

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3629
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.03.2026

DOWRY SYSTEM IN PUNJAB

3629. SHRI SHER SINGH GHUBAYA:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the excessive expenditure on marriage ceremonies and new forms of dowry system in many parts of the country including Punjab are promoting social inequality, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government is running any effective awareness campaign to stop social evils like extravagance in marriages and dowry, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Government proposes to encourage simple marriages and implement the Act relating to dowry abolition more strictly, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (c) “Police” and “Public Order” are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. The responsibility to maintain law and order, protection of life and property of the citizens including investigation and prosecution of cases of dowry and dowry death rests with the respective State Governments and they are competent to deal with it.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, have adequate provisions to tackle the menace of Dowry. The Act prohibits and penalizes giving or taking of dowry so as to safeguard women against dowry harassment. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 defines dowry harassment within the purview of domestic violence and provides remedies such as protection order, residence order, custody order, monetary relief, compensation order etc. under it.

The Central Government gives highest priority to ensuring safety and security of women and has undertaken various legislative and schematic interventions in this regard. These include legislations such as “Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita”, “Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita”, “The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2006”, “The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961”. Besides these legal provisions, there are multiple schemes and projects implemented by the Government which include One Stop Centres (OSCs); Universalisation of Women Helplines (WHL), Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) which is a pan-India single number (112)/ mobile app-based system for emergencies; capacity building in community through awareness programmes, setting up/ strengthening of Women Help Desks (WHDs) at Police Stations etc.

One Stop Centre (OSC) scheme, which is fully funded by the central government is being implemented across the country since 1st April, 2015. It provides integrated support and assistance under one roof to women affected by violence and those in distress, both in private and public spaces. It also provides an integrated range of services including medical aid, legal aid and advice, temporary shelter, police assistance, psycho-social counselling to needy women. 914 OSCs are operational across the country and over 13.37 lakh women have been assisted upto 31st December, 2025.

To ensure that the Police Stations are more women friendly and approachable, as they would be the first and single point of contact for any woman walking into a police station, 15,049 Women Help Desks (WHDs) have been set up, of which 14,363 are headed by women police officers. To provide help and support to needy women and women in distress, Emergency Response Support System (ERSS-112) has been established in all 36 States and UTs for various emergencies, with computer aided dispatch of field/ police resources. In addition to ERSS, a fully functional dedicated Women Helpline (WHL-181) is operational in 35 States and UTs except West Bengal. The WHL has also been integrated with ERSS. Till 31st December, 2025, Women Helplines have assisted over 96.37 lakh women.

Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) has also undertaken several initiatives, which, inter-alia include training and skill development programs for Investigation Officers, Prosecution Officers and Medical Officers. BPR&D has also prepared Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for “Women Help Desk at Police Stations” to ensure their smooth functioning by focusing on four critical components, viz. infrastructure, training, human resource development and response mechanism. A book titled “Women’s Safety and Security- a Handbook for First Responders and Investigators in the Police” has also been prepared for the purpose of prevention and investigation of crime against women with specific reference to the crime of sexual assault, which includes investigation, victim compensation and rehabilitation. Emphasis has been laid upon inculcating appropriate behavioural and attitudinal skills in the police force for prevention and detection of crimes against women and children and for proper interaction with the victims of crime. Webinars on women safety with sensitivity, gender sensitization of police personnel etc. have also been organized by BPR&D.

The Ministry also undertakes awareness exercise for safety and security of women and children from time to time. Further, the Government, through institutions like the National Commission for Women (NCW), National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and their counterparts in States have been spreading awareness through seminars, workshops, audio-visual, print and electronic media etc. to sensitize the people about the safety and security of women and children including to sensitize about the evils of dowry system and also about various provisions of law. In addition, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Home Affairs have issued advisories to States and UTs from time to time on various issues pertaining to safety and security of women and children.

To make legal aid more accessible for women, the National Commission for Women (NCW) in collaboration with Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA) has launched a legal aid clinic which is a single-window facility for resolving grievances of women by providing free legal assistance.

The Ministry has launched the 'Mission Shakti Portal' with all functional features on January 22, 2025. This Portal aims to enhance accessibility of various government services for women, establish quality mechanisms for rescue, protection, and rehabilitation and build the capacity of functionaries and duty holders under various schemes and legislations.

Furthermore, a National dashboard has been developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) for monitoring calls across all States and UTs implementing the Women Helpline. This dashboard enables real-time monitoring of calls received and women assisted. Through this system, the Central Government will be able to maintain centralized data on violence faced by women across India, categorized by types of cases, including instances of domestic violence.
