

Evaluation of Dowry Related Crimes in Bijapur City

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ABSTRACT

The present modern day culture still has the ancient evils of civilization. In spite of the increase in educational status of most parts of the country, dowry related harassments and deaths are on the rise with every coming year. Marriage is considered more of a business alliance rather than a religious rite and bride as a source of money and materials.

The objectives of our study is to find out the cause and mode of death in the victims, to study age of victims, married life, educational, occupational and socioeconomic status of the victims, to study the type of family, type of marriage and number and gender of the children born to the victims and to suggest concrete steps to Government and NGO's, especial women organization to reduce incidence of dowry harassment and deaths. The present study was conducted at Department of Forensic medicine, Shri B.M. Patil Medical College, Bijapur, on all married women dying within 7 years of married life, booked under section 304 (B), 306 and 498 (A), IPC and 176 Cr PC, whose inquest was conducted by executive magistrate.

Key words: Dowry deaths, Bride-burning, Harassment, Dowry, Homicide, Suicide.

INTRODUCTION

Dowry related violence occurs among all subgroups of Indian population, but the rates are higher among the poor & lower castes, In many cases, the husband & his family continues for years to demand additional dowry by physically & verbally abusing the bride.

In majority of cases, young wives, are unable to fulfill their husband's demand for dowries continue to be victimized until they eventually commit suicide by fire. The husband's response to the tragedy is often, It was her time, in other words her predetermined fate, The news papers report on back paper simply that so & so died of burns, without giving background or details is a routine.

Indeed in India today, torture of the young house wives by their husbands and in-law's for failure to bring sufficient dowry has become the order of the day all over the country. On an average, one indian women commits suicide every four hours over a dowry dispute, as for official data, despite a series of laws to empower them.

To know the various incidences of dowry related crimes in our region, This project has been undertaken.

OBJECTIVES

1. To know the incidence of dowry deaths.
2. To identify all the factors that lead to the young women take the extreme step of ending her own life.
3. To assess the physical and mental trauma that coexists in the victim

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Source of data and materials:

- a) Source: Method of collection of data:

The Data will be collected from the Following Sources:

- In patient case sheets in case of hospital admission.
- Postmortem examination reports of the cases.

Inquest reports

Period of Study

1st July 2009 to 1st June 2010.

- c) Sample size

35 cases of dowry related crimes in Bijapur City

Inclusion criteria:

1. Autopsy conducted on all the dead bodies of married women brought under the umbrella of dowry death by law, at BLDE University's Shri B.M Patil Medical College, Bijapur.
2. Interrogation of the victim while in the hospital

Exclusion criteria:

- The incidents not related to 304(B)I.P.C, 498(A) I.P.C., 306 I.P.C. 176 CrPC

Table 1. Dowry death cases with reference to age of the victims and duration of married life

Sl No	Age of Victims	Total		Duration Married life in year						
		No	%	0 to <1	>1 to <2	>2to <3	>3to <4	>4 to <5	>5 to <6	>6 to <7
0										
1	18-21	15	42.85	02	03	03	02	02	01	02
2	22-25	09	25.71	01	02	02	01	01	00	00
3	26-29	05	14.29	02	02	01	00	00	01	01
4	30-33	01	8.5	01	01	00	01	00	00	00
5	34-37	00	5.8	00	01	00	00	00	00	00
6	>38	00	2.85	00	00	00	01	00	00	01
Total		35	100	06	09	06	05	03	02	04
Percentage				17.1	25.8	17.23	14.35	8.65	5.7	10.8

Table 2. Mode and manner of dowry deaths observed during Study period

Sl No.	Date of Death	Manner of Death				Total	
		Homicide		Suicide		No	%
		No	%	No	%		
1	Burning	04	11.4	12	34.28	16	45.71
2	Hanging	03	8.58	06	17.15	09	25.71
3	Poisoning	04	11.4	03	8.58	07	20
4	Drowning	00	00	02	5.8	02	5.8
5	Strangulation	01	2.85	00	00	01	2.85
Total		12	34.2	23	65.81	35	100

Table 3. Religion wise distribution of dowry deaths

Sl No	Religion	No	%
1	Hindu	18	51.43
2	Muslim	10	28.58
3	Christian	07	20.00
Total		35	100

Table 4. Time of occurrence of incidences leading to dowry deaths

Sl No	Time of Incidence	No of Death	%
1	Morning (6A M to 10AM.)	07	20.0
2	Working Hours (10 AM to 4PM.)	03	8.58
3	Evening Hours 4 PM to 9PM.)	11	31.5
4	Night (9PM to 6 AM.)	14	40.00
Total		35	100.0

Table 5. Location of incidence leading to dowry deaths

Sl No	Location of incidence	Total		Homicidal		Suicidal	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	In-law's House	16	45.11	04	11.42	12	34.28
2	Husband's House	09	25.71	03	8.58	06	17.15
3	Parent's House	05	14.29	02	5.8	03	8.58
4	Road side /Field	05	14.29	02	5.8	03	8.58
		35		11		24	
Total		100		31.6		68.59	

Table 6. Offenders involved in causation of dowry deaths

Sl. No.	Offenders Involved	Dowry Deaths	
		No	%
1	Husband	17	48.5
2	Relative Husband	03	8.58
3	Both Husband / Relation	13	37.14
4	No offenders	12	5.8
Total		35	100

Table 7. Offenders involved in causation of dowry deaths

Sl. No.	Type of Family	Dowry Deaths	
		No	%
1	Joint Family	22	62.85
2	Nuclear family	13	37.15
Total		35	100.0

Table 8. Occurrence of dowry death's in relation to type of marriage

Sl. No.	Type of Marriage	Dowry Deaths	
		No	%
1	Arranged Marriage	26	74.28
2.	Love Marriage	9	25.72
Total		35	100.00

Table 9. Occurrence of dowry death's in relation with socio-economic status of the family

Sl. No.	Socio-Economic status	Dowry Deaths	
		No	%
1	Very Lower Class	08	22.85
2	Lower Class	10	28.58
3	Lower Middle Class	08	22.85
4	Higher Middle Class	06	17.15
5	Higher Class	03	8.58
6	Very Higher Class	00	00
Total		35	100

Table 10. Occurrence of dowry death's in relation with educational status of victim

Sl. No.	Educational Status	Dowry Deaths	
		No	%
1	Illiterate	09	25.72
2	Non Metric	12	34.28
3	Matriculation	08	22.85
4	Graduate	05	14.29
5	Postgraduate	01	2.85
Total		35	100

Table 11. Occurrence of dowry death's in relation with occupational status of the victim

Sl. No.	Occupational Status	Dowry Deaths	
		No	%
1	House Wife	18	51.43
2	Private Sector Employee	09	25.71
3	Government Employee	05	14.29
4	Student	03	8.58
	Total	35	100

Table 12. Occurrence of dowry death's in relation with number and gender of the children born to victim

Sl. No.	Children	Dowry Deaths	
		No	%
1	No Child	08	22.85
2	Only Female Child	13	37.14
3	Only Male Child	05	14.29
4	Male &Female	02	5.8
5	Below Child Bearing Duration	07	20
	Total	35	100.0

DISCUSSION

In dowry a deep routed cause of violence against women in India, has been reported. Sharma B R, Harish D, Manish Gupta and Veerendra pal singh¹ 2005, write as even the world has entered new millenium, the harsh reality is that the women in India have long been illtreated in our male dominant society.

PradeepKumar M V and F S Kulagoud² 2004 says as the dowry is a continuing demand it is not an one time payment initially at the time of marriage alone, but the series of gifts before and after marriage till the in-laws and husbands are satisfied.

The age of victims of the dowry death's studied in our study are mostly between 18-21 yrs, accounting for i.e.,15 cases(42.85%), out of 35 cases in one year. Maximum incidence of dowry death's observed during first 2-3 years of married life.These findings are in accordance with Sharma B R¹.

Regarding the causative factors modes of dowry deaths such as burns, hanging, poisoning, drowning etc.,majority of dowry deaths are due to burns i.e.,16(45.71%) followed by hanging 09(25.71%), poisoning 07(20%) and drowning 02(5.8%). These findings are comparable to other previous studies conducted by Nagesh Kumar⁴, where 60% of dowry deaths were due to burns Bhullar D.S³.

When dowry deaths are analyzed according to religion, Hindu females comprised of an alarming large group i.e.,18(51.43%) followed by other communities like Muslims 10(28.58%), Christian's 07(20%). These findings are comparable with findings of Anil

Agnihotri⁵,where 90% were Hindus other communities like Muslims, Christians and Sikhs, the number of dowry deaths were negligible.

The analysis of the cases with reference to time of occurrence of vital events leading to death's in our study showed that most of the cases have occurred at night hours, between i.e., 14(40%) between 9pm to 6am followed by i.e., 11(31.5%)between 4pm to 9pm and i.e.,7(20%)between 6am to 10am. It is in comparison with Anil Agnihotri⁵ study where 35.76% cases during night and 32.45% cases in the evening hours and Bhullar D.S³ reported (68.75%) cases between 4pm to 6pm.

These findings suggest most of the victims are killed by suicide i.e., 24(68.59%) or homicide i.e., 11(31.6%), when the other members of the family members were at home. Most of the incidence have occurred i.e., in-laws house 16(45.11%) followed by i.e., 09(25.71%) in husband's house.

The study clearly suggests that young house wives from joint families are major targets i.e., 22(62.85%) cases. These findings are in collaboration with Anil Agnihotri⁵ and Manjunath K. H study⁶, who observed more cases in joint families. In our study i.e., 17(48.5%) cases we found, husbands are the offenders.

With regard to type of marriage, most of the victims were got married by arranged marriage i.e., 26(74.28%) cases where as only i.e., 09(25.72%) cases are love marriage. This is because low understanding between husband and wife in arranged marriage and most of the brides going to stay in joint family after marriage. These findings are in corroboration with Anil Agnihotri⁵ and Manjunath K H studies⁶.

The socio-economic status of the family has a relevance in occurrence of dowry death cases, In the present study, most of the cases have been reported from lower class and lower middle class i.e., 08(22.85%) cases from lower class and i.e., 10(28.58%) cases from lower middle socio-economic class families and only 03(8.58%) cases in higher class. These findings are in agreement with the study of Sharma B.R, Harish D1 who observed 85% of victims belong to the low socio-economic group while only 0.8% belongs to high socio-economic group and in Anil Agnihotri⁵ study, most of the cases (54.97%) were found in low socio-economic group. These findings correspond to observation made by viz Gupta R.K and Srivastava A.K⁷.

In relevance to educational status of the victims,most of the cases were below matriculation

12(34.28%) followed by illiterate in 09(25.72%) cases, Among matriculated, 08(22.85%) victims were graduate. These findings correspond to other studies in this field by viz Gupta.R.K and Bhullar D S³.

When dowry related death cases are studied in relation to occupational status of the victims, the house wives constitute alarmingly a large group i.e., 18(51.43%) cases followed by private sector employees 09(25.71%) and only 05(14.29%) cases of government employees and students 03(8.58%). These findings are more or less similar to Anil Agnihotri⁵ study in which 95% of cases were house wives. This is because of their economic and social dependence on husband and in-laws for one or other means.

Most of the occurrence of dowry deaths in relation with number and Gender of the children Born to victim. i.e., 13(37.14%) in only female child and no child i.e., 8(28.85%). These findings are similar to the observations made by Sharma B R and Harish D¹.

CONCLUSION

1. Most of the dowry deaths occurred during evening and night hours between 4pm to 6am (61.5%).
2. Most of the dowry deaths occurred in Hindu religion (51.43%). And spreading to other religions too, Muslims (28.58%), Christian (14.28%).
3. Most of the victims are in the age between 18 to 21 years (42.85%). Maximum incidence of dowry deaths observed during first 2-3 years of married life.
4. Commonest location of incidence leading to dowry deaths. being the in laws house (45.72%) followed by husband's house (25.71%).
5. Commonest offenders being husband, in laws and both husband's relatives (82.85%).
6. Most of the victims belong to joint families (62.85%). In nuclear family, husband being alcoholic (37.15%).
7. Most of the victims were of arranged marriage (74.28%).
8. Most of the victims belong to lower and lower middle socio economic families (28.58%).
9. Most of the victims were educated below matriculation or just matriculate (57.13%).
10. Burning is the most common mode of dowry deaths (34.28%), followed by hanging (17.15%) and poisoning (8.58%).
11. Most of the victims were house wives (51.43%).
12. Most of the victims gave birth to only female child (37.14%) or no child at all (22.85%).

SUMMARY

1. Burning and hanging were the commonest methods employed by the victims in case of suicide but strangely enough the same methods were employed in homicides also
2. Between the ages of 18 to 21 years and married life of 2 to 3 years maximum incidence were observed
3. Hindu victims were more in number probably due to larger population
4. 4pm to 6am appears to be very sensitive period of the day as can be seen here with maximum number of deaths
5. Maximum number of deaths have taken place in in laws house.
6. Husband appears to be the main perpetrator of the crime.
7. Strangely maximum number of deaths have taken place in joint families.
8. Maximum incidence is in the arranged marriage.
9. Incidence is more in very low, low and lower middle class families.
10. Even the low educational level has gobbled up maximum number of victims.
11. Similarly, the incidence is maximum in housewives.
12. Unfortunately, the incidence was seen to be more in mothers of female children.

"It is very important to know the demographic pattern of Dowry Deaths in order to curb this menace and save the lives of women from their helplessness. Retributory measures alone have not significantly reduced any crime so far education is the key."

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the view of the worrying results of present study following measures are suggested to reduce the number of dowry related deaths and harassments.

- A. Social and Economical measures
 1. Public opinion against the magnitude and gravity of dowry deaths should be mobilized through various agencies.
 2. Costly and ostentatious marriage rituals should be discouraged by society and preferably a ban on such marriages be imposed by government.
 3. Newly wedded couples should be allowed to live separately from their in laws during first few formative years of their marriage as couples develop good understanding between each other.

4. Social boycott should be done to those tainted boys and their families in future marriage negotiation by the society.
 5. Effective measures to be taken to promote education among the women to increase their educational status.
 6. Women to be educated regarding their legal rights and special provisions under which they can fight the crimes against them.
 7. Inter caste and love marriages to be encouraged.
 8. Crimes against women cells should be opened in large number to tackle the immediate provocation.
- B. Measures by NGO's and government
The government in consultation with women NGO's working on gender violence issues should develop a national initiative against crimes against women.
- C. Legal and Administrative measures
1. More strict laws should be framed for offenders of dowry deaths and use of various explosive and inflammable materials and poisons to prevent unnatural female deaths.
 2. A well equipped task force with modern techniques for proper and prompt investigation should be sanctioned as dowry death cases are relatively high.

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