



From Legislation To Reality: A Critical Examination Of Dowry Law Enforcement Using NCRB Data

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Abstract

Dowry is the money, goods or estate that a woman brings to a marriage. A major legislative move to end the long-standing custom of dowries in India was the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961. The reality on the ground shows a sharp difference, with the custom enduring across socioeconomic strata despite its explicit ban on providing or receiving dowries. Reports of dowry-related violence, harassment, and fatalities are still coming in, underscoring the difficulties in properly implementing the rule. Meaningful change is impeded by societal norms, patriarchal mindsets, and legislative implementation flaws. Although the law's scope has been broadened by modifications and court rulings, including provisions under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and Section 498A (Section 86 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita) of the Indian Penal Code, enforcement of the law is still uneven. The discussion is made more difficult by the mounting controversy over the abuse of these laws.

This paper examines the gap between legislation and reality in India's efforts to abolish dowry. It underscores the need for comprehensive reform that includes stronger enforcement, social awareness campaigns, and empowerment of women through education and economic independence. The fight against dowry requires not only legal tools but also a transformation of societal values and gender relations. This abstract looks at the discrepancy between Indian initiatives to outlaw dowries and their actual implementation. It emphasises the necessity of all-encompassing reform, which should include more robust enforcement, social awareness initiatives, and the empowering of women via economic independence and education. Eliminating dowries from Indian society will not be possible without a multifaceted strategy that tackles both legal and cultural obstacles. In addition to legislative measures, the battle against dowries also calls for a change in gender roles and societal norms.

Keywords: 1. Dowry Prohibition Act 2. Social reform 3. Gender inequality 4. Patriarchy 5. Legal enforcement

I. Introduction

Dowry, historically embedded in Indian matrimonial customs, refers to the transfer of parental property, gifts, or money at the marriage of a daughter. Despite being legally prohibited, the dowry system continues to be a significant contributor to violence against women in India.¹ The practice, while rooted in traditional norms, has transformed into a coercive demand, often resulting in abuse, harassment, and even death of brides when expectations remain unmet.²

To combat this, the Indian legislature enacted several statutory provisions, the most notable being the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, which explicitly criminalizes the giving and receiving of dowry.³ This was followed by crucial amendments to the Indian Penal Code (IPC), particularly Section 498A(Section 86 BNS), which penalizes cruelty by the husband or his relatives, and Section 304B, which addresses dowry deaths.⁴ While these laws signify progressive intent, the effectiveness of their enforcement remains under scrutiny.

Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) consistently reveals that dowry-related crimes remain high, raising critical concerns about implementation.⁵ The disconnect between legislation and ground realities is stark: thousands of women continue to face physical and psychological trauma or lose their lives each year over dowry disputes.⁶

This paper seeks to critically examine the enforcement of anti-dowry laws in India by analyzing NCRB data, evaluating institutional challenges, and identifying gaps between legal provisions and practical execution. It also seeks to offer forward-looking recommendations aimed at bridging this gap and achieving substantive justice for affected women.

II. Legal Framework

The Indian legal system has enacted a multi-tiered framework to combat dowry-related crimes. Central to this framework are both special legislation and specific provisions within the Indian Penal Code (IPC) designed to address the causes and consequences of dowry harassment and deaths.

- A. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:** The cornerstone of anti-dowry legislation in India is the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, which criminalizes both the giving and receiving of dowry.⁷ The Act defines dowry as any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given directly or indirectly in connection with the marriage. It makes such transactions punishable with imprisonment up to five

¹ **INDIA CONST.** art. 15; See also Flavia Agnes, *Law, Justice and Gender: Family Law and Constitutional Provisions in India*, 5 E. L. J. 35, 36 (2011).

² See *Sarkar v. State of Assam*, (1990) 4 SCC 193 (India); See also Ranjana Kumari, *Brides Are Not For Burning* 67 (1993).

³ The Dowry Prohibition Act, No. 28 of 1961, INDIA CODE (1961).

⁴ Indian Penal Code, No. 45 of 1860, §§ 498A, 304B, INDIA CODE (1860).

⁵ Nat'l Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India 2022* (Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India), available at <https://ncrb.gov.in/en/crime-india>.

⁶ See Vidya Rattan, *Enforcement Mechanism of Dowry Laws in India*, 3 Indian Bar Rev. 421 (2018).

⁷ The Dowry Prohibition Act, No. 28 of 1961, INDIA CODE (1961).

years and a fine not less than ₹15,000 or the amount of dowry, whichever is more. However, enforcement of this Act has remained inconsistent, with few cases resulting in conviction.⁸

B. Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code: Inserted into the IPC in 1983, Section 498A addresses cruelty inflicted on a woman by her husband or his relatives.⁹ Cruelty under this section includes both physical and mental harassment and specifically covers coercion to meet unlawful dowry demands. This provision has been pivotal in offering immediate legal recourse to married women facing abuse.

A. While its introduction was a progressive step, concerns have been raised regarding the misuse of Section 498A.¹⁰ The Supreme Court in *Rajesh Sharma v. State of U.P.* cautioned against its misuse and laid down guidelines to prevent arbitrary arrests.¹¹ Despite such controversies, it remains a powerful tool for protecting women against dowry-linked domestic violence.

B. Section 304B of the Indian Penal Code: Section 304B, added to the IPC in 1986, specifically deals with dowry deaths.¹² If a woman dies due to burns or bodily injury under suspicious circumstances within seven years of her marriage, and it is shown that she was subjected to dowry-related harassment shortly before her death, the husband or his relatives are presumed to be responsible. The punishment under this section is a minimum of seven years' imprisonment, which may extend to life imprisonment. This presumption provision shifts the burden of proof onto the accused, a significant departure from general criminal law.

C. Sections 113A and 113B Indian Evidence Act (Section 117,118 BSA):

To support prosecution under Sections 498A IPC (Section 86 BNS) and 304B IPC (Section 80BNS), the Indian Evidence Act was amended to include Sections 113A and 113B (Section 117, 118 BSA), allowing courts to presume abetment of suicide and dowry death respectively when certain conditions are met.¹³ These presumptive clauses aim to strengthen the evidentiary framework surrounding dowry-related crimes.

III. Analysis of NCRB Data

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, publishes annual reports titled *Crime in India*, offering critical insights into the nature, frequency, and distribution of dowry-related offenses across the country.¹⁴ These reports serve as the primary empirical basis for understanding the enforcement efficacy of laws like the Dowry Prohibition Act, Section 498A, and Section 304B of the Indian Penal Code.

⁸ See Law Comm'n of India, *205th Report on the Laws Against Dowry*, 12 (2008), available at <https://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports.htm>.

⁹ Indian Penal Code, No. 45 of 1860, § 498A, INDIA CODE (1983).

¹⁰ Shashi Bala, *Misuse of Anti-Dowry Laws in India: A Review of Judicial Trends*, 6 J. Gend. Just. 112 (2017).

¹¹ *Rajesh Sharma v. State of U.P.*, (2017) 8 SCC 746 (India).

¹² Indian Penal Code, No. 45 of 1860, § 304B, INDIA CODE (1986).

¹³ Indian Evidence Act, No. 1 of 1872, §§ 113A, 113B, INDIA CODE (1986).

¹⁴ Nat'l Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India 2021*, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, GOV'T OF INDIA, <https://ncrb.gov.in/en/crime-india> (last visited Apr. 6, 2025).

- A. **Prevalence of Dowry Deaths:** Despite the criminalization of dowry, data reveals that dowry deaths continue to plague Indian society. In 2021, 6,589 dowry death cases were registered nationwide.¹⁵ This represented a 3.85% decrease from 2020, which recorded 6,843 such cases.¹⁶ The state of Uttar Pradesh continues to top the chart with 2,222 cases in 2021, followed by Bihar (1,096) and Madhya Pradesh (507).
- B. **Geographical Disparities:** A deeper geographical analysis shows that the incidence of dowry deaths is not evenly distributed. While Uttar Pradesh reports the highest number in absolute terms, states like Haryana and Odisha show higher dowry death rates when measured per 100,000 female population, indicating a need for region-specific policy responses.¹⁷ These disparities reflect the socio-cultural and economic influences on the dowry system's persistence across different Indian states.
- C. **Trends Over Time:** Longitudinal trends suggest a gradual decline in the number of dowry deaths over the last decade. In 2012, there were 8,233 registered dowry death cases compared to 6,589 in 2021. While this declining trend may be indicative of increased awareness or improved legal response, the consistently high figures still reflect the entrenched cultural acceptance of dowry practices and the systemic inefficiencies in eradicating them.
- D. **Conviction and Disposal Rates:** One of the most concerning aspects of NCRB data is the low conviction rate in dowry-related cases. In 2020, the conviction rate for dowry deaths under Section 304B was approximately 35%, reflecting both the ineffectiveness of investigations and weak prosecution mechanisms. Common reasons for acquittals include lack of direct evidence, hostile witnesses, and delays in filing FIRs.
- E. **Data Limitations and Underreporting:** Although NCRB data is a vital policy tool, it suffers from significant limitations. Underreporting of dowry harassment and deaths is rampant due to social stigma, fear of retaliation, and familial pressure.¹⁸ Additionally, inconsistencies in crime registration, classification, and state-wise variation in data collection methodologies further weaken the data's reliability for uniform national-level conclusions.¹⁹
- F. ²⁰Official statistics on dowry deaths for 2024 have not yet been made public by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as of April 2025. According to the most recent complete figures, there were 6,450 dowry death cases in 2022, a 4.5% drop from the year before. With 2,218 occurrences, Uttar Pradesh reported the most, followed by Madhya Pradesh (518), Bihar (1,057), and Bihar

¹⁷ See *Violence Against Women in India*, WIKIPEDIA, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence_against_women_in_India ; see also NCRB, *Crime in India 2021*

¹⁸ Shashi Bala, *Underreporting of Crimes Against Women: A Case Study of Dowry Deaths*, 9 GEND. & L. J. 112 (2018).

¹⁹ Law Comm'n of India, *205th Report on the Laws Against Dowry*, 23–24 (2008), <https://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports.htm>.

²⁰ National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), *Crime in India 2022: Chapter on Crimes Against Women*, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. (last visited Apr. 6, 2025)

IV. Challenges in Enforcement

Despite the existence of a robust legal framework, including the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, and penal provisions like Sections 498A and 304B of the Indian Penal Code, the enforcement of dowry laws in India remains significantly flawed.²¹ One of the foremost challenges is underreporting, driven by social stigma, fear of retaliation from the husband's family, and the pressure to preserve family honor.²² Many victims choose silence over justice, leading to a considerable discrepancy between actual incidents and reported cases.

Even when cases are reported, investigative inadequacies severely hinder the pursuit of justice. Police officers often lack the specialized training necessary to handle gender-sensitive cases, resulting in poor documentation, delayed First Information Reports (FIRs), and weak evidence collection.²³ Further, judicial delays exacerbate the issue—cases related to dowry deaths or harassment often languish in courts for years, by which time crucial evidence is lost or witnesses become hostile.²⁴ According to NCRB data, the conviction rate for dowry deaths hovers around 35%, reflecting the inefficacy of the criminal justice process.²⁵

Another significant concern is the misuse of Section 498A IPC, which has led to contentious debates. Critics argue that this provision is occasionally weaponized in false or exaggerated complaints, undermining its legitimacy.²⁶ The Supreme Court in *Rajesh Sharma v. State of Uttar Pradesh* even observed the misuse and laid down guidelines to prevent arbitrary arrests.²⁷ However, scholars and activists have cautioned that overemphasizing misuse may dilute the law's intended protective effect and deter genuine victims from seeking redress.²⁸

Moreover, corruption and administrative apathy among enforcement officials further obstruct the application of dowry laws. Law enforcement agencies are often reluctant to intervene in what they term "domestic matters," thus perpetuating a culture of impunity.²⁹ The role of Dowry Prohibition Officers, as mandated under the 1961 Act, is rarely implemented in practice due to lack of funding, awareness, and institutional support.³⁰ Combined with the absence of proper witness protection mechanisms and inadequate access to legal aid, these factors collectively render the legal protections against dowry violence largely ineffective for the majority of victims.

²¹ The Dowry Prohibition Act, No. 28 of 1961; Indian Penal Code, No. 45 of 1860, §§ 498A, 304B, INDIA CODE.

²² See Shashi Bala, *Underreporting of Dowry Crimes in India: A Gendered Social Perspective*, 6 INT'L J. SOC. & L. 112, 117 (2019). (last visited Apr. 6, 2025)

²³ Law Comm'n of India, *205th Report on the Laws Against Dowry*, 25–26 (2008), <https://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports.htm>. (last visited Apr. 6, 2025)

²⁴ Ritu Gupta, *Judicial Backlog and Delays in Gender-Based Violence Cases*, 7 DELHI L. REV. 88, 93 (2021). (last visited Apr. 6, 2025)

²⁵ Nat'l Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India 2021*, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, GOV'T OF INDIA, tbl.13A, <https://ncrb.gov.in/en/crime-india> (last visited Apr. 6, 2025).

²⁶ Sudhir Krishnaswamy, *Misuse and the Real Victims: A Case Study of Section 498A IPC*, 12 NAT'L L. U. J. 144 (2018).

²⁷ *Rajesh Sharma v. State of U.P.*, (2017) 8 SCC 746 (India).

²⁸ Flavia Agnes, *Law, Gender, and Domestic Violence in India: Legal Paradoxes*, 5 FEMINIST L. STUD. 143, 151 (2017).

²⁹ Vidya Rattan, *The Failures of Law Enforcement in Addressing Dowry Harassment*, 3 SOC. JUST. J. 45 (2018).

³⁰ Nita Bhalla, *India's Forgotten Dowry Officers*, THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION (2019), <https://news.trust.org/item/20190902133539-0y7dg>.

V. Case Law Analysis

Judicial interpretation has played a pivotal role in shaping the implementation and evolution of anti-dowry laws in India. Courts have not only interpreted statutory provisions such as Sections 498A and 304B of the Indian Penal Code but have also provided critical guidance on evidentiary standards and procedural fairness in dowry-related cases.

One of the landmark cases in this domain is *State of Punjab v. Iqbal Singh*, where the Supreme Court emphasized that in dowry death cases under Section 304B, the prosecution must establish that the death occurred within seven years of marriage and that soon before her death, the woman was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or his relatives in connection with dowry demands.³¹ This judgment clarified the essential ingredients for attracting Section 304B, thereby aiding lower courts in consistent interpretation.

In *Kans Raj v. State of Punjab*, the Court reiterated the importance of presumption under Section 113B of the Indian Evidence Act, allowing courts to presume that a dowry death was caused by the husband or his relatives when the conditions of Section 304B are fulfilled.³² The Court held that although such presumptions are rebuttable, the burden of proof shifts significantly to the accused, thereby strengthening the prosecution's case.

However, the judiciary has also acknowledged the potential for misuse of these provisions. In *Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Union of India*, the Court addressed the concerns of false or exaggerated complaints under Section 498A.³³ The Court held that while the law was enacted to protect women from cruelty, it should not become a tool for legal terrorism. Similar sentiments were echoed in *Rajesh Sharma v. State of U.P.*, where the Court laid down procedural safeguards, including the establishment of Family Welfare Committees to screen complaints before arrests.³⁴

Despite these interventions, the courts have largely remained sensitive to the plight of genuine victims. In *Sham Lal v. State of Haryana*, the Court convicted the accused for dowry death, noting that a woman's repeated complaints of torture before her unnatural death within the matrimonial home created a strong chain of circumstantial evidence.³⁵ This case demonstrated the judiciary's willingness to go beyond direct evidence and rely on corroborative testimony, post-mortem reports, and the socio-cultural context of dowry pressure.

Thus, judicial responses have oscillated between protecting genuine victims and preventing abuse of legal provisions, highlighting the need for a nuanced and balanced approach. The courts have significantly influenced the practical enforcement of dowry laws, filling legislative gaps and strengthening interpretive clarity, but challenges still persist in achieving uniformity and timely justice

³¹ *State of Punjab v. Iqbal Singh*, (1991) 3 SCC 1 (India).

³² *Kans Raj v. State of Punjab*, (2000) 5 SCC 207 (India).

³³ *Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Union of India*, (2005) 6 SCC 281 (India).

³⁴ *Rajesh Sharma v. State of U.P.*, (2017) 8 SCC 746 (India).

³⁵ *Sham Lal v. State of Haryana*, (2014) 5 SCC 638 (India).

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

CONCLUSION

The Court and Legislature have to make changes if the laws of matrimonial cruelty are to be of any deterrence. Looking into the recent observations and the increase in the misuse of this Section, there should be certain amendments which should be brought up in this law:

1. Role of Women NGOs: These organizations should investigate complaint properly without any bias towards the woman keeping in mind that the law is being misused largely to harass more women in husband's family. They should not encourage any woman to file a criminal case against her in-laws for trivial matters. Foreign Women Organizations should also take responsibility of not allowing false complaint to be registered against NRI's just to harass and extort huge amount of money from them. These organizations should also conduct survey/research on the misuse of the act and should educate people about its consequences. If these organizations are found to be assisting in filing false complaints, then they should be made liable for prosecution in the country where they are functioning.

2. Family Counselling Centres: Numerous cases of men being harassed by wife or/and in-laws have come to light from different parts of the country. As of now there is no organization, which can really help these harassed men and his family members, to listen their side of the story and put their point of view in front of the government. Need of the hour is to create family counseling centers across the country to help those aggrieved families.

3. Time bound Investigation and Trial: A speedy trial of 498(a) cases will not only ensure justice for the innocents that have been implicated in false charges, it will also lead to prompt redressal of the grievances of real dowry victims. The reduction in false cases will also reduce the burden on judiciary and expedite the processing of real cases.

4. Definition of Mental Cruelty: Mental cruelty has been vaguely defined in the act, which leaves scope of misuse. This should be clearly elaborated to remove loopholes in the law. There should be provision for men also to file a case for mental cruelty by his wife.

5. Investigation by Civil authorities: The investigation into these offences be carried out by civil authorities and only after his/her finding as to the commission of the offence, cognizance should be taken. The government should create awareness among officers about its misuse.

6. Bailable: The main reason of 498a being misused to harass innocent is its non-bailable nature. This section should be made bailable to prevent innocent old parents, pregnant sisters, and school going children from languishing in custody for weeks without any fault of them.

7. Compoundable: Once FIR has been registered it becomes impossible to withdraw the case even if wife realizes that she has done a blunder and wants to come back to her matrimonial home. To save institution

of marriage this should be made compoundable. Moreover, in the scenario where the couple decides to end the marriage by mutual divorce, continuation of criminal proceedings hamper their life.

8. Arrest Warrants: Arrest warrant should be issued only against the main accused and only after cognizance has been taken. Husband family members should not be arrested.

9. Penalty for making false accusation: Whenever any court comes to the conclusion that the allegations made regarding commission of offence under section 498a IPC are unfound, stringent action should be taken against persons making the allegations. This would discourage persons from coming to courts with unclean hands and ulterior motives. Criminal charges should be brought against all authorities that are collaborating with falsely accusing women and their parental families.

10. Court Proceedings: Physical appearance of the accused on hearing should be waved or kept low to avoid hassles in appearing to the court, especially for NRIs. The court should not ask to surrender passport of the husband and his family which could cost job of the husband and his family members.

11. Registration of Marriage and Gifts Exchanged: The registration of marriages should be made compulsory along with the requirement that the couple make a joint declaration regarding the gifts exchanged during marriage.

12. Punish Dowry Givers: If the complainant admits giving dowry in the complaint, the courts should take cognizance of the same and initiate proceedings against them under the relevant sections of the Dowry Prohibition Act

13. Penalize corrupt Investigation Officers: If it is apparent to the court that a fair investigation has not been conducted by the investigation officer, and that the husband and his family have been charge-sheeted without proper verification of the complaint, the investigation officer should be penalized for gross negligence of duty.

14. NRI Issues: Unless they are proven to be guilty after the due judicial process, NRIs should be given a fair chance to justice by assuring them of the following –

- a) Permission to return to country of employment
- b) No impoundment/revocation of passport and no Interpol Red Corner Notices.
- c) No unnecessary arrests
- d) Expeditious investigation and trial.

15. Gender Neutral: Everyone should have equal rights and responsibilities, irrespective of gender. In the current social context, there should be similar laws to protect harassed husband and his family members from an unscrupulous wife

³⁶This Section only provides for the remedy to woman only and these days it is being used as a 'brahamastra' by the woman. It is a highly debatable issue these days, if this problem is not solved by legislation it may become a bane for the society. People's trust over the judiciary will come to an end. So it's high time that this Section be amended and some changes like mentioned above should be brought up in this law.

The institution of marriage is no longer considered a sacred union of two hearts but has rather become more of a civil contract between two individuals in literal sense of the term where one is obligated to another to perform conjugal rights.

³⁷Section 86 (IPC Section 498A, now BNS Section 86) which has otherwise incurred the infamy of being a 'legal terrorism' was primarily incorporated to combat the evil practices of dowry and dowry deaths. But recent study shows that over the years it has changed its colour and has become a weapon of notoriety. With the help of books of distinguished legal personalities and eminent lawyers, articles written or published by social activists the researcher has formulated some hypothesis in regard to the curbing of this social cancer.

The inclusion of Section 86 (IPC Section 498A, now BNS Section 86) IPC, 1860 though seemed fruitful and effective in the early years of its proclamation unfortunately a new era of ruthlessness emerged with the arrival of 21st century. Although judiciary has failed miserably in curbing the gross abuse of Section 86 (IPC Section 498A, now BNS Section 86) nevertheless the very provision calls for an immediate redressal to the sufferings of the real victims of dowry harassment. The protection should also be extended to male members of the society as recent study shows countless innocent husbands and their families have been affected by this stringent provision since the section provides shelter only to women rendering the provision to be biased, discriminatory and unconstitutional.

Anyone who has been awake the last two decades knows how section 498-A of IPC, 1860 has been heavily misused, dragging innocent men and women into police stations, lock-ups and courts, thus depriving many young children of a happy childhood, many youth of productive careers and many senior citizens of mental peace in the last leg of their lives.

Many women who really need protection from Domestic Violence will probably never know about it and even if they do, never use it. This law will be yet another weapon in the hands of unscrupulous women who will misuse it at the slightest opportunity. When a man is thrown out of his own house under true or false allegations of domestic violence or cruelty everyone who is dependent on him is bound to suffer. It is unfair enough to penalize an entire family even if an accused man is truly abusive. Unfair is a subtle word to describe a situation in which an innocent man, along with his family, is tortured by misuse of law.

³⁶ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita – section 86

³⁷ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita – Section 86

After the entire study we can conclude that though Section 498-A of IPC, 1860 was brought in forth for the protection of women from the cruelty of her husband and his relatives but now it is being abused. These women are turning the law other way round by being cruel to their husband and his relatives and getting them tried under ³⁸Section 86 (IPC Section 498A, now BNS Section 86) of IPC, 1860 which deals with “Cruelty by husband or relatives of husband”. Henceforth certain legal actions should be taken as soon as possible to curtail growth of “legal terrorism”, by misuse of provisions of law.

RECOMMENDATIONS -

The following are the suggestions or recommendations posed by the researcher towards the research problem :-

- **Firstly**, in India, the trial of criminal cases especially of serious nature continues for 8 to 10 years if not more depending on the gravity of crime. But a speedy trial is advisable so that the innocent victims entrapped under the section of 498A gets prompt redressal. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that besides being effective the judiciary must try to expedite the process of trial with regard to the 498A cases.
- **Secondly**, an effort must also be made so that the investigation regarding this 498A cases is operated only by civil authorities and only on the finding of reasonable evidence, enough to establish the individual's crime, should the policeman take actions against him.
- **Thirdly**, the provision laid down under section 498A IPC, 1860 needs an immediate amendment and it should be one of the major concerns of the law-makers in recent times.
- **Fourthly**, in our nation there is no proper formal organization who offers family counselling. Establishment of a recognized family counselling organization is essential so that the individuals can vent out their grief and can also take the advice of experts and practitioners.
- **Fifthly**, the NGO's associated with the human rights activities must join hands to act in a neutral manner and should educate the crowd of not filing criminal cases based on trivial matters.
- **Sixthly**, a genuine endeavour must be made so that 498A cases are continued as bailable offence and not non-bailable to prevent the innocent ones from languishing in custody.
- **Seventhly**, The Court should start imposing penalty and stringent actions must be taken against the individual for making false accusations since this section lacks the deterrent element for which the dowry cases are increasing at such alarming level.
- **Eighthly**, strong actions must be taken against the dishonest, corrupted police officers; they must either be penalized or suspended from their posts if it becomes evident that there has been a gross negligence of duty on their part.

³⁸ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita – Section 86

VII. References

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