materialism, greed, and a desire for consumer goods and modernization, which put a cash value on everything and commercialized human relationships (Sharma, 1998: 282). It is due to the desire that people start asking for more dowry from the bride before marriage. If she brings then she remains happy otherwise she is harassed by them.
CASE STUDIES

The Case Studies related to the dowry harassment cases which were collected during the field work are discussed as below:

Jaya was married to Deep on the 31st day of May 2009 and started living with her in-laws at Talab Tillo colony. The family consisted of 5 more members viz; Rattan Lal (father-in-law), Garo Devi (mother-in-law), Ambo Devi (grand mother-in-law), Babli Devi (sister-in-law) and Jung Lal (brother-in-law). After few months all these members started taunting Jaya that her father is a poor person and is not able to fulfill their demands. Deep also started beating her mercilessly without any rhyme and reason.

The father of Jaya went to her house and tried to patch up the issue but all in vain as the in-laws along with Ajay demanded dowry from him. On 11.04.10 at 10:30 a.m Deep, step mother-in-law and father-in-law slapped as well as beat Jaya and threw her out of the house and asked her to bring dowry from her parents. She went to her parental house, after some days her father and mother went to her in-laws’ home and pleaded to call Jaya back in their home but they did not agree. Then they also met Deep after two days and said the same to him but he too walked on the footsteps of his parents.

Now Jaya was left with no other alternative so she lodged an FIR against Deep, Rattan Lal, Garo Devi, Ambo Devi, Babli Devi and Jung Lal in Women Cell. As Deep got to know that Jaya has lodged FIR against them he rang Jaya and asked her to take back the case otherwise it would not be good for her but Jaya retaliated and said to him that she would not take the case back and he has no right to force her as The Dowry Prohibition Act has given women the right to lodge complaint against dowry harassment. The case continued and after some months Deep came to Jaya’s house, apologized for his mistake and asked her to come back and live with him. So both of them started living with each other and they are happy now. In this way the law helped her.

Tripta Nanda a resident of Domana, an employee in the LIC office, was married to Ajay. Ajay saw her in the marriage of her brother which took place on 20.10.2006. From that day he started seeing Tripta and continued to do so for three years. One day he called up Tripta and said he wants to marry her. Ajay revealed his
identity as a policeman and at times said he is a Manager in a marriage hall. Tripta told her brother that a boy irritates her.

The parents of Tripta did not want to get her married to him but later on she said Ajay is a good boy, Ajay’s father told them that he will get Ajay permanent employee in Police department. Later on they agreed and the holy wedlock took place. In dowry Tripta brought washing machine, T.V, cooler, fridge, VCR, almirah, motor cycle worth ₹ 50,000, clothes worth ₹ 2,00000, gold of ₹ 2,00000 but no furniture was given. Tripta got to know that Ajay is not in police but cleans utensils in a banquet hall and his father plays cards with him the whole day. Both go in the morning and come back home at 5.00 pm.

After fifteen days of their marriage, Ajay started beating her as he wanted money for furniture which Tripta had not brought with her. He also wanted that the nomination of the LIC policy of Tripta which was of ₹ 5 lacks in the name of her father should be made in his name. One day Ajay beat Tripta and took her to R.S Pura i.e to her natal home to take ₹ 2,00000 for the furniture, she stayed there for 3 days. As Ajay had told Tripta to come back so on 1.05.2010 her brother dropped her till the bus stand. No sooner did Tripta reached home than Ajay slapped her. Then she went in veranda he again slapped her, he searched Tripta’s purse to check if she had brought money that he had asked her to bring. Tripta’s brother rang to confirm if she had reached in her in-laws house safely, Ajay switched on Tripta’s phone so that her brother could listen whatever was happening with Tripta. Then both Tripta’s brother and mother took ₹ 10,000 with them and went to Tripta’s house. As soon as they reached her home then Tripta’s mother-in-law took a rod and blew on Tripta’s brother and then on her mother too. Her brother and mother fell down. Her mother-in-law locked the room and was about to go to the police station to register a case against Tripta’s mother and brother that they came to her house to kill them. But the elder sister of Tripta who was also married in the same locality was told by the neighbours that Tripta’s mother-in-law is going to the police station. So she went to Tripta’s house unlocked the door and all of them went to the police station to file case against Tripta’s husband and in-laws. The Station House Officer provided them with police jeep to take her to the hospital and she was admitted in Sarwal Hospital.
Chapter-V: Dowry Harassment and Dowry Deaths

After few days, Tripta was released from the hospital and her parents took her in their house. She started to go to LIC office whenever she had work as she was its agent. In July, Tripta went to the Sarwal hospital for her medical checkup as she was pregnant. Somehow Ajay saw her when she was going back after her checkup; he met Tripta and told her to sit on the bike as he would help her to board the bus to go to R.S Pura. Tripta sat on bike, Ajay first went to Vikram Chowk and then changed his route to his house, she told him that she would jump from the bike but Ajay told her he would also jump into the river and die, it would end three lives at the same time i.e the life of baby in the womb too, so she remained quite.

Now, Tripta is living with Ajay, her sister told that she was beaten once but Tripta did not say anything about this. She says she has to live there in his house, only death can separate her from there. But Tripta’s parents are scared as to what will happen to their daughter?

*Sneha* has sought the indulgence of court under section 13 of J&K Hindu Marriage Act (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) for dissolution of marriage by a decree of divorce on the ground of desertion and cruelty. Sneha has alleged in this petition that Sneha was married to Sanjay on 29-10-2000 at Jammu in accordance with Hindu rites and customs and out of this wedlock a male child namely Sahil was born at Jammu on 21-12-2001. Sneha has further alleged that immediately after the marriage the behaviour of Sanjay and in-laws was cruel towards her and after 7 days of marriage Sanjay along with his family members started harassing and maltreating her and forced her to bring cash and more dowry.

As Sneha was studying in college her in-laws did not allow her to write the examination. The lust of getting cash and more dowry made Sanjay so furious that after one month of the marriage he turned her out of the matrimonial house after beating with a threat that in case Sneha wants to come back to her in-laws house, she should bring ₹ 1,00,000, otherwise Sanjay will not allow her to live in her in-laws house. A plot was given to Sneha by her parents in her name but the in-laws wanted that it should be in the name of Sanjay.

With the intervention of some respectable members, Sanjay agreed to live in a rented accommodation with Sneha with a condition that the rent and the house hold expenditure even food should be borne by the parents of Sneha. Thereafter Sanjay
lived with Sneha for about one year in a rental accommodation but during this period he also behaved cruelly with Sneha and forced to ask her parents to deposit ₹ 1,00,000 cash in his account. As Sanjay had started living with Sneha, they put him in a business of selling of furniture in partnership with Sneha and the parties availed loan of Punjab National Bank, Shalamar Road, Jammu as housing loan but Sanjay utilized the said money for furniture business and did not liquidate the that loan. This loan was liquidated by the father of Sneha and only then his documents of the plot were released.

Sanjay also took golden bangles without Sneha’s consent and on her enquiry about the said bangles, he beat her and left the house with a threat that either to give him all the gold ornaments otherwise he will not come back to the rental accommodation. Since then i.e., 13-08-2003 he has deserted Sneha without any reasonable cause and has not provided Sneha and the son the necessities of life. Rather he was threatening Sneha of dire consequences on telephone and has also threatened that he would re-marry another girl who is rich. The attitude of Sanjay was so cruel and torturing that it was difficult for Sneha to reside with Sanjay and due to his cruel attitude her life had become miserable. Sneha has not condoned the act of cruelty. Hence she filed a divorce.

On the presentation of Sneha, Sanjay was summoned, who appeared and both the parties were persuaded by the court to live together during the reconciliation proceedings but Sneha declined to live with Sanjay and stated that it is not safe for her to live in her in-laws house. Thereafter, Sanjay was directed to file his objections but the same were not filed till 05-10-2006, when he was proceeded ex-parte for his continuous absence in the case. Thereafter, Sneha was directed to lead her ex-parte evidence in support of her case.

Sneha getting herself examined had also examined two witnesses namely Bharat Bhushan and Tilak Raj as her witnesses in ex-parte in support of her petition.

Bharat Bhushan has stated that he knew both the families, who were married on 29-10-2000 at Jammu. The couple had a son, aged five years and attended school. After one week of the marriage, Sneha was harassed and treated with cruelty by her husband and in-laws asking her to get more dowry and was also turned out of the house after being beaten up by him. Sanjay had deserted Sneha from 13-08-2003.
attitude and behaviour of Sanjay from the very beginning was cruel towards Sneha. Sanjay has not taken any care of Sneha or her child nor paid any maintenance.

Tilak Raj has stated that the two families are known to him. Sanjay has deserted Sneha and the minor child and had not paid any maintenance to them. It is not safe for Sneha to live with Sanjay nor is it possible for her.

The Judge heard the learned counsel for Sneha in ex-parte and had given his thoughtful consideration to the whole matter. He had also gone through the evidence adduced by Sneha in ex-parte.

Though Sanjay had appeared in the court and participated in the reconciliation proceedings, later on he neither filed his objections nor appeared in the court to contest the case and absented himself from the proceedings and as such, was proceeded ex-parte. In case the allegations would have definitely contested the case in order to disprove the allegations of the petitioner but the same has not been done, which shows that the respondent is also not interested in continuance of the marital knot with Sneha.

Cruelty need not to be physical, it can be mental making the life of the other spouse miserable always with continuous desertion, not performing the marital obligations, demanding dowry and cash, treating the spouse with cruelty, itself a sufficient cause and creates a reasonable apprehension in the mind of Sneha that it will be harmful and unsafe to live with Sanjay, even if he comes back and resides with Sneha.

Sanjay has absented himself from the proceedings and has been ex-parte, as such; there is no rebuttal evidence on the file which could discredit Sneha’s evidence on the file. Sneha’s evidence has also been supported by her witness in ex-parte. In absence or rebuttal evidence available before the court, the court had no reason to disbelieve the statement of Sneha and her witness.

Later on it was established that Sanjay/husband is guilty of matrimonial offence of cruelty and desertion, as such, Sneha was entitled to a decree of divorce on the said grounds. Hence the marriage solemnized between the parties on 29-10-2000 at Jammu was hereby dissolved by an ex-parte decree of divorce.

**Shalika Rani** w/o Ajay Kumar resident of Domana is 27 years old, who is pursuing B.Ed from KC College of Education, Paloura and is also M.A in English.
She got married on 12th Dec’2006. The groom was found by her aunt (tai). The father-in-law is a Senior Accountant in the Department of Agriculture and mother-in-law is a housewife, she is from Punjab.

In marriage she brought two sets of gold for her, a chain, ring and ‘kara’ for her husband, a chain and ear studs for mother-in-law, a ring for father-in-law, ear rings for grandmother-in-law. The kara was demanded by the in-laws for the groom. These items cost ₹ 80,000. The clothes which she brought for the relatives and herself cost ₹ 30,000; the cost of the household items like bed, dressing table, sofa, washing machine, almirah was ₹ 50,000; cooler, fridge and T.V were of ₹ 50,000 and utensils were of ₹ 10,000. About ₹ 2,20,000 were spent in the dowry items. They wanted motor cycle also but Shalika did not bring as her parents could not afford it.

![Fig. 5.4: Photograph Showing Shalika with her son](image_url)

After one month her parents rang up in her house to inform that they are sending dowry, soon the in-laws hired a truck and brought dowry but Shalika was unaware about all this. After one month of marriage her mother-in-law told Shalika that her brother’s daughter-in-law has brought money and jewellery in dowry which
are useful items but she has brought household items and there is no use of such items. Shalika’s dowry was not used in the house because her mother-in-law kept it for her daughter. She said that she would give it as dowry when her daughter will get married. Shalika used T.V, washing machine, bed but it led to hue and cry in the house. All other items were lying as such. The mother-in-law made Shalika work the whole day without any rest and when Shalika’s husband came home then she asked Shalika to stop working and started to do work in front of Ajay so that he may think that Shalika does not work in home but made his mother work. Earlier Ajay used to help her but later on her mother-in-law filled his ears against Shalika, he helped for 2-3 months after marriage but after that sided with his mother.

On 21st August 2007, Shalika was not feeling well due to pregnancy, Ajay took Shalika to her parental home and did not come to take her. On 2nd December her case became very critical and she was taken to the hospital where she delivered a baby boy. Nobody from her in-laws’ home even Ajay came to see the baby. After a month of the delivery she went to Ajay’s house along with her parents and baby. The in-laws asked Shalika to take some vows i.e.:
1. She won’t go home.
2. She will not study any more.
3. She will not do job.
4. She shall write in the stamp paper that she if dies no one from her in-laws shall be responsible for her death.

Shalika agreed first three but not the fourth one and came back to her father’s house.

In 2008 January, Ajay’s grandmother died, Shalika with her parents went to his home and gave them money, sweets etc. as per the ritual. She was sitting behind Ajay with her son in the lap, she was expecting that Ajay would see his son but to her sorrow he didn’t turn back even once. In February, Ajay sent summon to her house, which hurt her, the case was he wanted to live with Shalika but she didn’t want as she knew that he was not a good person at heart. In October, Shalika went to Nanak Nagar to Ajay’s house. She had to attend a marriage of her cousin, she told Ajay to pick her from the marriage at night and he agreed. At night as Ajay did not come so she rang him and found his mobile switched off, so she came home alone. Next day, she told
Ajay that they would celebrate Aditya’s (their son’s) 1st birthday this led to quarrel in the family. Shalika’s mother-in-law locked her in a room with her brother-in-law and husband, Ajay kept his knees over her stomach blocked her mouth with his hands, so she became unconscious. This incident scared her a lot and Shalika came back to her parental home.

Later on Shalika submitted maintenance case against Ajay, she wanted a separate room so that she can be safe. Ajay agreed to it so Shalika went to Ajay’s home. There she lived in a separate room but Ajay hardly came in that room, he told her that they had husband-wife relation in the society only and he had no love for her in heart. One day Shalika and Aditya were ill, Shalika was talking on phone with her sister soon her sister-in-law rang Ajay and said Shalika has beaten her. Her mother-in-law used vulgar language for Shalika. Soon Shalika ranged the President of State Commission for Women, Susheela Jamwal and filed her case, she told Shalika to call her parents who came soon to Ajay’s house. Meanwhile police also came as her in-laws called it by complaining false and wrong charges against Shalika about the beaten case. She went back again to her father’s home. After few days Shalika went to Nanak Nagar to live but she was not given any thing to eat so the very next day i.e. 30th Oct’2009 she came back as she was left with no hope regarding the settlement of the case with Ajay anymore.

Now Shalika gets ₹ 1400 only as maintenance in court. Ajay is working in National Rural Health Mission and get ₹ 9000 per month as salary but said that he is not doing anything. Shalika has decided she won’t give divorce to Ajay as she doesn’t want any other girl to suffer like her by living with such ferocious people like Ajay and his mother.

*Moni* w/o Jai, a resident of Talab Tillo got married in November 2008, after few days the family of Jai started abusing, harassing and torturing Moni. After two months, her in-laws told her clearly that she has not brought dowry i.e. the luxury items like washing machine, air-conditioner, fridge etc. they also said that she has not passed her final year of graduation.

In July’09 when Jai was in Srinagar Moni’s in-laws threatened and beat her for gold ornaments which were lying with her. One day Moni’s mother-in-law caught
her from neck, beat her and snatched all the ornaments from Moni and kept with herself.

In December’09, Jai beat Moni, trashed her from his house and asked her to bring rupees two lacs from her father otherwise he will burn her alive as he is not afraid of any offence because he has close links with Inspector General of Police (IGP), Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), gundas of Jammu city as well as with militants of Kashmir. Jai took `85,000 in total from Moni’s parents time to time.

One day Moni was in her father’s house when a notice, to her surprise, came for her from the court, in which the advocate had mentioned that Moni was married to his client Jai, the marriage was simple without any dowry demand and his client has not received any form of dowry but Moni’s parents had offered some golden ornaments, valuable sarees and Moni started living with his client- Jai who is working in the Department of Police in Crime Branch right from the inception of marriage. For unknown reasons, Moni had left the house of Jai along with ornaments of gold, sarees, in Jai’s absence when he was on duty in Kashmir and thereafter lodged a false and frivolous complaint before the Women Police Cell.

After 4-5 months due to intervention of Moni’s parents and other respectable persons of the family, Jai gave a written affidavit that they will not demand any dowry further. Now the couple is living happily with each other.

Thus it is seen how brides are harassed as well as burnt for the want of more and more dowry in our society and how parents and neighbours become helpless to save the women from the clutches of in-laws and even their husbands. The Case Studies mentioned here reveal the voracious nature of the in-laws of the victims for getting dowry and to what extent they can go for some trivial items. The role of institutions like Women Cell, Police stations and courts in helping the victims to get rid of such situations is also dealt here. The Women Cell and Police Stations first of all try that the matter should be compromised there only among the family members. If both the parties do not agree then it proceeds to the court.
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**Chapter-V : Dowry Harassment and Dowry Deaths**


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