

Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act 1984

The **Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act of 1984** prescribes a minimum punishment of two years imprisonment and fine to anyone demanding dowry. Because of this Dowry Prohibition Act, a person who gives or takes, or helps in the giving or taking of dowry can be sentenced to jail for 5 years and fined Rs.15,000/- or the amount of the value of dowry, whichever is more. This Act is prohibited to give or to agree to give, directly or indirectly, any property or valuable security, in connection with a marriage. The giving of or agreeing to the giving of any amount either in cash or kind, jewelry, articles, properties, etc. in respect of a marriage is absolutely prohibited by the Dowry prohibition Act. Even the making of a demand for dowry is also now prohibited and it is punishable with imprisonment of 5 years and a fine of Rs.10,000/-

In Order to provide more teeth to dowry prevention laws, the Government has decided to make it mandatory for couples to make list of gifts exchanged during the ceremonies of marriage. The **Dowry Prohibition (Maintenance of List of present to the Bride and Bridegroom) Rules** were introduced in 1985 in pursuance of the same purpose. It clearly stated that the list of gifts, in form of a sworn affidavit, has to be notarized, signed by a protection officer or a dowry prohibition officer and kept by both the parties. Failing this can invite heavy penalty including a three-year term in jail for not only bride and groom but also their parents.

To stop the offences of cruelty by husband or his relatives on wife, Section 498-A has been added in the **Indian Penal Code**, and Section 198-A has been added in the **Criminal Procedure Code** since the year 1983. In the case of suicide by a married woman, within 7 years from the date of her marriage, the Court may presume that such suicide has been abetted, encouraged by her husband or his relatives. Provision to this effect has been added in the Indian Evidence Act, by adding Section 113-A since the year 1983.

Sec.304-B is incorporated in the **Indian Penal Code in 1983**. It deals with Dowry Death. It states that where the death of a woman is caused by any burns or bodily injury or occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances within seven years of her marriage and it is shown that soon before her death she was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or any relative of her husband for, or in connection with, any demand for dowry, such death shall be called "dowry death" and such husband or relative shall be deemed to have caused her death.

Clause(2) of Sec.304-B stated that whoever commits dowry death shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may extend to imprisonment for life.

Recently for the Protection of women from Domestic Violence an Act is enacted in the year 2005 which is called as the **Domestic Violence Act**.