

Practice of dowry among married youth and prevalence of dowry death in selected states in india

Introduction

In spite of modernization and women's increasing role in the market economy, the practice of dowry in India is becoming more wide spread. Evidence shows that the value of dowry is increasing. In India marriage is typically arranged and the practice of dowry is common in most part of the country (Karve, 1965). The practice of dowry in India has an extensive history beginning in approximately the 13th or 14th century AD (Rao, 1982). Its origin can be traced to the Hindu succession laws as they stood prior to the Hindu laws reforms of the 1950. Under the Hindu law of the *Mitakshra* system, a female was not entitled to have a share in parental wealth, while a male has a right to share parental wealth since his birth. Some scholars pointed out that this practice appears to have compensated for this restriction, by allowing presentation of wealth to her at an appropriate time, usually her marriage. Thus dowry acts as a social mode of transferring the right of inheritance to a daughter, and consist only movable property (Krishnamurthy, 1981; Miller 1981; Sharma 1984).

Nature of marriage transaction in any societies has been theoretically linked to a number of factors including the nature of residence and inheritance system, women's role in production, kinship organization, and relative availability of spouses and social stratification in society. In many traditional societies, some transfer of money, goods and services accompany the initiation of marriage. When these transfers are made from brides and their families, they are broadly classified as dowries. A transfer in the opposite direction, from grooms and their families to bride and their family is commonly found in polygamous societies. Generally it is called as bride price.

A growing literature on dowry exists, with a particular emphasis on developing countries. In this paper our effort is to know the practice of dowry among married men and women and possible socio-economic determinant associated with this and prevailing dowry death in India and concerning states during different point of time. Because these crimes are in fact a matter of concern, as they reflect the condition of women in our society.

Data and Method

This paper draw data from "The Youth in India: Situation and Needs" survey conducted during 2006-2007 and Crime in India (2008-2011) from National Crime record Bureau (NCRB) of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Government of India.

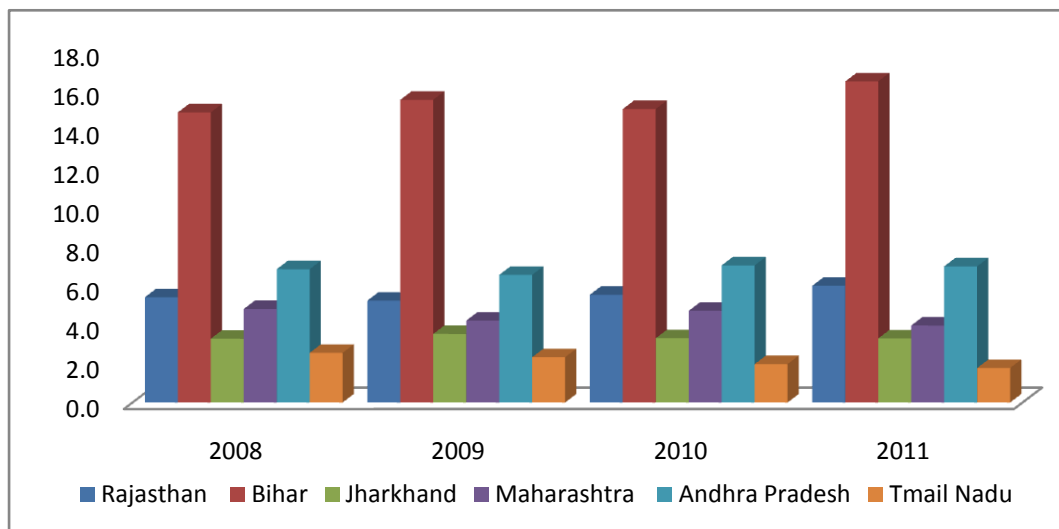
The survey is an outcome of collaborative efforts of International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai and Population Council, New Delhi. This sub-nationally representative survey covers six purposively selected states of India namely –Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu. The survey specifically interviewed 8052 married young men in the age group 15-29, 11522 unmarried young men in the age group 15-24, 13912 married young women and 17362 unmarried young women in the age group 15-24. Interview was conducted in separate PSUs for female and male respondent and each PSU, household were selected by systematic sampling. Within each selected household, no more than one respondent was interview from one category. The study covers the inclusive information on the young's people life such as education, work and employment, agency and gender role attitude, awareness on sexual and reproductive health, premarital sexual relationship and transition to marriage and married life, substance abuse, mental health disorder.

In order to capture the dowry practices in societies, direct question related to payment of dowry was asked, which includes whether the respondent has brought or received any cash, gift, jewelry and or other items at time of marriage, response were capture in binary form. And incident of dowry death has been taken as absolute numbers. For the aforementioned objective of the study, bi-variate and multivariate techniques have been utilized.

Dowry death

Despite the law against dowry, dowry death at present, is a burning problem of society it is increasing day by day owing to prevailing socio-economic fabric and life style in the family. It is evident from table 3 that dowry death has been on the rise from 2008 to 2011 at the national level. Statistics from states indicates that dowry death are increasing in all the selected states and only in Tamil nadu it is the other way round. While in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh percentage share to the all india dowry death is also increasing over period of time. Point to note is that these are the only reported cases; atual number may differ from it. Dowry, although banned by law in 1961 but never seriously enforced. Satatistics recently resealed by NCRB shows that in 2011, 8618 dowry death cases were reported across india, a deacde earlier this number was 6995 but climbed to 8117 dowry death in 2008.

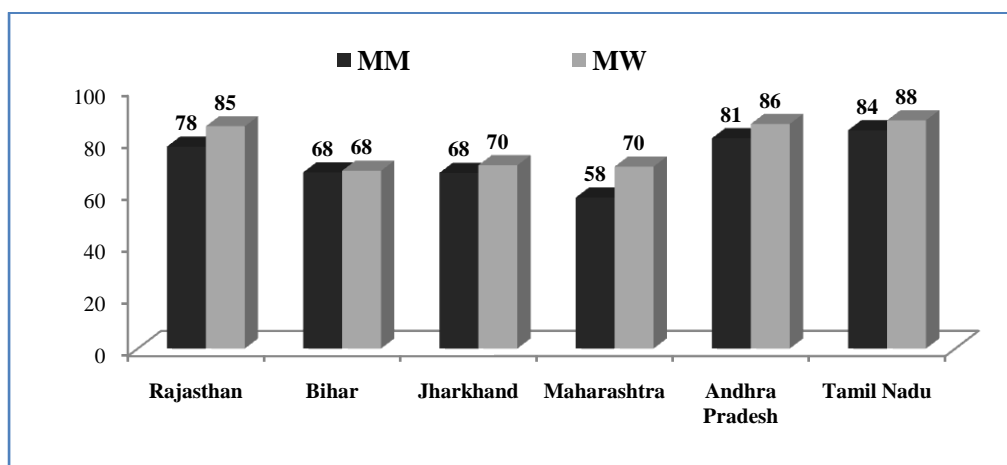
Fig 2: Percentage Share to the all india Dowry Death



Practice of dowry within marriage

Table 1 shows socio-economic differentials of men aged 15-29 and women aged 15-24 who reported receiving or giving of dowry. Among married men 73 percent from urban and 71 percent from rural areas reported of receiving or giving dowry where as among women 81 percent from urban and 76 percent from rural areas reported the same practice. In both the group (men and women) practice of dowry is increasing with increasing age. Practice of dowry is reported lowest in other religious groups by both married men and women. For men it is highest in Christians and both Hindu and Muslims men reported almost equal of such practice. However for women, highest percentage of Muslim followed by Christian women admitted giving dowry.

Figure1: Practice of dowry among married men and women in selected states



Practice of dowry is reportedly highest among higher caste groups of both married men and married women. Practice of dowry also increases with increasing educational level

and wealth quintile of both men and women. Result also depicts state wise differential in dowry practice for both men and women. Practice of dowry is highest among both men and women in the state of Tamil Nadu while it is lowest in Maharashtra.

Table 2 represents results from binary logistic regression analysis for payment or acceptance of dowry by married men and married women. It is apparent from the table that both men and women of rural areas are (17 percent among men and 11 percent among women) more likely to receive or pay the dowry as compared to men and women in urban areas. Again increasing age of men and women are positively associated with payment or acceptance of dowry. For instance, men aged 20-24 years and aged 25-29 years are more likely to payment or acceptance of dowry (63 percent and 65 percent respectively); whereas women in 20-24 years of age group are 16 percent more likely to payment or acceptance of dowry. Religion does not have any association with payment or acceptance of dowry in men however it is significantly associated with women. As compared to Hindu, Muslim women are 42 percent more likely to make payment or accept dowry where as women form other religious groups are 26 percent less likely to make such payments. Men from STs and OBC are 39 percent and 10 percent less likely to payment or acceptance of dowry as against men from general caste group. Women from SC and STs are 28 percent and 42 percent less likely to make such payments or accept it. Increasing educational level is positively associated with dowry practices. As compared to both uneducated men and women, men and women who are educated up to 1-7 years are 40 percent and 38 percent more likely to comply with dowry practices and it further increases to 90 percent more likely for men and 73 percent more likely for women in case of 12 and above years of schooling respectively. Love marriages have negative association with dowry practice and this is evident for both men and women. Wealth quintiles have positive association with dowry and it increases with increasing wealth status for both men and women. State level analysis shows that as compared to Rajasthan practice of dowry is significantly higher in the states of Andhra Pradesh (30 percent more likely) and Tamil Nadu (2.5 times more likely). Nevertheless women in states like Bihar, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra are 66 percent 54 percent and 77 percent less likely to comply with dowry practices respectively. As compare to Rajasthan however women in Tamil Nadu are 26 percent more likely to make such payments or acceptance.

Discussion and Conclusion

Dowry is a social evil but continues to be a common practice in almost every part of india. Finding indicates that dowry is universal phenomenon in all the sates and it is not restricted with religion. To note here, dowry increases with economic standard, however chance of

receiving and giving is less in love marriage and in those who are living in nuclear families. Interestingly men in southern states are having significantly higher chance of receiving dowry.

Although the factors influencing their regional variation remain a matter of speculation, in fact the literature contains several contradictory claims and findings on this matter. For instance, Srinivas (1965) in his work on Coorgs of Karnataka found that dowry is compatible with cross cousin marriage and marriage among equals and is not necessarily or only linked with female hypergamy. Moreover, there are some significant although locally confined sections of matrilineal and bilateral inheritance (both male and female) in south India (Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh), where women property rights are not the exception but the rule (Agarwal, 1995)

It has also been noted that, dowry has a close relation between class, caste and socio-economic position and marriage transaction in India (Goody, 1973; Miller, 1981). It is held that the custom of dowry is more prevalent among the general caste and wealthier people, it can be understood that marriage are largely alliance between two families in India. As a result it is the household of each potential spouse that make the marital decisions. Generally parents of bride initiate a search for groom and gives consideration to both individual traits such as wealth, occupation of father and groom. In other words combination of traits of groom, the bride and their respective household economic status plays a major role in marriage process. Though the organization of kinship, exogamy, socio economic status may have an impact on increasing the size of dowry payments, they serve only as the explanation for the existence of marriage transactions in India.

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Table 1: Incidence of Dowry death in india and states

States	Year			
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Rajasthan	439*	436	462	514
Bihar	1210	1295	1257	1413
Jharkhand	266	295	276	282
Maharashtra	390	351	393	339
Andhra Pradesh	556	546	588	599
Tamil Nadu	207	194	165	152
India	8172	8383	8391	8618

Table 2: Distribution of married men and women who reported receiving or giving dowry by background characteristics

Background Characteristics	MM (15-29)	MW(15-24)
Place of residence		
Urban	73.4	81.1
Rural	71.2	76.8
Age of respondents		
15-19	60.3	74.4
20-24	70.8	79.1
25-29	73.1	-
Religion		
Hindu	72.0	77.8
Muslim	72.1	83.0
Christian	76.1	79.8
Others	58.7	58.2
Caste		
SCs	68.0	71.2
STs/VJNT	57.1	63.8
OBC	75.9	80.7
General	76.0	82.8
Education		
None	60.6	70.9
1-7 years	70.8	80.0
8-11 years	74.4	82.9
12 and above	81.1	85.6
Wealth quintile		
First	53.5	61.3
Second	68.6	75.7
Third	73.6	80.6
Fourth	76.9	84.4
Fifth	84.5	89.2
States		
Rajasthan	77.6	85.4
Bihar	67.7	68.3
Jharkhand	67.5	70.4
Maharashtra	58.0	69.9
Andhra Pradesh	80.8	86.3
Tamil Nadu	83.9	87.7
Total	72.0	78.0
N	8052	13912

Note: MM- Married men; MW- Married women

Table 3: Odds ratios from Logistic regression showing payment or acceptance of dowry

Background Characteristics	MM (15-29)		MW(15-24)	
	Odds ratio	CI	Odds ratio	CI
Place of residence				
Urban ®				
Rural	1.17**	(1.01-1.35)	1.11*	(0.97-1.26)
Age of respondents				
15-19 ®				
20-24	1.63***	(1.28-2.07)	1.16***	(1.05-1.28)
25-29	1.65***	(1.30-2.08)	-	
Religion				
Hindu ®				
Muslim	1.04	(0.86-1.25)	1.42***	(1.19-1.69)
Christian	0.97	(0.62-1.49)	0.96	(0.70-1.30)
Others	0.93	(0.66-1.29)	0.74**	(0.57-0.94)
Caste				
General ®				
Schedule Caste (SC)	0.80	(0.66-0.96)	0.72***	(0.61-0.84)
Schedule Tribe (ST)/ VJNT	0.61**	(0.49-0.74)	0.52***	(0.42-0.62)
Other Backward Classes	0.90***	(0.76-1.05)	0.93	(0.80-1.07)
Education				
None ®				
1-7 years	1.40***	(1.20-1.62)	1.38***	(1.23-1.55)
8-11 years	1.53***	(1.30-1.78)	1.57***	(1.36-1.79)
12 and above	1.90***	(1.54-2.35)	1.73***	(1.36-2.18)
Type of Marriage				
Arrange ®				
Love	0.14***	(0.92-1.16)	0.12***	(0.09-0.13)
Family type				
Nuclear ®				
Non Nuclear	1.04	(0.92-1.16)	1.26***	(1.14-1.39)
Wealth quintile				
First ®				
Second	1.55***	(1.32-1.81)	1.57***	(1.38-1.77)
Third	1.76***	(1.48-2.09)	1.90***	(1.64-2.18)
Fourth	2.08***	(1.72-2.51)	2.35***	(1.99-2.77)
Fifth	3.32***	(2.62-4.19)	3.19***	(2.59-3.92)
State				
Rajasthan ®				
Bihar	0.80*	(0.67-0.94)	0.34***	(0.28-0.39)
Jharkhand	0.92	(0.72-1.17)	0.46***	(0.37-0.57)
Maharashtra	0.42***	(0.35-0.50)	0.23***	(0.19-0.27)
Andhra Pradesh	1.30***	(1.07-1.56)	0.86	(0.71-1.03)
Tamil Nadu	2.59***	(1.96-3.40)	1.26**	(0.98-1.59)
Constant	1.01		1.70	
R2	0.167		0.21	
N	8052		13912	

Note: MM- Married men; MW- Married women; (R)-Reference category; (C)-Continuous variable; CI-Confidence Intervals; Level of significance: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1