

Profile of Suspicious Deaths of Women died within Seven Years of Marriage Life Brought for Post-Mortem Examination at District Hospital

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Abstract: Background: Increasing number of unnatural deaths in women during early marriage life in our country during last few decades require urgent attention to prevent this type of occurrence. Objectives : To study the epidemiological , social and medico legal aspects of suspicious deaths in women died within seven years of their marriage life. Method: one year study of suspicious deaths in women died within seven years of marriage life brought for post- mortem examination at mortuary of Sir T. General Hospital & Govt. Medical College, Bhavnagar has been conducted with exclusion of women died in mass casualties, road traffic accidents & natural deaths. Results: In our study we observed that most of the victims were young (18-26 yrs) hindu females living in a joint family with their husband & in-laws & majority of them were illiterate or poorly educated & died in suspicious & unnatural circumstances. Interpretation & Conclusion: Most of the deaths were suicidal & accidental with few homicidal deaths due to burns was the most common cause of death followed by poisoning, hanging and drowning. Demand for the dowry & ill treatment by in-laws and/husband are common motives for suicidal cases followed by extra marital affairs, Mal adjustment of wife, poverty, infertility of female, drunkenness etc. Accidental deaths were due to burns because of wearing of loose synthetic sari in Gujarati women which catch the fire while cooking. Such type of cases must be investigated in deep and searching the reasons for this type of occurrence and preventive measure by social, political and legal way by Government as well as non government organisations must be sought. [Darji J et al NJIRM 2013; 4(5) : 30-32]

Key Words: Bride, Dowry, Burn, Harassment by In-laws and Husband.

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Introduction: Most of the incidents of cruelty on wives do not come to public knowledge because wife remains mute for the sake of self-prestige or prestige of the family and does not share her problems to others. It is only when the battering of the wife takes a really bad shape, the state of affairs come to public.¹

Though incidents of atrocities on women has presently drawn maximum attention all over the world and corrective steps are taken by way of legislations and other social means to remove the problem of inequality in the society or at home on the basis of sexuality, we in India are confronted for over last four decades, with more number of bride deaths in matrimonial houses.^{1,2,3}

Abetment to suicide in bride due to the pressure for dowry & torture by in-laws and/or husband are common. Homicidal burning of women is also prevalent.^{4,5} Other reasons for unnatural deaths in bride are extra marital affairs, Mal adjustment of wife, poverty, infertility of female, drunkenness etc. Present study has been conducted to study the epidemiological , social and medico legal aspects of

suspicious deaths in women died within seven years of their marriage life.

Material and Methods: Present study has been conducted on all the cases of suspicious deaths in women died within seven years of their marriage life brought for post-mortem examination at mortuary of Sir T. General Hospital & Govt. Medical College, Bhavnagar during 1st January 2012 to 31st December 2012. In our study women died due to mass casualties, road traffic accidents, natural deaths& unknown dead bodies of women were excluded. Related information to draw conclusions were also collected from Investigating Officer, Relatives of deceased and cause of death from post-mortem examination report.

Results: Total number of suspicious deaths of women of less than seven years of their marriage life during study period of 1st January-2012 to 31st December-2012 were 103 which was 9.25% of total deaths autopsied (1113) during that period.

Table 1: Religion of victim

Religion	No.	Percentage(%)
Hindu	97	94.18
Muslim	06	05.82
Total	103	100

Table 2: Area (Urban/Rural) of victim

Area	No.	Percentage(%)
Rural	59	57.28
Urban	44	42.72
Total	103	100

Table 3: Families (Joint/Nuclear) of victim

Family	No.	Percentage(%)
Joint	91	88.35
Nuclear	12	11.65
Total	103	100

Table 4: Age of victim(including upper & lower limits of the group)

Age group	No.	Percentage (%)
18-20	22	21.36
21-22	14	13.59
23-24	12	11.65
25-26	23	22.33
27-28	14	13.60
29-30	10	9.71
31-32	03	2.91
33-34	02	1.94
35-36	02	1.94
37-38	01	0.97
Total	103	100

Note(for table:4) More than 6 months of age has been counted as the completed year.

Table 5: Duration since marriage of victim

Duration (Yrs)	No.	Percentage(%)
< 1	20	19.42
1-2	14	13.60
2-3	25	24.27
3-4	21	20.39
4-5	08	07.76
5-6	08	07.76
6-7	07	6.80
Total	103	100

Table: 6 Educational status of victim

Education	No.	Percentage
Illiterate	63	61.16
Primary (</= 5 th std.)	16	15.54

Primary (5 th to 7 th std.)	07	06.80
Secondary	09	08.73
Higher secondary	06	05.82
Graduate	02	01.95
Post graduate	00	00
Professional/Technical	00	00
Total	103	100

Table:7 Occupation of Husband of victim

Occupation	No.	Percentage(%)
Unemployed	24	23.30
Own business	25	24.27
Service	17	16.51
Labour	15	14.56
Diamond worker	09	08.74
Farmer	06	05.83
Family business	04	03.88
Others	03	02.91
Total	103	100

Table 8: Cause and manner of death

Cause of death	Manner of Death							
	Suicidal		Homicidal		Accidental		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No.	%
Burns	49	47.57	02	1.95	31	30.09	82	79.61
Poisoning	10	9.71	---	---	---	---	10	9.71
Hanging	08	7.77	---	---	---	---	08	7.77
Drowning	02	1.94	---	---	---	---	02	1.94
Mechanical injury	---	---	01	0.97	---	---	01	0.97
	69	66.99	03	2.92	31	30.09	103	100

Table 9: Motive behind Suicidal and homicidal deaths

Motive	No.	%
Dowry	20	27.39
Ill- treatment by In-laws	11	15.07
Extra Marital Affairs	09	12.33
Mal-adjustment of Wife	08	10.96
Poverty	06	8.22
Disease Condition of victim	06	8.22
Drunkeness	05	6.85
Infertility in Victim	04	5.48
Negligent behaviour of husband	04	5.48
Total	73	100

Discussion: High incidence of unnatural deaths in young Hindu newly married females is probably due to more prevalent dowry system in Hindu community where they have been tortured by in-laws and/or their husband for the demand of dowry, which leads to abetment of suicide in women.^{4,6,7} Our study also shows same findings. Other motives observed in our study are extra marital affairs, Mal adjustment of wife, poverty, infertility of female, drunkenness etc. Same observations made by A.K. Srivastava et al.⁶ Accidental deaths were due to burns because of wearing of loose synthetic sari in Gujarati women which catch the fire while cooking. Same observations made by A.K. Srivastava et al.⁶ I. Pankaj Prajapati et al.⁸ in their study on profile of unnatural female deaths in south Gujarat region observed that majority of the deaths were accidental and burns was the most common cause of death while in our study suicidal cases(66.99%) outnumbered the accidental(30.09%) cases & burns is the most common cause of death. Pankaj Prajapati et al.⁹ in their study on pattern of suicidal deaths in females of south Gujarat region observed that most common cause of death was poisoning followed by hanging and burns while in our study we observed most common cause of death in suicidal cases is burns followed by poisoning and hanging.

Conclusion: Extra marital affairs, Mal adjustment of wife, poverty, infertility of female, drunkenness etc. This can be prevented by increasing education in women making them self dependent economically. Encouraging inter-caste marriage with free choice. Prohibiting the dowry system with the help of Social, political and legal way by Government as well as non government organisations & Giving privacy to newly married couples.

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Conflict of interest: None

Funding: None
