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Dowry link to murders and family violence in Victoria

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Huajiao Zhuang bludgeoned to death her daughter-in-law.

Source: News Corp Australia

TWO women have been murdered and hundreds abused in cases linked to a historic practise still legal in Victoria.

A human rights group has demanded the Government outlaw dowry, where a bride's family bestow lavish gifts on the groom and his loved ones.

At least 250 women a year are subjected to violence in Victoria, while two women have been killed since 2012

in cases linked to the practise.

Psychiatrist Dr Manjula O'Connor said dowry was a contributing factor to three-quarters of the family violence victims she sees, with three new women coming to her for help each day.

"It's an epidemic," she said.

In the past three years at least two murders in Victoria have been linked to dowry.



Selina Lin who was killed by her mother-in-law.

Source: Supplied

In 2012, a 21-year-old was bludgeoned to death by her mother-in-law, who wanted her son to marry another woman for a \$500,000 dowry.

Huajiao Zhuang hit Selina Lin 33 times in the head in front of her young son at their Bundoora home.

She put her body in a wheelie bin and threw it into Darebin Creek.

Zhuang had wanted her son to divorce Ms Lin and instead marry a Chinese woman, who would hand over cash in exchange of a permanent residency in Australia.

In December, a suspected murder-suicide was believed connected with tension over dowry payments.

Shikha Godara Beniwal was murdered in a Deer Park home, her three-year-old son there at the time.

Her husband, Sunil Beniwal, died hours later when he veered his car into an oncoming truck.

Dr O'Connor has had dealings with the case.

"Shikha Godara's murder was related to insufficient dowry," she said.

"The problems started from day one of their marriage because the man and his father wanted 300,000 rupees (more than \$6000) from her family."

In another case, a woman said her husband threatened to deport her back to India if her parents refused to send money to help repay his debts.

“He was hitting me then would say ‘I’m sorry, I was provoked’,” the woman, who did not want to be named, said.

“I don’t want any other girl to suffer what I suffered.”

The Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health, of which Dr O’Connor is founder, has lodged a written submission to the Family Violence Royal Commission requesting the government outlaw dowry.

Dr O’Connor said “there would definitely be a reduction in violence” if dowry was put under the family violence protection act as a type of economic abuse.

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