



# **The Practice of Dowry and its Implications on Social Life: A Study of Dhaka City**

*A Research Monograph*

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## ► Research Summary

The research utilized a descriptive cross-sectional design within Dhaka City, focusing on Sutrapur, Bangshal, Kotwali, and Motijheel thanas. Primary data were gathered from a sample of 237 respondents, comprising 124 married women and 113 husbands. Findings indicate that dowry remains pervasive across all socio-economic strata, with cash being the primary medium of exchange. The study highlights a disturbing correlation between dowry demands and various forms of domestic abuse, particularly psychological harassment, which often persists long after the marital union. Furthermore, the research identifies significant structural barriers to legal recourse, including social stigma and institutional inefficiencies. Based on these insights, the study advocates for a multi-faceted approach involving enhanced legal enforcement, economic empowerment for women, and community-led initiatives to challenge the cultural normalization of dowry.

## ABSTRACT

Dowry remains a pervasive social practice in Bangladesh despite legal prohibition and increasing awareness of women's rights. This study examines the practice of dowry and its social implications on women's lives in Dhaka City. The research aims to explore the prevalence, forms, negotiation processes, and post-marital dynamics of dowry, as well as its psychological, social, and economic consequences.

The study adopted a quantitative research approach with limited qualitative components and employed a descriptive cross-sectional design. Primary data were collected through face-to-face interviews using a structured questionnaire. A total of 237 respondents, including married women and their husbands from selected areas of Dhaka City, participated in the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques supported by thematic interpretation of qualitative responses.

The findings reveal that dowry remains widespread across socio-economic, educational, and religious groups. Cash dowry emerged as the most common form, with frequent post-marital demands leading to sustained pressure on women and their natal families. The study found a strong association between dowry practices and psychological as well as physical abuse, economic dependency, and reduced marital satisfaction among women. Despite awareness of dowry laws, access to justice remained limited due to social stigma, fear of retaliation, and institutional barriers.

The study concludes that dowry is not merely a cultural tradition but a structural form of gender-based oppression that reinforces inequality and violence against women. It recommends strengthened legal enforcement, women's economic empowerment, community-based interventions, and long-term social norm transformation to effectively address dowry practices in urban Bangladesh.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

- Dowry has transformed from a voluntary gift (\*stridhan\*) into a coercive and exploitative institution that reinforces patriarchal control.
- Despite legal prohibition via the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1980, the practice remains pervasive across all socio-economic and religious groups.
- Urbanization in Dhaka City has reshaped rather than diminished dowry, often justifying it through rising living costs and social competition.
- The practice has severe social implications, including psychological harassment, domestic violence, and chronic economic insecurity for women.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

- Dowry persists as an ongoing post-marital process involving repeated demands and sustained pressure on natal families.
- Failure to meet demands is strongly associated with gender-based violence, particularly underreported psychological abuse.
- In urban centers like Dhaka, higher education and employment do not necessarily ensure protection or autonomy from dowry-related exploitation.
- There is a significant gap between high legal awareness and low access to justice due to social stigma and institutional barriers.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

### **General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to examine the practice of dowry and its implications on social life in Dhaka City.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To assess the prevalence and patterns of dowry practices among married couples in Dhaka City.
2. To identify the common forms of dowry and analyze the processes through which dowry is negotiated and transferred.
3. To examine the nature and extent of post-marital dowry demands.
4. To explore the relationship between dowry practices and dowry-related pressure or abuse against women.
5. To analyze the psychological, social, and economic impacts of dowry on women's lives and marital relationships.
6. To examine women's awareness of dowry-related laws and the barriers they face in accessing justice and support mechanisms.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. How prevalent is the practice of dowry among married couples in Dhaka City?
2. What forms of dowry are commonly practiced, and how are they negotiated?
3. To what extent do dowry demands continue after marriage, and in what forms do they occur?
4. What types of pressure or abuse are associated with dowry practices?

5. How do dowry practices affect women's psychological well-being, marital relationships, and social status?
6. What level of legal awareness do women have regarding dowry, and what factors limit their access to justice?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study holds substantial academic, social, and policy relevance. Academically, it contributes to the existing literature on dowry by examining the practice within an urban Bangladeshi context and by conceptualizing dowry as an ongoing post-marital process rather than a single ceremonial event. The study also brings attention to less visible forms of harm, particularly psychological and economic abuse, which are often overlooked in policy and research.

From a policy and practical perspective, the findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, social workers, legal practitioners, and women's rights organizations. By identifying the gaps between legal provisions and lived realities, the study highlights the limitations of law-centered approaches and underscores the need for integrated social, economic, and community-based interventions.

Furthermore, by documenting women's lived experiences, the study contributes to advocacy efforts aimed at raising public awareness and challenging the social normalization of dowry. The evidence generated by this research can inform gender-sensitive policies, legal reforms, and empowerment programs designed to protect women's rights and promote equitable marital relations.

## **1.6 Scope and Limitations**

The scope of this study is confined to Dhaka City and focuses on married women and their husbands residing in selected urban areas. The study examines dowry practices, post-marital experiences, and their social implications within this specific urban context.

However, several limitations must be acknowledged. The use of non-probability convenience sampling restricts the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce recall bias or social desirability bias, particularly given the sensitive nature of dowry-related issues. Some respondents may have underreported experiences of abuse due to fear or social pressure. Additionally, the study does not include rural populations, where dowry practices may differ in form and intensity.

Despite these limitations, the study provides in-depth and contextually rich insights into dowry practices in an urban setting and offers a strong empirical foundation for future research.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into seven chapters.

- Chapter One presents the introduction, including the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and limitations of the study.
- Chapter Two reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature on dowry, gender inequality, and legal frameworks, and identifies research gaps.

- Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, including research design, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, ethical considerations, and data analysis methods.
- Chapter Four presents the socio-economic and demographic profile of the respondents.
- Chapter Five examines the practice of dowry, including its prevalence, forms, negotiation processes, post-marital demands, and associated abuse.
- Chapter Six analyzes the broader social implications of dowry on women's lives, family relations, and intergenerational dynamics.
- Chapter Seven summarizes the major findings, discusses policy recommendations, and concludes the study with implications for policy, practice, and future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews existing literature relevant to the practice of dowry and its implications on social life, with particular reference to Bangladesh and South Asia. The purpose of the literature review is to situate the present study within the broader body of scholarly work, identify major themes and debates, and highlight gaps that justify the current research. The chapter draws on sociological, anthropological, legal, and gender based studies to explore dowry as a social institution, its historical evolution, its relationship with patriarchy and gender inequality, and its consequences for women's lives.

### **2.2 Concept and Definition of Dowry**

Dowry is generally defined as the transfer of money, goods, property, or other valuable assets from the bride's family to the groom or groom's family as part of the marriage process. According to the Dowry Prohibition Act of Bangladesh (1980), dowry refers to any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly in connection with a marriage.

In contemporary societies, dowry has increasingly become monetized, shifting from symbolic gifts to large cash payments and material assets. This transformation has intensified economic pressure on brides' families and has contributed to various forms of abuse against married women.

### **2.3 Historical Evolution of Dowry in South Asia**

Historically, dowry in South Asia originated as a form of *\*stridhan\**—property voluntarily given to a woman by her parents at the time of marriage to ensure her financial security (Oldenburg, 2002). In pre colonial societies, this practice was limited in scale and largely symbolic.

In modern South Asia, dowry has become increasingly compulsory and competitive. The amount demanded often reflects the groom's education, profession, and family status. This shift has transformed dowry from a protective institution into a source of exploitation and violence against women.

## **2.4 Dowry and Patriarchy**

Patriarchy plays a central role in sustaining dowry practices. Patriarchal social structures assign men economic authority and decision making power, while women are viewed as dependents who must be transferred from one household to another through marriage. Dowry reinforces this system by framing women as economic liabilities whose acceptance into the husband's family requires compensation.

Feminist scholars argue that dowry is a structural manifestation of gender inequality, rooted in son preference, patrilineal inheritance, and patrilocal residence patterns (Kabeer, 2001). In societies where sons are expected to support parents in old age and inherit family property, daughters are often perceived as burdens, increasing the social acceptance of dowry.

Dowry also strengthens male dominance within marriage. Women who bring insufficient dowry are often subjected to verbal abuse, physical violence, or threats of abandonment, reinforcing their subordinate position within the household.

## **2.5 Dowry and Gender-Based Violence**

A substantial body of literature links dowry with various forms of gender based violence, including physical abuse, psychological harassment, economic deprivation, and in extreme cases, death. Studies in Bangladesh and India reveal that dowry related violence often continues long after marriage, particularly when dowry demands remain unmet (Odhikar, 2012).

Psychological violence—such as humiliation, threats, and emotional manipulation—is reported more frequently than physical violence but remains under documented due to its invisibility and social normalization. Researchers note that women may tolerate abuse to preserve marital stability and social respectability (Siddiqi, 2002).

Dowry related violence is not limited to poor households; it is prevalent across socio economic classes, including educated and urban families. This challenges the assumption that dowry is solely a consequence of poverty or lack of education.

## **2.6 Dowry in Urban Contexts**

Urbanization has not reduced dowry practices; rather, it has reshaped them. In urban areas like Dhaka City, dowry demands are often higher and more monetized, reflecting rising living costs, consumer culture, and social competition. Studies indicate that grooms' families in urban settings often justify dowry demands as necessary for establishing a household or maintaining social status (Ahmed & Kashem, 2012).

Urban women may have greater access to education and employment, yet this does not necessarily protect them from dowry demands. In some cases, higher educational attainment of women leads to increased dowry expectations, as families attempt to secure “better” grooms.

## **2.7 Legal Framework and Enforcement in Bangladesh**

The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1980 criminalizes the giving and taking of dowry in Bangladesh. Additional legal provisions related to domestic violence and women's rights further strengthen the legal framework against dowry related abuse.

However, researchers consistently highlight weak enforcement of these laws. Social stigma, lengthy legal procedures, lack of legal awareness, and fear of retaliation discourage victims from seeking justice. Law enforcement agencies are often reluctant to intervene in what are perceived as private family matters.

NGO reports suggest that legal reforms alone are insufficient to eliminate dowry without broader social change and community engagement.

## **2.8 Review of Empirical Studies in Bangladesh**

Several empirical studies have examined dowry practices in Bangladesh. Ain O Salish Kendro (2011) documented a steady increase in dowry related violence despite legal prohibition. Ahmed and Kashem (2012) found that dowry demands are closely linked to the groom's socio economic status and often continue after marriage.

Other studies emphasize women's coping strategies, including silence, endurance, and reliance on natal families. These findings highlight the complex interplay between social norms, economic dependency, and gender inequality.

## **2.9 Research Gap**

Although existing literature provides valuable insights into dowry practices and dowry related violence, several gaps remain. First, many studies focus primarily on extreme forms of violence, such as death or severe physical abuse, while neglecting everyday psychological and economic oppression. Second, limited research explores dowry as an ongoing post marital process rather than a single event. Third, few studies incorporate the perspectives of both women and husbands within an urban context.

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining the nature, patterns, and social implications of dowry practices in Dhaka City, with particular attention to women's lived experiences and post marital realities.

## **2.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed relevant theoretical and empirical literature on dowry, highlighting its historical evolution, relationship with patriarchy, links to gender based violence, and persistence in urban contexts. The review demonstrates that

dowry is a structural social problem deeply embedded in gender inequality and economic relations. The identified research gaps provide a strong justification for the present study, which aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of dowry and its implications on social life in Dhaka City.

# **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodological framework adopted to examine the practice of dowry and its implications on social life in Dhaka City. It outlines the research approach, research design, study area, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, limitations of the study, and methods of data processing and analysis. A clear and systematic methodological approach was adopted to ensure the reliability, validity, and ethical integrity of the research.

## **3.2 Research Approach**

The study followed a quantitative research approach with limited qualitative components. The quantitative approach enabled the researcher to measure the prevalence, forms, and patterns of dowry practices and to analyze their social implications using numerical data. Limited qualitative information obtained through open ended questions was used to contextualize and deepen understanding of respondents' experiences.

A quantitative approach was considered appropriate given the objectives of the study, which focus on describing trends, patterns, and relationships rather than developing theory. The inclusion of qualitative insights enhanced the interpretive depth of the findings without compromising the structured nature of the research.

## **3.3 Research Design**

The study employed a descriptive cross sectional research design, which involves collecting data from respondents at a single point in time. This design is widely used in social science research to describe social phenomena as they naturally occur.

The cross sectional design was particularly suitable for this study due to the sensitive nature of dowry related issues and the practical constraints of time and resources. It allowed the researcher to capture a snapshot of dowry practices and post marital experiences among married women and men in Dhaka City without manipulating variables or intervening in respondents' lives.

### **3.4 Study Area**

The study was conducted in Dhaka City, the capital of Bangladesh and the country's largest metropolitan area. Dhaka represents a diverse urban context characterized by rapid population growth, socio economic stratification, and cultural heterogeneity.

Four police station (thana) areas were purposively selected: Sutrapur, Bangshal, Kotwali, and Motijheel. These areas were chosen to reflect variation in residential patterns, occupational structures, and income levels. The selected locations include both older residential neighborhoods and commercially active zones, making them suitable for examining dowry practices within a dynamic urban environment.

### **3.5 Study Population**

The study population comprised married women and their husbands residing in the selected areas of Dhaka City whose marriages took place between 2010 and 2016. This time frame was selected to ensure that respondents had sufficient post marital experience to reflect on dowry related practices and consequences.

Both women and men were included to capture a more comprehensive understanding of dowry dynamics, as dowry involves negotiations and interactions between both marital partners and their families.

### **3.6 Sample Size**

A total of 237 respondents participated in the study, including 124 women and 113 husbands. The sample size was determined based on accessibility, time constraints, and the sensitive nature of the research topic.

Although the sample size does not allow for nationwide generalization, it is sufficient for descriptive analysis and provides meaningful insights into dowry practices and social experiences within the selected urban context.

### **3.7 Sampling Technique**

The study employed non probability convenience sampling. Respondents were selected based on their availability, willingness to participate, and relevance to the study objectives.

Convenience sampling was deemed appropriate due to the highly sensitive nature of dowry related issues. Many potential respondents were reluctant to discuss personal marital experiences, making probability sampling impractical. Efforts were made to ensure diversity by including respondents from different socio economic, educational, and religious backgrounds.

### **3.8 Research Instruments**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study. The questionnaire was prepared in Bangla to ensure clarity and ease of understanding for respondents.

The questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

- ✓ Socio economic and demographic information
- ✓ Marriage and dowry related practices
- ✓ Post marital experiences and forms of abuse
- ✓ Attitudes and perceptions regarding dowry
- ✓ Awareness of legal provisions and coping strategies

Both closed ended and limited open ended questions were included to capture quantitative data as well as contextual narratives.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedures**

Primary data were collected through face to face interviews conducted by the researcher. This method was chosen to facilitate rapport building, clarify questions when necessary, and ensure completeness and accuracy of responses.

Before each interview, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their participation was voluntary. Verbal consent was obtained, and confidentiality was strictly maintained. Interviews were conducted in locations convenient and comfortable for respondents to minimize discomfort and ensure privacy.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were given significant importance throughout the research process. The following ethical principles were observed:

- ✓ Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw at any time.
- ✓ Informed consent was obtained before data collection.
- ✓ Respondents' identities were kept anonymous, and personal information was not disclosed.
- ✓ Sensitive questions were asked with caution to avoid emotional distress.
- ✓ Data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

### **3.11 Reliability and Validity**

To ensure reliability, the questionnaire was carefully designed using clear and unambiguous language. Similar questions were cross checked to maintain consistency in responses.

Content validity was ensured by reviewing relevant literature and aligning questionnaire items with the research objectives. The questionnaire was reviewed by academic peers and revised accordingly before final data collection.

### **3.12 Limitations of the Study**

Despite careful design and implementation, the study has certain limitations:

- ✓ The use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of findings.
- ✓ Self reported data may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias.
- ✓ The sensitive nature of dowry may have led some respondents to withhold information.
- ✓ The study focuses on urban areas and does not reflect rural experiences.

### **3.13 Data Processing and Analysis**

After data collection, questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency. The data were then coded and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel for analysis.

Descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies, percentages, and cross tabulations were used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative responses from open ended questions were thematically summarized to support and enrich the quantitative findings.

### **3.14 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the research methodology used to investigate dowry practices and their social implications in Dhaka City. The methodological approach was designed to ensure ethical integrity, analytical rigor, and relevance to the study objectives. The following chapter presents the socio economic profile of the respondents based on the collected data.

## CHAPTER FOUR: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents included in the study. An examination of respondents' background characteristics is essential for understanding the social context in which dowry practices operate and for interpreting their wider implications. Variables such as religion, age, education, occupation, income, family structure, and age at marriage have been analyzed to identify the patterns, inequalities, and vulnerabilities associated with dowry practices in Dhaka City.

Where relevant, the data are presented separately for women respondents and their husbands in order to facilitate a clearer understanding of the gendered dimensions of socio-economic status within marriage. The findings are organized using tables and figures for clarity, followed by analytical interpretations to show how these characteristics are linked to dowry practices.

### 4.2 Religious Affiliation

Table 4. 1: Religious Affiliation of Women

#### Religious Affiliation of Women Respondents (N = 124)

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Muslim	97	78.23
Hindu	23	18.55
Christian	3	2.42
Buddhist	1	0.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Figure 4.1: Religious Distribution of Women Respondents (Pie Chart)

## Interpretation

The majority of women respondents were Muslim (78.23%), followed by Hindu respondents (18.55%). Only a small proportion belonged to Christian (2.42%) and Buddhist (0.81%) communities. This distribution indicates that dowry practices are not confined to any single religious group; rather, they are found across different religious communities.

The presence of dowry among respondents from diverse religious backgrounds suggests that dowry is not fundamentally rooted in religious doctrine, but is better understood as a socially constructed institution sustained by cultural expectations, patriarchal values, and marriage-related status considerations. This finding supports the broader literature that identifies dowry in Bangladesh as a cross-religious social practice.

## 4.3 Age Distribution

Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Women Respondents

### Age Distribution of Women Respondents (N = 124)

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16–20	36	29.03
21–25	45	36.29
26–30	30	24.19
31–35	11	8.87
36–40	2	1.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Figure 4.2: Age Distribution of Women Respondents (Bar Chart)

## Interpretation

The data indicate that the largest proportion of women respondents belonged to the 21–25 years age group (36.29%), followed by 16–20 years (29.03%) and 26–30 years (24.19%). Taken together, nearly two-thirds of the respondents (65.32%)

were between 16 and 25 years, showing that the study population is predominantly young.

This age pattern is important because younger women are often more vulnerable to dowry-related pressure due to limited economic independence, weaker bargaining power, and less awareness of legal protections. The concentration of respondents in younger age groups also reflects the persistence of early marriage norms, which may reinforce women’s social and economic dependency.

## 4.4 Educational Status of Women

Table 4.3: Educational Status of Women Respondents

**Educational Status of Women Respondents (N = 124)**

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	11	8.87
Primary	14	11.29
Secondary	19	15.32
SSC	14	11.29
HSC	24	19.35
Graduate	22	17.74
Master’s	12	9.68
No response / Not reported	8	6.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Figure 4.3: Educational Status of Women Respondents (Column Chart)

### Interpretation

The educational profile of women respondents is relatively diverse, ranging from illiteracy to postgraduate education. A considerable proportion had completed higher secondary education (19.35%) or attained graduate-level education (17.74%), indicating that a notable segment of the respondents had experienced formal educational advancement.

However, the findings suggest that education alone does not eliminate dowry practices. Even among women with relatively higher levels of education, dowry remained present. This implies that while education may increase awareness and aspiration, it does not automatically transform entrenched patriarchal norms or the social expectations surrounding marriage. Therefore, the persistence of dowry appears to be shaped more by structural and cultural factors than by educational attainment alone.

## 4.5 Occupational Status of Women

Table 4.4: Occupational Status of Women

### Occupational Status of Women Respondents (N = 124)

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Homemaker	79	63.71
Service	24	19.35
Business	8	6.45
Student	9	7.26
Others	4	3.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Interpretation

The occupational distribution shows that the majority of women respondents were homemakers (63.71%), while smaller proportions were engaged in service (19.35%), business (6.45%), or were students (7.26%). This pattern reflects the continuing concentration of women in unpaid domestic roles.

Economic dependence on husbands or marital families can substantially limit women's bargaining power and their ability to resist dowry-related demands. The high proportion of homemakers therefore suggests an increased level of vulnerability. At the same time, the presence of dowry demands among employed women indicates that women's income generation does not necessarily protect

them from dowry-related pressure, highlighting the deeply institutionalized nature of the practice.

## 4.6 Socio-Economic Profile of Husbands

Table 4.5

*Table 4.5: Educational Status of Husbands*

### Educational Status of Husbands (N = 113)

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SSC or below	28	24.78
HSC	31	27.43
Graduate	34	30.09
Master's and above	20	17.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Interpretation

The educational background of husbands indicates that a substantial proportion had completed graduate-level education (30.09%), while 17.70% had attained a Master's degree or above. Compared to women respondents, husbands appear to hold comparatively stronger educational positions.

This is significant because higher educational attainment among men often increases their perceived value in the marriage market. In many cases, male education functions not only as a marker of status but also as a basis for higher dowry expectations. Thus, rather than reducing dowry, higher male education may sometimes contribute to the intensification of dowry demands.

## 4.7 Occupational and Income Status of Husbands

*Table 4.6: Occupational Status of Husbands*

#### Occupational Status of Husbands (N = 113)

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Service	54	47.79
Business	32	28.32
Self-employed	15	13.27
Others	12	10.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 4.7

#### Monthly Income of Husbands (N = 113)

Income Range (BDT)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 15,000	18	15.93
15,000–25,000	37	32.74
25,001–40,000	34	30.09
Above 40,000	24	21.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### Interpretation

The occupational profile of husbands shows that nearly half were engaged in service-related jobs (47.79%), followed by business (28.32%) and self-employment (13.27%). The income distribution indicates that respondents were spread across several earning categories, with the largest proportion falling within the BDT 15,000–25,000 range (32.74%).

The findings suggest that dowry practices occur across all income groups, indicating that dowry is not limited to poorer households. However, higher income and occupational status appear to be associated with greater dowry expectations, often justified by social prestige, lifestyle standards, and the groom's perceived status in the marriage market.

## 4.8 Family Structure

Table 4.8: Type of Family

#### Type of Family of All Respondents Combined (Women and Husbands) (N = 237)

Family Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Nuclear	143	60.34
Joint	94	39.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## Interpretation

The data show that 60.34% of all respondents belonged to nuclear families, while 39.66% came from joint family systems. Dowry-related pressure was reported in both family settings, although family structure appears to influence the nature of such demands.

In joint families, post-marital dowry demands may be more pronounced because expectations are often shaped by multiple family members, including in-laws and extended relatives. In contrast, in nuclear families, dowry-related negotiations may be more directly confined to the couple and their immediate families. Thus, while dowry exists in both settings, joint family arrangements may intensify women's exposure to collective familial pressure.

## 4.9 Age at Marriage

Table 4.9: Age at Marriage of Women

Age at Marriage of Women (N = 124)

Age at Marriage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 18	42	33.87
18–20	38	30.65
21–25	33	26.61
Above 25	11	8.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## Interpretation

The data reveal that 33.87% of women respondents were married before the age of 18, while another 30.65% were married between 18 and 20 years. This indicates that a substantial proportion of women entered marriage at a relatively early age. Early marriage is closely related to vulnerability to dowry-related abuse. Women who marry early often face interrupted education, limited employment opportunities, reduced decision-making power, and increased dependence on husbands and marital families. These conditions make them more susceptible to coercion, economic exploitation, and post-marital dowry demands. The findings therefore suggest that early marriage and dowry are closely interconnected phenomena, both rooted in broader structures of gender inequality and patriarchal control.

## 4.10 Chapter Summary

Overall, the socio-economic and demographic profile of the respondents highlights several structural factors associated with the persistence of dowry practices in Dhaka City. Variables such as early marriage, women's economic dependence, unequal educational positioning, family structure, and the socio-economic status of husbands all appear to shape the nature and intensity of dowry-related expectations. The findings suggest that dowry is not an isolated custom, but rather a deeply embedded social institution connected to gender inequality, status competition, and patriarchal family relations.

## CHAPTER FIVE: PRACTICE OF DOWRY

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the nature, forms, timing, and processes of dowry practices among the respondents in Dhaka City. It explores how dowry is negotiated, demanded, and enforced both before and after marriage, and how these practices shape marital relations and women's everyday experiences. In addition, the chapter analyzes dowry-related pressure and abuse as integral dimensions of the dowry system rather than as isolated or exceptional incidents.

By focusing on the prevalence of dowry, its different forms, the negotiation process, post-marital demands, and associated abuse, this chapter provides a broader understanding of how dowry operates as a continuing mechanism of gendered control, economic extraction, and social domination within marriage.

### 5.2 Prevalence of Dowry Practice

Table 5.1: Prevalence of Dowry among Women

*Table 5.1: Prevalence of Dowry among Women*

Prevalence of Dowry among Women Respondents (N = 124)

Dowry Paid	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	77	62.10
No	47	37.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### Interpretation

The findings show that nearly two-thirds of the women respondents (62.10%) reported that dowry was paid at the time of marriage, while 37.90% stated that no formal dowry was given. This indicates that dowry remains a widespread marital practice among the respondents in Dhaka City.

However, qualitative responses suggest that the absence of formal dowry payment does not necessarily imply the absence of dowry-related expectations. Many women who reported that no dowry had been paid still described indirect financial demands, gift obligations, or material expectations after marriage. This suggests that dowry often persists in informal and concealed forms, remaining embedded within marital relationships even when it is not openly acknowledged.

### 5.3 Forms of Dowry

Table 5.2: Forms of Dowry Paid

#### Forms of Dowry Paid (N = 77)

Type of Dowry	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cash	45	58.44
Furniture	19	24.68
Land/Property	8	10.39
Others (electronics, gold, etc.)	5	6.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### Interpretation

Among those who reported paying dowry, cash emerged as the most common form, accounting for 58.44% of all responses. This was followed by furniture (24.68%), land or property (10.39%), and other items such as electronics and gold (6.49%).

The predominance of cash dowry reflects the increasing monetization of marriage transactions, particularly in urban settings. Cash is often preferred because it provides immediate financial benefit to the groom’s family and may be used for consumption, debt repayment, business purposes, or social display. In contrast, property and material goods appear to be more common in relatively better-off households, where dowry may also function as a symbol of family status and economic capacity. These findings suggest that dowry is not merely a customary

gift exchange; rather, it often takes the form of a strategic economic transfer embedded within marriage negotiations.

## **5.4 Timing of Dowry Payment**

Dowry payments were not always completed at the time of marriage. Respondents described several payment patterns, including full payment before marriage, partial payment with promises of future installments, and demands made after marriage.

### **Interpretation**

The timing of dowry payment is significant because it reveals that dowry is often not a one-time transaction but an extended process that may continue well beyond the wedding ceremony. When payment is incomplete or deferred, women and their natal families may remain under continued pressure to fulfill promised amounts or provide additional support.

Post-marital dowry demands are especially harmful because they create a persistent climate of uncertainty and coercion. Installment-based arrangements may operate as a mechanism of control, enabling the husband or in-laws to apply pressure, threaten mistreatment, or justify abuse when expected payments are delayed or incomplete. Thus, the timing of dowry payment is closely linked to women's vulnerability within marriage.

## **5.5 Dowry Negotiation Process**

Dowry negotiations were primarily conducted by male family members, including fathers, brothers, and maternal uncles, while women's direct participation in the process remained minimal.

## **Interpretation**

The exclusion of women from dowry negotiations reflects the broader patriarchal organization of marriage decision-making. Since dowry negotiations concern the terms of marriage and directly affect women's lives, their limited involvement indicates a significant denial of agency and voice.

Many respondents reported that they were informed about dowry arrangements only after decisions had already been finalized by their family members. This lack of participation reinforces women's subordinate position within both natal and marital households. It also shows that dowry is not only an economic practice but also a mechanism through which male authority over women's life choices is reproduced and legitimized.

## **5.6 Dowry Demands after Marriage**

A significant proportion of women reported experiencing additional dowry demands after marriage. These demands were often presented as requests for financial assistance, gifts, or support during times of difficulty, but they frequently carried implicit or explicit pressure.

## **Interpretation**

Post-marital dowry demands blur the boundary between culturally normalized expectations and coercive extraction. Although such demands are often framed in socially acceptable terms—such as helping the husband's family or meeting temporary needs—they may in practice function as a continuation of dowry claims.

Women who were unable to meet these demands frequently reported strained marital relations, diminished emotional support, and increased conflict within the household. This suggests that dowry does not end with the wedding ceremony; rather, it often continues as an ongoing system of material obligation, through

which women’s position in the marital home remains conditional upon continued economic contribution from their natal families.

## 5.7 Dowry-Related Pressure and Abuse

Table 5.3: Experience of Dowry-Related Abuse

Experience of Dowry-Related Abuse (N = 124)

Experienced Abuse	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	63	50.81
No	61	49.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Interpretation

The data show that 50.81% of women respondents experienced some form of dowry-related abuse, indicating that abuse is a significant dimension of the dowry system. Among those who reported abuse, psychological abuse (42.86%) was more common than physical abuse (34.92%), while 22.22% experienced both physical and psychological forms of abuse.

The prevalence of psychological abuse is especially important because it often includes verbal humiliation, threats, emotional neglect, intimidation, and social isolation—forms of violence that may be normalized within family life and therefore remain less visible. Because psychological violence is harder to document and may not leave physical evidence, it can be particularly difficult to address through legal or institutional mechanisms. These findings show that dowry-related abuse extends beyond physical violence and includes a broad spectrum of coercive practices that undermine women’s dignity, security, and well-being.

## 5.8 Perpetrators of Dowry-Related Abuse

Dowry-related abuse was not limited to husbands alone; in-laws, especially mothers-in-law and brothers-in-law, were also frequently involved in pressuring or mistreating women.

Table 5.4: Types of Dowry-Related Abuse

Table 5.4: Types of Dowry-Related Abuse

Types of Dowry-Related Abuse (N = 63)

Type of Abuse	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Physical	22	34.92
Psychological	27	42.86
Both	14	22.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Interpretation

This collective nature of abuse highlights the role of the wider family structure in sustaining dowry practices. Dowry-related pressure is often embedded within household power relations, where multiple family members may participate in demanding money, goods, or continued support from the woman's natal family.

Such findings suggest that dowry is not merely a conflict between husband and wife, but rather a broader familial and social institution supported by shared expectations and collective authority. This is particularly relevant in joint family systems, where multiple actors may influence the treatment of women and intensify pressure around dowry obligations.

## 5.9 Dowry and Marital Relationship

Women who experienced dowry pressure frequently reported lower marital satisfaction, limited decision-making power, and a sense of emotional insecurity within the household.

These findings suggest that dowry has profound implications for the quality of marital relationships. Rather than establishing marriage as a partnership based on trust, mutual respect, and shared responsibility, dowry may transform it into a conditional relationship in which a woman's acceptance and status depend on the material benefits she brings.

Under such conditions, women's dignity and security within marriage become closely tied to continued compliance with economic expectations. This weakens the foundation of marital equality and contributes to unequal power relations between spouses. Dowry, therefore, not only affects financial transactions but also reshapes the emotional and relational dimensions of marriage.

## **5.10 Dowry and Economic Dependency**

Even among women who were engaged in paid work, dowry-related pressure persisted. In some cases, women's earnings were appropriated or controlled by husbands or in-laws.

This finding indicates that women's employment alone does not necessarily ensure empowerment or protection from dowry-related pressure. While paid work may improve women's access to income, it does not automatically alter the patriarchal norms that govern control over that income.

When husbands or in-laws exercise authority over women's earnings, women's labor may become another source of extraction within marriage. In this sense, dowry reinforces women's economic subordination by legitimizing ongoing material claims on them and their natal families. The persistence of dowry among employed women demonstrates that economic participation must be accompanied by greater control over resources and decision-making power if it is to contribute meaningfully to women's empowerment.

## **5.11 Dowry without Formal Payment**

Some respondents stated that no formal dowry had been paid at the time of marriage, yet they continued to face regular expectations for gifts, money, and financial support from the husband's family.

This finding suggests that dowry often operates as a process rather than a single event. Even when no formal transaction is acknowledged during marriage, the expectation of ongoing material transfer may continue in subtle or socially acceptable forms.

Such practices demonstrate how dowry adapts to changing social and legal contexts. Rather than disappearing, it may become less visible and more difficult to identify, functioning through repeated requests, symbolic obligations, or familial pressure. This reinforces the view that dowry is not limited to ceremonial payment, but extends into the everyday dynamics of marital life.

## **5.12 Chapter Summary**

Overall, the findings of this chapter demonstrate that dowry remains a significant and multidimensional practice among the respondents in Dhaka City. It is manifested not only through formal payments at the time of marriage, but also through continued post-marital demands, indirect financial expectations, and various forms of abuse.

The chapter further shows that dowry is closely connected to patriarchal authority, women's limited bargaining power, and the unequal structure of marital relations. Whether expressed through cash transfers, delayed payments, psychological abuse, or ongoing expectations for support, dowry functions as a system of material and social control. These findings underline the need to understand dowry not as an isolated cultural tradition, but as a deeply embedded institution that reproduces gender inequality within family and marriage.

## **CHAPTER SIX: SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF DOWRY**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the broader social implications of dowry practices on women's lives, marital relationships, family dynamics, and social status. Beyond material exchange, dowry functions as a powerful social mechanism that shapes gender relations, reinforces inequality, and legitimizes various forms of control and violence against women. The chapter draws on empirical findings from the study to analyze the psychological, social, and intergenerational consequences of dowry in the urban context of Dhaka City.

### **6.2 Psychological Impact on Women**

One of the most significant yet under recognized consequences of dowry is its psychological impact on married women. Women who faced dowry pressure reported experiences of anxiety, fear, humiliation, and emotional distress. Continuous reminders of unpaid or insufficient dowry created a sense of guilt and inadequacy, as women were made to feel responsible for family conflict.

Psychological abuse often took the form of verbal insults, comparisons with other women who brought higher dowry, threats of divorce or remarriage, and emotional neglect. Unlike physical violence, psychological harm remains largely invisible and socially normalized, making it difficult for women to seek support or recognition of their suffering.

### **6.3 Impact on Marital Relationships**

Dowry significantly affects the quality and stability of marital relationships. Women who fulfilled dowry demands reported relatively stable marital relations initially, while those who failed to meet expectations experienced strained relationships characterized by conflict, mistrust, and power imbalance.

Marriage, under the dowry system, becomes a conditional arrangement in which women's acceptance depends on their capacity to provide material benefits. This undermines mutual respect and companionship and transforms marital intimacy into a site of economic negotiation and control.

## **6.4 Family Relations and In-Law Dynamics**

Dowry practices deeply influence relationships between women and their in laws. Mothers in law and other family members often played active roles in enforcing dowry demands. Women reported being monitored, criticized, or socially isolated within the household as punishment for unmet demands.

In joint family systems, dowry pressure was often intensified due to the involvement of multiple authority figures. These dynamics reinforced women's marginal position within their marital homes and limited their ability to assert autonomy or seek support.

## **6.5 Social Status and Stigmatization**

Dowry affects women's social identity and status both within the marital home and in the wider community. Women who brought "adequate" dowry were often treated with greater respect, while those who did not were stigmatized and blamed for marital discord.

This stigmatization extends to women's natal families, who may face social shame and reputational damage. As a result, families often prioritize social acceptance over women's well being, discouraging them from reporting abuse or leaving abusive marriages.

## **6.6 Economic Consequences for Natal Families**

Dowry places a heavy financial burden on women's natal families, often forcing them into debt, asset depletion, or economic insecurity. Respondents reported selling land, taking loans, or borrowing from relatives to meet dowry demands.

These economic sacrifices disproportionately affect families with daughters and contribute to intergenerational inequality. In some cases, dowry obligations limited families' ability to invest in education, health, or livelihoods, reinforcing cycles of poverty.

## **6.7 Dowry, Legal Awareness, and Access to Justice**

Although many respondents were aware that dowry is illegal, very few sought legal remedies. Fear of social stigma, lack of trust in legal institutions, lengthy procedures, and concern for children's future were major barriers to accessing justice.

Women who considered legal action faced pressure from both natal and marital families to remain silent. This gap between legal knowledge and legal action highlights the limitations of formal laws in addressing deeply rooted social practices.

## **6.8 Impact on Children and Intergenerational Transmission**

Dowry practices have significant implications for children, particularly daughters. Children raised in households characterized by dowry conflict often witness violence, emotional distress, and gender discrimination.

These experiences contribute to the normalization of dowry for the next generation. Daughters internalize expectations of economic contribution to

marriage, while sons may grow up perceiving dowry as entitlement, perpetuating the cycle.

## **6.9 Women's Agency and Coping Strategies**

Despite structural constraints, women employed various coping strategies, including silence, endurance, reliance on natal families, and informal mediation by community elders. While these strategies provided temporary relief, they often reinforced women's subordinate position.

Few women reported exercising agency through resistance or legal action, reflecting limited options available within patriarchal social structures. This underscores the need for collective and institutional support mechanisms to enhance women's agency.

## **6.10 Dowry as Structural Gender-Based Oppression**

The findings of this study support the view that dowry is not merely a cultural tradition but a structural form of gender based oppression. It intersects with patriarchy, economic inequality, and social norms to systematically disadvantage women.

Dowry legitimizes control over women's bodies, labor, and emotions, making it a central mechanism through which gender inequality is reproduced in society.

## **6.11 Chapter Summary**

This chapter highlighted the far reaching social implications of dowry on women's psychological well being, marital relations, family dynamics, social status, and intergenerational socialization. Dowry emerges as a deeply embedded social institution that extends beyond economic exchange to shape everyday experiences of inequality and violence. The following chapter presents the overall findings, policy recommendations, and concluding reflections of the study.

# **CHAPTER SEVEN: FINDINGS, POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION**

## **7.1 Introduction**

This final chapter presents a synthesis of the major findings of the study on dowry practices and their social implications in Dhaka City. It also outlines policy recommendations based on empirical evidence and concludes with reflections on the significance of the study and directions for future research. The chapter aims to bridge research findings with practical interventions to address dowry as a persistent social problem.

## **7.2 Summary of Major Findings**

The study reveals that dowry remains a widespread and deeply embedded practice in urban Bangladesh despite legal prohibition and increased awareness. The key findings are summarized below:

### **1. Prevalence of Dowry:**

A significant proportion of marriages involved dowry transactions, either in direct or indirect forms. Dowry was found to be prevalent across religious, educational, and income groups.

### **2. Monetization of Dowry:**

Cash dowry was the most common form, reflecting the increasing commercialization of marriage in urban contexts. Post marital dowry demands were common and functioned as ongoing financial extraction.

### **3. Gendered Power Relations:**

Dowry negotiations were dominated by male family members, excluding women from decision making processes that directly affected their lives.

#### **4. Dowry Related Abuse:**

Over half of the women respondents experienced dowry related abuse, with psychological violence being more prevalent than physical abuse. Abuse often involved multiple perpetrators, including in laws.

#### **5. Economic Dependency:**

Women's economic dependency, even among employed women, increased vulnerability to dowry pressure. Women's income was frequently controlled by husbands or in laws.

#### **6. Legal Awareness vs. Legal Action:**

Although many respondents were aware that dowry is illegal, very few pursued legal remedies due to fear of stigma, retaliation, and institutional barriers.

#### **7. Intergenerational Impact:**

Dowry practices perpetuate gender inequality across generations by normalizing discrimination, violence, and economic exploitation of women.

### **7.3 Discussion of Findings in Relation to Literature**

The study extends existing literature by demonstrating that dowry operates as an ongoing post marital process rather than a one time event. It also highlights the

under recognized role of psychological violence and collective family involvement in dowry enforcement, particularly in urban joint and semi joint family settings.

## **7.4 Policy Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

### **7.4.1 Strengthening Legal Enforcement**

7. Ensure effective implementation of the *Dowry Prohibition Act* through the establishment of specialized police units and expedited judicial processes in fast-track courts.
8. Enhance multi-sectoral coordination between law enforcement agencies, legal aid organizations, and civil society women's rights groups to streamline victim support.

### **7.4.2 Legal Advocacy and Support Infrastructure**

9. Scale up legal literacy initiatives targeting vulnerable demographics, families, and community influencers to demystify judicial recourse.
10. Operationalize accessible legal aid bureaus at the ward and community levels, with a specific focus on urban informal settlements and low-income districts.

### **7.4.3 Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women**

11. Facilitate access to formal employment and financial literacy, ensuring women maintain autonomous control over their personal assets and income.

12. Bolster micro-finance and entrepreneurial programs with rigorous safeguards to prevent the male appropriation of generated revenue.

#### **7.4.4 Community-Driven Interventions**

13. Mobilize religious leaders, educators, and local stakeholders to lead anti-dowry advocacy and foster a culture of institutional accountability.
14. Strengthen community-based mediation frameworks that prioritize the safety, dignity, and legal rights of women over social compromise.

#### **7.4.5 Educational Reform and Normative Change**

15. Integrate comprehensive gender equality modules and anti-dowry education into the national academic curriculum.
16. Utilize strategic mass media campaigns to deconstruct harmful dowry norms and champion the adoption of equitable marital practices.

#### **7.4.6 Comprehensive Psychosocial Support**

17. Institute professional counseling and mental health services tailored for survivors of dowry-related coercion and domestic abuse.
18. Upgrade and expand the network of secure shelters and safe houses for women facing immediate risks of violence.

### **7.5 Implications for Social Work and Gender Policy**

The findings of this study have profound implications for the field of social work and the formulation of gender-responsive policies in Bangladesh. The evidence regarding pervasive psychological abuse necessitates a shift in social work practice from crisis intervention to comprehensive trauma-informed care.

Practitioners must develop specialized diagnostic tools to identify non-physical coercion and emotional manipulation, which are often normalized within urban domestic spheres. Policy frameworks should prioritize the integration of mental health support into existing community-based protection programs.

Furthermore, the persistent economic dependency observed—even among earning women—underscores the limitation of simple income-generation models. Gender policy must evolve to address the structural barriers to resource control, advocating for legal and social mechanisms that protect women's right to autonomous asset management. Finally, to overcome the documented barriers to legal access, social workers must act as institutional mediators, bridging the gap between victims and the judicial system by reducing the social stigma associated with reporting dowry-related crimes. Policy makers should focus on decentralizing legal aid and ensuring that protection mechanisms are both culturally sensitive and logistically accessible to women in diverse urban socio-economic strata.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

This study underscores that dowry persists as a pervasive and detrimental social institution in Dhaka City, deeply rooted in the nexus of patriarchy, economic disparity, and entrenched social norms. Despite rigorous legal prohibitions, the practice continues to fundamentally compromise marital stability, women's social standing, and family structures.

Dowry not only imposes severe economic burdens but also functions as a tool for legitimizing psychological and physical violence against women, thereby eroding their dignity and restricting their agency. Eradicating this practice necessitates a transition beyond legislative frameworks toward a comprehensive transformation of the social and cultural constructs that sustain it.

## 7.7 Suggestions for Future Research

### Future research may:

- Conduct longitudinal studies to examine long term effects of dowry on women's well being.
- Explore men's attitudes and motivations regarding dowry in greater depth.
- Compare urban and rural dowry practices to identify contextual differences.
- Examine the effectiveness of anti-dowry interventions and policies.

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## APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

### *Structured Research Questionnaire*

#### **Research Title:**

*The Practice of Dowry and its Implications on Social Life: A Study of Dhaka City*

#### **Target Demographic:**

Married women and their spouses residing within Dhaka City metropolitan areas.

#### **Protocol for Enumerators:**

Enumerators must articulate each query with clarity and ensure precise documentation of responses. Strict adherence to respondent confidentiality and ethical research standards is mandatory throughout the interview process.

#### Section A: Socio-Demographic Information

##### 1. Age of respondent:

Below 20  21–25  26–30  31–35  Above 35

##### 2. Religion:

Islam  Hinduism  Christianity  Buddhism  Others (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

##### 3. Educational qualification:

No formal education

Primary

Secondary

Higher Secondary

Graduate and above

4. Occupation:

Housewife

Service holder

Business

Self-employed

Others (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Monthly personal income (if applicable):

No income

Below 10,000 BDT

10,001–20,000 BDT

Above 20,000 BDT

6. Family type:

Nuclear  Joint  Extended

7. Age at marriage:

Below 18  18–20  21–25  Above 25

## Section B: Marriage and Dowry Practice

8. Was any dowry paid at the time of your marriage?

Yes  No

9. If yes, what was the form of dowry? (Multiple answers possible)

Cash

Furniture

Land/Property

Jewelry

Household items

Others (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Who decided the dowry amount/items?

Groom

Groom's family

Bride's family

Joint decision

11. Was dowry fully paid before marriage?

Yes  No  Partially

12. Were there any dowry demands after marriage?

Yes  No

### **Section C: Dowry-Related Pressure and Abuse**

13. Did you ever face pressure due to dowry issues?

Yes  No

14. If yes, what type of pressure did you face? (Multiple answers possible)

Verbal abuse

Psychological pressure

Physical violence

Threat of divorce

Social isolation

15. Who pressured or abused you?

Husband

Mother-in-law

Father-in-law

Other relatives

16. How often did such incidents occur?

Rarely  Sometimes  Often

### **Section D: Social and Psychological Impacts**

17. Did dowry-related issues affect your mental well-being?

Yes  No

18. If yes, what effects did you experience?

Anxiety

Depression

Fear

Low self-esteem

19. How would you describe your marital relationship overall?

Good  Average  Poor

20. Did dowry demands affect your relationship with in-laws?

Yes  No

### **Section E: Legal Awareness and Coping Strategies**

21. Are you aware that dowry is legally prohibited in Bangladesh?

Yes  No

22. Did you seek any help due to dowry-related problems?

No

Yes →  Family  Community leader  NGO  Police  Court

23. If you did not seek legal help, why?

- Fear of social stigma
- Fear of family conflict
- Lack of legal knowledge
- Financial constraints

**Section F: Perceptions and Suggestions**

24. In your opinion, why does dowry still exist?

- Social tradition
- Economic pressure
- Gender inequality
- Family expectations

25. What measures do you think can reduce dowry practices?

- Strong law enforcement
- Women's education
- Economic empowerment
- Social awareness

## APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

### *Participant Informed Consent Protocol*

**Title of the Study:**

**Dowry Practices and Their Social Implications on Women in Dhaka City**

**Objective of the Inquiry:**

The primary objective of this scholarly inquiry is to evaluate the prevailing patterns of dowry and their multi-dimensional impacts—socio-economic and psychological—on married women in Dhaka City.

**Voluntary Engagement:**

Engagement in this study is entirely elective. Participants reserve the right to decline specific inquiries or terminate their involvement at any juncture without prejudice or penalty.

**Anonymity & Confidentiality:**

All disclosed data will be treated with the utmost discretion. Personal identifiers will be excluded from the final research publication to ensure participant anonymity.

**Risk and Benefit Assessment:**

There are no direct risks involved in participating in this study. However, some questions may be sensitive. There are no direct monetary benefits, but your participation will help improve understanding and policy responses regarding dowry practices.

**Statement of Affirmation:**

I have been informed about the purpose and nature of this study. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I agree to participate in this research.

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_