

because youngsters believe in complete new theory of living life with challenges and in their own ways. The rise of the modern thought-freedom of choice and availability of options brought a change within the attitude of people from being content in life to highly ambitious and to achieve goals.

The ambitions of leading a highly comfortable life kept alive the evil tradition of dowry but in a new and changed way. It became a status symbol. The society started to change, mainly in metro, from traditional compact to openness society that adopted live-in relationships, extra-marital affairs, pre-marital sex, homosexuality etc. Despite of such openness, dowry like old and meaningless custom did not die. No doubt, youngsters believe in freedom, liberty, and individuality, but when it comes to marriage they follow all those family customs instead of abandoned them. Many times we hear stories like breaking up of a relationship, because the family of the boy wants to marry the girl of his parent's choice and status or vice a versa.

Today, girls are earning well, they are educated, career-oriented, ambitious and sitting at high level position and taking important decisions in corporate as well as government offices. In fact, she is the one who bears the dual burden of household responsibility as well work hard to meet out professional deadlines. It is high time, the young generation should raise their voices against dowry. If they do not take any effective step, the situation might go beyond control. They needs to work harder to revolt against this outmoded dowry system. An effective awareness campaign in association with NGOs, voluntary organisations or with government agencies can help to fight against this social evil.

- Parul Gupta

Contributions from Readers

Dear Readers,

Would you like to report news related women of your locality? Do you want your imagination and creativity to be seen and admired by others? If you have the journalistic instinct or serious bent towards writing creative piece, there is ample scope for you to set free your journalistic attributes or get your creative piece published in our magazine. You can report news-stories or write feature, article or analysis on success story or plight of women, fight against odds or can be anything but all related to women. You can send your contribution by post or email. Women on the Earth solicits original, well-written articles from writers across the country

So do not wait and send your contributions to us since Women On The Earth is committed to provide a democratic platform to readers for their expression. The final decision regarding the selection and publication of the articles shall rest solely with the editorial board of Women On The Earth.

You can send or email your contribution to the following address.

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Legislations and Laws for women

The State enacted several women-specific and women-related legislations to protect women against social discrimination, violence and atrocities and also to prevent social evils like child marriages, dowry, rape, practice of Sati etc. The recently notified Prevention of Domestic Violence Act is a landmark law in acting as a deterrent as well as providing legal recourse to the women who are victims of any form of domestic violence.

Apart from these, there are a number of laws which may not be gender specific but still have ramifications on women.

1. Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 provides for equal pay to men and women for equal work.

2. Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 amended in 1976 provides the right for girls to repudiate a child marriage before attaining maturity whether the marriage has been consummated or not.

3. The Marriage (Amendment) Act, 2001 amended the Hindu Marriage Act, Special Marriage Act, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure providing for speedy disposal of applications for maintenance; the ceiling limit for claiming maintenance has been deleted and a wide discretion has been given to the Magistrate to award appropriate maintenance.

4 The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956 as amended and renamed in 1986 makes the sexual exploitation of male or female, a cognizable offence. It is being amended to decriminalize the prostitutes and make the laws more stringent against traffickers. An amendment brought in 1984 to the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 made women's subjection to cruelty a cognizable

offence. The second amendment brought in 1986 makes the husband or in-laws punishable, if a woman commits suicide within 7 years of her marriage and it has been proved that she has been subjected to cruelty. Also a new criminal offence of 'Dowry Death' has been incorporated in the Indian Penal Code.

5. Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976 raises the age for marriage of a girl to 18 years from 15 years and that of a boy to 21 years and makes offences under this Act cognizable.

6. Medical Termination Pregnancy Act of 1971 legalises abortion by qualified professional on humanitarian or medical grounds. The maximum punishment may go upto life imprisonment. The Act has further been amended specifying the place and persons authorized to perform abortion and provide for penal actions against the unauthorized persons performing abortions.

7. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986 and the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 have been enacted to protect the dignity of women and prevent violence against them as well as their exploitation.

8. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 provides for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. It provides for immediate and emergent relief to women in situations of violence of any kind in the home.

Compiled by WOTE team

