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Observation and Results

During the study period of one year extending from 16th April 1997 to 15th April 1998, a total number of 151 cases were recorded in Allahabad Range, which included districts of Allahabad, Fatehpur and Pratapgarh. Majority of deaths i.e. 50.99% were observed in Allahabad. **(Table- 1)**

TABLE - l

Distribution of down death in allahabad range during 1997-98

District	*No. of Dowry Deaths*	*Percentage*
Allahabad	77	50.99
Fatehpur	42	27.82
Pratapgarh	32	21.19
Total	151	100

Comparatively speaking the yearly number of dowry death cases in Allahabad Range were 132, 147 and 149 respectively in 1995, 1996 and 1997. Furthermore, in all three years Allahabad district recorded the largest number of dowry deaths followed by Fatehpur and Pratapgarh districts **(Table 2)**.

However, in Allahabad district 1996 was the worst year for 57.14 % (84 out of 147) of dowry deaths were noted. A significant decline in percentage i.e. 50.34% (75 out of 149 cases) was observed in 1997 **(Table 2)**.

While the analysis of data in Fatehpur showed maximum percentage of dowry deaths i.e. 32.57 % (43 out of 132 cases) in the year 1995 and minimum percentage i.e. 21.42 % (32 out of 149 cases) of dowry death cases in the year 1997 **(Table 2)**.

The scenario at Pratapgarh district showed a maximum percentage of 21.48 (32 out of 149 cases) in the year 1997 followed by 15.31% in 1995. In 1996, the percentage of dowry deaths was 12.25 (18 out of 147 cases) **(Table 2)**.

TABLE-2

YEAR WISE distribution OF CASES IN ALLABABAD RANGE

District	*Dowry Deaths*					
	Year 1995		**Year 1996**		**Year 1997**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Allahabad	68	51.52	84	57.14	75	50.34
Fatehpur	43	32.57	45	30.61	32	21.48
Pratapgarh	21	15.31	18	12.25	32	21.48
Total	132	100	147	100	149	100

During the study period, out of total number of 151 dowry deaths, majority of them 118 (78.15%) were found to be homicidal in nature and remaining 33 (21.85%) were suicidal in nature. Amongst 33 suicidal cases Pratapgarh district showed highest incidence i.e. (43.75%) followed by 12 (28.57%) in Fatehpur and 7 (9.09%) cases in Allahabad .Out of 118 homicidal cases, Allahabad recorded highest incidence i.e. 70 (90.91%) **(Table 3)**.

TABLE-3

DISTRIBUTION OF DOWRY DEATHS ACCORDING TO NATURE (HOMICIDAL OR SUICIDAL) IN ALLAHABAD RANGE

Nature of deaths	*Districts*						*Total*	
	Allahabad		**Fatehpur**		**Pratapgarh**			
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Homicidal	70	90.91	31	71.43	18	56.25	118	78.15
Suicidal	7	9.09	12	28.57	14	43.75	33	21.85
Total	77	100	42	100	32	100	151	100

In the recorded dowry death cases, the age of victims ranged from 18 to 38 years. Majority of dowry deaths 42 out of 151 (27.81%) were recorded in the age group of 23 to 26 years, followed by 39 out of 151 (25.83%) cases in the age group of27 to 30 years and 35 out of 151 (23.18%) in the age group of 18 to 22 years. Thus, maximum incidence of dowry deaths i.e. 76.82% were noted in the age group of 18 to 30 years; whereas in the age group of 35 to 38 years only 9 cases were recorded (5.96%) (**Table 4**). Thus, beyond age of 30 years only 35 cases were noted i.e. 23.18%.

TABLE-4

AGE DISTRIBUTION IN DOWRY DEATHS

Age group (in years)	*No. of Dowry Deaths*	*Percentage*
18-22	35	23.18
23-26	42	27.81
27-30	39	25.83
31-34	26	17.22
35.38	9	5.96
Total	151	100

On the basis of religious ground it is found that incidents of dowry deaths were mostly in Hindu religion i.e. 142 (94.04%), followed by 7 cases (4.64%) in Muslims, while in other community especially Christians and Sikhs the cases reported were negligible. (**Table 5**).

TABLE 5

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF VICTMS

Religion	*No. of Dowry Deaths*	*Percentage*
Hindus	142	94.04
Muslims	7	4.64
Sikhs	1	0.66
Christians	1	0.66
Others	-	-
Total	151	100

An attempt has also been made to chart out a relation between peak time and dowry death occurrence. It was gathered that out of 151 dowry deaths, majority of deaths i.e. 54 (35.76%) occurred during night followed by 49 (32.45%) deaths in the evening and only 17 cases (11.26%) were reported in the afternoon. (**Table 6**).

TABLE-6

tiMING RELATED TO DOWRY DEAths

Time	*No. of dowry deaths*	*Percentage*
Morning (6 am to 12 noon)	31	20.53
Mid-day (12 noon to 4 pm)	17	11.26
Evening (4pm to 9 pm)	49	32.45
Night (9 pm to 6 am)	54	35.76
Total	151	100

The breakup of culprits involved in cases of dowry deaths had also been worked up to make an in-depth study. Husband and / or his relatives were found to be responsible for 127 out of 151 (84.11%) dowry death cases. They together either killed or forced the victims to end their life. Husband alone was found to be most common offender responsible for 33.77% of all dowry death cases. Other persons including neighbors, passers by etc accounted for a meager 4 % of dowry deaths. (**Table 7**).

TABLE-7

OFFENDERS INVOLVED IN DOWRY deaths

Offenders	*No. of Dowry Deaths*	*Percentage*
Husband	51	33.77
Relative of husband	33	21.85
Both husband and his relatives	43	28.48
Any other person	6	3.98
No offender present	18	11.92
Total	151	100

A probe regarding causative agents like burns, poison, asphyxia (including drowning, hanging, strangulation etc) and other concerned causes showed out of 151 dowry deaths, burn deaths were 102 (67.55%). Burn deaths, thus constitute commonest causative factor for dowry death. This was followed by 22 (14.57%) deaths due to poisoning whereas asphyxia accounted for lowest incidence of only 3 (1.99%) deaths (**Table 8**).

Out of total burn 102 deaths, 85 (72.03%) deaths were found to be homicidal in nature and rest 17 deaths were of suicidal nature. Moreover, younger age group were more commonly involved as far as burn deaths are concerned. In deaths due to poisoning, a majority of 14 deaths (42.42%) were suicidal in nature. Out of 3 asphyxial deaths either by hanging or drowning, 2 cases were of suicidal nature and one belonged to homicidal category (**Table 8**).

Other causes include those cases where exact cause of death could not be detected clearly. Of 24 such unnatural female deaths, allegations of homicidal deaths were recorded hence all these cases were provisionally included under homicidal category.

Table 8

Causative factors in dowry deaths χ^2= 34.33, df =3; p<0.001

Causative agents	*Dowry Deaths*				*Total*	
	Homicidal		**Suicidal**			
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Burns	85	72.03	17	51.52	102	67.55
Poisons	8	6.78	14	42.42	22	14.57
Asphyxia	1	0.85	2	6.06	3	1.99
Other causes	24	20.34	-	-	24	15.89
Total	118	100	33	100	151	100

A link between educational qualification of victims and dowry deaths was also explored. Most of the dowry deaths were recorded in ladies whose educational qualifications was below matric i.e. 65 (43.05%) cases, followed by matriculates 44 (29.14%) cases and then illiterates 36 (23.84%) cases. Only 6 (3.97%) cases were educated beyond matric. The break up amongst homicidal victims was non-matric 54 cases, matriculates 35 cases and illiterates 29 cases. In educated females, suicide was most common. Precisely speaking in graduates and postgraduates, almost all the cases were suicidal in nature and no homicidal case was reported. (**Table 9**).

Table 9

Educational background of victims of dowry deaths χ^2= 22.55, df =3; p<0.001

Education	*Dowry Deaths*				*Total*	
	Homicidal		**Suicidal**			
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Illiterate	29	24.58	7	21.21	36	23.84
Non-matric	54	45.76	11	33.34	65	43.05
Matriculate	35	29.66	9	27.27	44	29.14
Graduate	-	-	5	15.15	5	3.31
Postgraduate	-	-	1	3.03	1	0.66
Total	118	100	33	100	151	100

A major chunk of dowry deaths 83 cases (54.97%) belonged to the low socio -economic group, followed by 45 cases (29.81%) in lower middle class and 15 (9.93%) deaths in very low socio-economic class. Only 8 (5.29%) victims came from higher middle class. In high and very high socio-economic class not a single dowry death case had been recorded. Homicidal cases outnumbered suicides, as was burn deaths to other causes. Amongst the homicidal deaths a major chunk 102 out of 118 recorded deaths belonged to low and lower middle class socio-economic status (**Table 10**).

Table 10

Socio-economic status in relation to dowry deaths χ^2= 5.12, df =3; N.S.

Socio-economic status	Dowry Deaths				Total	
	Homicidal		Suicidal			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very-low	9	7.63	6	18.18	15	9.93
Low	69	59.47	14	42.43	83	54.97
Lower-middle	33	27.97	12	36.36	45	29.81
Higher-middle	7	5.93	1	3.03	8	5.29
High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Very high	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	118	100	33	100	151	100

A great majority of the victims of dowry deaths were housewives i.e. 144 (95.36%). Amongst housewives, homicidal cases showed highest incidence 113 (78.47%). Among the employed only one case had been recorded who died by suicidal mode. In student category out of 4 cases, 3 died by homicidal mode and only 1 by suicidal mode **(Table 11).**

Table 11

occupational status of victims χ^2 = 4.16, df =3; NS

Education	Dowry Deaths				Total	
	Homicidal		Suicidal			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Housewife	113	95.76	31	93.94	144	95.36
Employed	-	-	1	3.03	1	0.66
Student	3	2.54	1	3.03	4	2.65
Any other	2	1.70	-	-	2	1.33
Total	118	100	33	100	151	100

Majority of the dowry death cases were drawn from joint family 121 (80.13%), whereas 30 (19.87%) came from nuclear family. In joint family homicidal deaths (82.21%) were more common than the suicides (72.73%) while in nuclear family, suicidal victims 27.27% were relatively more than homicidaI17.79% (**Table 12**).

Table 12

type of family χ^2 = 0.92, df =3; NS

Family type	*Dowry Deaths*				*Total*	
	Homicidal		**Suicidal**			
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Joint family	97	82.21	24	72.73	121	80.13
Nuclear family	21	17.79	9	27.27	30	19.87
Total	118	100	33	100	151	100

Incidence of dowry deaths were more in arranged marriages 138 (91.39%) where as only 13 (8.16%) deaths occurred amongst love marriages. Amongst the arranged marriages, homicidal deaths 94.07% were more common than suicidal 81.82%. In contrast, amongst love marriages suicidal deaths 18.18% were more common than homicidal 5.93% deaths.

Table 13

type of marriage $\chi^2 = 4.91$, df =1; p=<0.05

Type of marriages	*Dowry Deaths*				*Total*	
	Homicidal		**Suicidal**			
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Arranged marriage	111	94.07	27	81.82	138	91.39
Love marriage	7	5.93	6	18.18	13	8.61
Total	118	100	33	100	151	100

In more than half (60.27%) of the total dowry deaths, the first and the foremost location of incidence was the in -law's house. followed by deaths occurring in husband's house 35.76% cases. Dowry deaths in parental house was recorded in only 3 cases and all of them of suicidal nature. Incidence of dowry deaths at the other locations like fields, well, pond or roadside were quite limited and only 3 such cases were recorded from these locations. (**Table 14**). In- law's house constituted the commonest location for homicidal deaths as well.

Table 14

location of incidence

Location	*Dowry Deaths*				*Total*	
	Homicidal		**Suicidal**			
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
In-law's house	74	62.71	17	51.52	91	60.27
Husband's house	43	36.44	11	33.33	54	35.76
Parental house	-	-	3	9.09	3	1.99
Road side	-	-	1	3.03	1	0.66
Fields	1	0.85	-	-	1	0.66
Well / Pond	-	-	1	3.03	1	0.66
Total	118	100	33	100	151	100

A comparative account of dowry deaths in U .P .and those of Allahabad range (Allahabad, Pratapgarh, Fatehpur) **as per official records of U.P.P.** A gradual rising trend was witness in incidence of dowry deaths during the last three years, 1995, 1996 and 1997 as presented in **Table 15**. Largest number of dowry deaths 149 (i.e. 9.23% of total dowry deaths in U.P .) were recorded in 1997, followed by 147 (7.81%) in 1996 and 132 (7.56%) in 19951n Allahabad Range. Whereas in U.P. dowry deaths were found to be highest i.e. 1881 cases in 1996 and lowest 1614 in 1997. Hence showing a declining trend in 1997 (**Table 15**).

Table 15

year wise distribution of dowry deaths in u.p. and allahabad range

Dowry deaths in	*Year*		
	1995	**1996**	**1997**
Uttar Pradesh	1747	1881	1614
Allahabad range	132	147	149
Percentage of dowry deaths in Allahabad range	7.56%	7.81%	9.23%

In the end a detailed year wise break up of the cases of crime against the women in U.P. during last three years 1995, 1996 and 1997 (**as per the official records of the U.P. police**) were presented in tabular fashion for comparison and thorough understanding.

Maximum cases of crime against women were recorded in 1996 i.e. 15,232 and lowest incidence of crime were in 1997 i.e. 12,622. A glance over the Table clearly indicated that in 1995 of various crimes against women, majority of cases i.e. 3,413 (22.95%) comprised of eve -teasing followed by dowry harassment 3,223 (21.67%) cases. Incidence of dowry deaths comprised of 1747 victims. However, in 1996 and 1997, majority of cases i.e. 3651 823.97%) and 2999 (23.76%) respectively were of dowry harassment followed by eve-teasing. (**Table 16**). Dowry deaths recorded were 1887 and 1614 respectively in 1996 and 1997. Although the actual number of deaths in 1997 was decreased, yet maximum of 12.79% i.e. 1614 cases out of a total 12,622 cases of crime against women were recorded in 1997 followed by 12.39% in 1996 and 11.75% in 1995; suggesting a slow but steady rising trend in the last three years at the state level (**Table 16**).

Results of our study are in line with the officials records as far as the rising trend was concerned, in cases of dowry deaths.

Table 16

year wise distribution of crime against women in up

Nature of Crime	*Year*					
	1995		**1996**		**1997**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Dowry deaths	1,747	11.75	1,887	12.39	1,614	12.79
Rape	1,902	12.79	1,807	11.36	1,479	11.72
Molestation	2,489	16.73	2,398	15.74	1,845	14.62
Abduction	2,099	14.11	2,225	14.61	2,052	16.25
Eve-teasing	3,413	22.95	3,264	21.43	2,633	20.86
Dowry harassment	3,223	21.67	3,651	23.97	2,999	23.76
Total	14.873	100	15,232	100	12,622	100

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Back to the thesis page