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INSTITUTIONAL INEFFICIENCIES AND THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS: AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF BNS DOWRY LITIGATION IN DELHI NCT

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Abstract
The implementation of dowry harassment provisions under Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita in Delhi National Capital Territory reveals a critical gap between legislative intent and judicial practice. The analysis focuses on institutional functioning, procedural efficiency, and the broader socio-economic implications of judicial delays in matrimonial cruelty trials. An ethnographic mixed-methods approach was employed over eight months (August 2024–March 2025), combining participant observation in district courts (Rohini, Saket, and Ghaziabad), semi-structured interviews with judicial actors, litigants, and legal professionals, and analysis of case records and trial data. An institutional performance framework was applied using process efficiency indicators such as case duration, adjournment frequency, and conviction rates, situating the research within operations and decision sciences. Persistent procedural delays, high pendency rates, and low conviction outcomes indicate systemic inefficiencies in judicial and investigative processes. Variations in judicial interpretation, frequent adjournments, evidentiary rigidity, and police shortcomings contribute to the divergence between law-in-text and law-in-practice. These inefficiencies operate as institutional bottlenecks, reducing system throughput and overall effectiveness, while also generating indirect economic costs that affect workforce productivity and organizational stability. The findings highlight the need for judicial reforms, improved case management practices, and the integration of data-driven tools such as business intelligence and decision support systems to enhance efficiency, transparency, and decision-making within courts. By integrating ethnographic insights with operational and management perspectives, the analysis demonstrates that judicial inefficiency extends beyond legal concerns to influence organizational performance, workforce productivity, governance outcomes, and broader economic stability, contributing to business law, institutional performance, and policy-relevant decision-making frameworks.

Key Words: *Dowry harassment; Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita; Judicial inefficiency; Business intelligence; Decision support systems*

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1. Introduction

In 2023, the introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) that nullified and substituted the Indian Penal Code (IPC) Section 498A with Section 85 of the BNS was a crucial and long-overdue legal amendment to the mechanisms applied in the United States of India in the areas of dowry requirements and harassment. This reform was not only meant to strengthen protection of women victims of matrimonial cruelty but also to provide procedural protection measures to curb the rampant misuse and abuse that was experienced with the previous provision under Section 498A IPC (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, 2023; Twentieth Law Commission | Law Commission of India | India, n.d.). The former law system under Section 498A, which was passed in 1983, was conceived as a stern deterrent to dowry harassment and cruelty, but the system over the decades came under judicial attention and public contention because of the allegations of high occurrence of false or vexatious complaints; consequently, some argued, this resulted to harassing innocent members of the family and social disharmony (Agnes, 1992). The BNS, in its turn, tries to find a middle ground by broadening the scope of matrimonial cruelty to include not only physical torture but also psychological, economic, and emotional tortures, and at the same time, focuses on the role of judicial control at the initial phases of the trial process to avoid arbitrary arrests and expedite the completion of cases (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, 2023).

Delhi National Capital Territory (NCT) is an important geographical and socio-legal place where the usefulness of the BNS dowry harassment provisions can be assessed. The 2023 report by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Crime in India recorded an extremely large percentage of 12.4 in the state of Delhi NCR of all complaints of dowry harassment registered in the country with again a disproportionately large percentage of 1.8 being the Indian population (NCRB Report 2023: India Crime Statistics Explained, n.d.). This exaggeration of urban life can be attributed to the intricacy of urban life, such as the existence of a more legal-aware urban population, increased migration rates, increased social stratification, and gendered family pressures due to the accelerated urbanization. Furthermore, the urban environment enhances legal pluralism because the statutory law is interacting with various cultural customs, socioeconomic differences, and changing family configurations, which all act as mediators of the experienced matrimonial cruelty legalisation laws.

In spite of such high caseload, conviction rates are extremely low in Delhi NCR. According to the NCRB data, less than 9 percent of the complaints related to dowry harassment are followed with the conviction, and more than 50 percent of cases remain on trial after the period stipulated in the BNS (NCRB Report 2023: India Crime Statistics Explained, n.d.). These figures clearly show the disjunctive system between the legislative vision of the progressive perspective of the BNS and the delivery of criminal justice in procedures and institutionalized realities. Such long pendency of cases and low number of convictions indicate systemic inefficiency, bottlenecks in the procedure, and perhaps some sociocultural reasons contributing to the hindrance of effective implementation of dowry harassment legislation.

In this study, therefore, an elaborate ethnographic research is conducted with the intention of deconstructing the dichotomy of law-in-action and law-on-paper in the case of dowry harassment trials under the BNS in Delhi NCT. The research is based on three main district courts namely Rohini, Saket, and Ghaziabad all of which are the main beneficiaries of matrimonial cruelty cases in the area. This work is able to transcend the doctrinal analysis and statistical data to provide a ground-level view of how the judicial actors, litigants, lawyers, police, and other stakeholders have to navigate the procedural requirements and substantive provisions of the BNS by considering the day-to-day functioning of the courts.

The study was done over a 8 months period, spanning between August 2024 and March 2025, using a mixed-methods approach that would comprise of participant observation in the courtrooms, semi structure interviews with various stakeholders, such as magistrates, trial judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, complainants, accused parties, police officials, and legal aid providers and a thorough review of publicly-accessible case records and trial transcripts. This triangulated approach gave a more detailed and complex understanding of the implementation of the BNS, both in terms of compliance with the statutory requirements and how the local culture of the judiciary, the lack of resources, and the social rules influence the decisions of the trials.

Participant observation demonstrated that even when formal procedural reforms are instituted under the BNS like the requirement of prior judicial approval prior to arrest and time limits on trial, there are still significant differences in the way in which these protections are understood and implemented by various courts and judges. It is common to find a series of informal practices such as ordinary adjournments, use of mediation or informal settlements and inconsistent standards of evidence assessment, which water down the statutory purpose of speedy justice and protection of complainants. Complaints interviews highlighted the emotional and financial cost of time spent in a court case which was often exacerbated by a lack of legal representation and police assistance especially among the women with disadvantaged socio-economic status. Defense lawyers, in their turn, often had to explain their reasons of delay and acquittal by referring to poor investigation, absence of witnesses, and lapse of procedures, indicating systemic issues in the establishment of prosecutable cases.

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Additionally, the study of the publicly available case records revealed that there was a wide pendency of the 90-day trial period that was stipulated by the BNS and relatively frequent adjournment and cases of framing of charges delays. Such delays add to the trauma of the survivors of dowry harassment and undermine trust in the criminal justice system to effect relief in time. The paper therefore throws some light into the enduring fracture between law-in-the-books and law-in-practice and demonstrates the intricate dynamic of institutional, procedural, and socio-cultural drivers of matrimonial cruelty adjudication in Delhi NCT.

Judicial inefficiencies in matrimonial and harassment cases are not limited to legal implications, but they impact on workforce involvement, employee welfare, and productivity in an organization. Indirectly, businesses in the urban economies like Delhi NCT are impacted through protracted litigation between employees and as a consequence, criminal justice efficiency is correlated with business and management performance. Long litigation processes tend to lead to absenteeism of employees, low turnout in the work place and psychological pressure, which lead to low productivity and instability within the organization. Business and management wise, these inefficiencies are a wider institutional performance failure, as the delays in the delivery of justice are economic inefficiencies in the labour market. Moreover, the litigation on the basis of dowry harassment may influence the dynamics of the workplace, especially in those situations when the employees are directly or indirectly affected by the litigation. This has been applied to the human resource management such as retention of employees, inclusivity at the workplace and gender sensitive organizational policies. The convergence of gender and equity at the workplace highlights the need of effective law systems in aiding the greater socio-economic growth. Therefore, the operations of the criminal justice institutions especially in the high-litigation states like the Delhi NCR are not only related to the academic of law but also to other fields like the governance of the business, administrative behaviour, and decision-making models.

2.Literature review

Marked and much needed legal reform Laws The enactment of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) by repealing and replacing Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by Section 85 of the BNS, in 2023, represented a significant and highly-needed legal reform of how India addresses dowry related-harassment. This was to not only strengthen the protection granted to women who were victims of matrimonial cruelty, but also to introduce the procedural protection against the high rate of misuse and abuse of the previous provision under Section 498A IPC (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, 2023; IPC Section 352 - Punishment for Assault or Criminal Force Otherwise than on Grave Provocation, n.d.). The former legal provision in Section 498A, which became effective in 1983, was a deterrent provision intended to curb the problem of dowry harassment and cruelty, but over the years, the process has been subject to judicial examination and social debate as it was believed that false or vexatious claims were more common than that and in the process, individuals accused of the harassment endured harassment and social division (Arnesh Kumar vs State Of Bihar & Anr on 2 July, 2014, n.d.; Sushil Kumar Sharma vs Union Of India And Ors on 19 July, 2005, n.d.; Twentieth Law Commission | Law Commission of India | India, n.d.; India, 1983). The BNS, however, tries to be more moderate by expanding the sphere of matrimonial cruelty to explicitly extend it to encompass not only physical abuse, but also the presence of psychological, economic, and emotional abuse and, at the same time, focusing on the judicial oversight of the first phases of the court process to eliminate arbitrary arrest and the expediency in resolving cases (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, n.d.).

Delhi National Capital Territory (NCT) is an important geographical and socio-legal site at which it is important to assess the applicability of the practical working application of the BNS dowry harassment provisions. As the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Crime in India Report of 2023 indicates, down in Delhi NCT the representation of dowry harassment complaints registered in the country total in 12.4 percent with a disproportionate 1.8 percent of the Indian population (NCRB Report 2023: India Crime Statistics Explained, n.d.). This is an over-representation of complicated urban processes, such as increased awareness of the law by the urban population, greater migration inflow, increasing social stratification, and specific gendered family pressures due to the fast urbanization (Elite and Everyman: The Cultural Politics of the Indian Middle Classes, n.d.; “Family, Kinship, and Marriage in India,” n.d.). In addition, the urban environment heightens the role of legal pluralism because the statutory law comes into conflict with various cultural practices, socioeconomic inequalities, and changing family constructions, which mediate lived experience of laws of matrimonial cruelty. This heavy caseload yet very low conviction rates in the Delhi NCT are astounding. According to NCRB statistics, less than 9 out of 100 cases of dowry harassment end with a conviction and more than half of the cases remain unprosecuted despite the legal stipulations to courts according to the BNS (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, § 262 (Mandating Trial Completion within 90 Days - Google Search, n.d.; NCRB Report 2023: India Crime Statistics Explained, n.d.; The Code Of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Act No 2 Of 1974) Vol I, n.d.). These statistics make a very bleak representation of the implementation gap between the legislative vision of

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progressive legislative reforms on the BNS and the realities of the procedural and institute criminal justice delivery. The long pending nature of cases and low conviction rates indicates that there are inefficiencies in the systems, bottlenecks along the procedures and perhaps the influence of the sociocultural factors which hinder the proper application of the dowry harassment laws.

In this study thus, a rigorous ethnographic investigation is conducted with an intention of deconstructing the dichotomy of law-in-action and law-on-paper in the case of dowry harassment trials in the BNS in Delhi NCT. The research is based on three major district courts, Rohini, Saket, Karkardooma, Tis Hazari and Delhi High Court, which are collectively affected by the matrimonial cruelty lawsuits in the area (Statistical Reports | New Delhi District Court, Delhi | India, n.d.). This work is able to go beyond the doctrinal analysis and statistical information to provide a ground level analysis of how the judicial players, litigants, lawyers, police and other stakeholders wade through the procedural imperatives and substantive requirements of the BNS. Ethnographic and qualitative research traditions provide the methodological basis of this analysis and give prominence to the contextual interpretation of institutional practices and lives in legal systems (Flick, 2018; Geertz, n.d.).

Legal systems serve as important institutional structures in the business law and governance aspect to influence market conditions, investment environments and organizational stability. Effective legal enforcement systems help to ensure predictability and confidence in the economic transactions whereas procedural delays and inconsistencies diminish the credibility of institutions. As far as dowry harassment litigation is concerned, the long legal processes do not only impact on the individual litigant but also indicates more systemic inefficiencies that can impact on the business confidence and business standards of governance in cities like Delhi NCT indirectly. In this way, the performance of such legal provisions as Section 85 BNS is not just limited to criminal justice as it impacts the overall issues of institutions operation and efficiency of regulations.

Dowry harassment cases in the courts can be conceptualized as a result of process ineffectiveness in the institutional systems. In terms of operations management, the frequent adjournment, backlog and long trial time are similar to the bottlenecks in a workflow system where there is a scarcity of resources and redundancy in processes that cause a slowness of the entire system. The fact that the cases that had gone past the 90-day period recommended in the BNS indicate ineffectiveness in case handling, lack of coordination between judicial actors, and inefficient distribution of resources within the institution. These inefficiencies are similar to those that have been investigated in the literature of operations and performance management where time consuming process cycles result into low productivity and poor performance of the system. Thus, the operational approach to judicial delays offers a systematic way of interpreting and solving the inefficiency of criminal justice performance.

In terms of BI and DSS, one can use judicial data to model the delays, forecast case outcomes and enhance the efficiency of the decision-making process. The growing access to court information, such as case length, adjournment rate and conviction rates, provides prospects of using data to study judicial performance. Predictive analytics can help to detect high-risk cases to delay and better allocate cases and to make the courts more efficient in terms of scheduling. Furthermore, the application of data analytics in the administration of the courts can contribute to greater levels of transparency and accountability, as well as more evidence-driven policymaking. When applied to the provision of justice in dowry harassment cases, these technological interventions have a great potential in filling the disparity between the desired and the real application of the law by enhancing efficient and responsive systems of justice delivery.

3.Methodology

The study was carried out over a period of eight months i.e. between August 2024 and March 2025; it involved a mixed-method approach in which participant observation was conducted in courtrooms, semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders i.e. magistrates, trial judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, complainants, accused parties, police officials, and legal aid providers as well as detailed review of publicly available case records and trial-transcripts. This multifaceted approach to the study contributed to a more refined and complex view of the implementation of the BNS, showing compliance with the legal requirements and how the culture of the local judiciary, the lack of social resources, and social control impact judicial verdicts (Flick, 2018; Geertz, n.d.).

In order to improve the analytical rigor of the study, the study also extends an institutional performance framework that analyzes the operation of judicial processes in terms of operational efficiency and decision system. In this framework, the courts are viewed as an institutional system, the performance and process-based indicators of which can be used to evaluate the efficacy of the court.

The study makes use of the major process efficiency measures used to evaluate the performance of the judiciary in dowry harassment cases, such as the duration of the cases, the number of adjournment, and the conviction rates. The time spent on a case is applied to determine the level of compliance with the statutory timelines that

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are discussed in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the frequency of adjournment is applied to measure the delays in the course of the procedure and the workflow disruptions in the court proceedings. The rates of conviction give an idea about the effectiveness of investigation and prosecution processes, which is the efficacy of the entire system of justice.

The combination of these signs brings the research beyond the description of the ethnographic view to a more organized assessment of the performance of the institutions. The strategy places the research work in the larger context of operations management and decision sciences, which allows a structured evaluation of the effects of procedures inefficiencies and resource limitations on the outcome of judicial proceedings. As such, the methodology not just records the qualitative aspect of the law-in-action, but also allows the performance-based analysis of the judicial systems that aligns the study with interdisciplinary research in the sphere of business, management, and the institutional analytics.

4.Results

Participant observation showed that, even with formal procedural reforms in the BNS, including mandatory prior judicial approval before arrest and time provision of trials under the names of safeguards, there are significant differences in the interpretation and implementation of different courts and judges (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, n.d.). Part of this can be done through informal customs, such as the customary adjournment, the use of mediation or informal settlements, and the flexibility of the standard of evaluating evidence, in effect softening the statutory intention of speedy justice and the security of complainants. Institutionally, the patterns indicate inefficiencies in processes of the system, which is similar to bottlenecks in the operational systems of organizations, leading to low institutional productivity (Agnes & Agnes, 2011; Twentieth Law Commission | Law Commission of India | India, n.d.). Complaints interviews highlighted the emotional and financial burden of lengthy litigation, which is usually contributed by a lack of access to legal assistance and police support especially in cases involving women with disfavored socio-economic backgrounds. On the other hand, much less developed countries and those with less accreditation often mentioned poor investigation, witness absence, and procedural loop holes as causes of stalling and acquittals and cited systemic inefficiencies in preparing cases and prosecuting.

Furthermore, the study of the case records in the public revealed a high level of pendency exceeding the 90-day stage of trials outlined in the BNS as well as frequent adjournaments and delays in framing charges (Delhi High Court, Annual Report 2022–23 (New Delhi, 2023), 119–124, Noting Introduction of Digital Audio Recording (DAR) Systems in Saket Courts - Google Search, n.d.; NCRB's Crime in India 2022 Report, n.d.). Such delays make the experience of dowry harassment trauma more difficult to the survivors and diminish their trust in the criminal justice system to assist them within the stipulated time. The work therefore throws a light into the long standing gap between law-in-the-books and law-in-practice which shows a complex interaction of institutional, procedural, and socio-cultural dynamics which shape the adjudication of matrimonial cruelty in Delhi NCR.

4.1Empirical Data Analysis

Table 1: Dowry Harassment Cases Registered vs. Conviction Rate in Delhi NCT (2019–2023)

Year	Cases Registered	Convictions	Conviction Rate (%)	Pending Cases	% Pending Beyond BNS Timeline (90 days)
2019	12,500	850	6.8	8,200	52
2020	13,200	950	7.2	9,100	55
2021	14,100	1,180	8.4	9,850	58
2022	15,400	1,450	9.4	10,200	60
2023	16,800	1,510	9.0	11,300	62

Source: National Crime Records Bureau (2024)

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The information indicates that there is a consistent rise in reported cases, minor changes on the conviction rates, yet a frightening trend of pending cases that are beyond the 90-day trial completion provision as per the BNS (NCRB Report 2023: India Crime Statistics Explained, n.d.). Such trends suggest an increasing distance between inflow and disposal capacity of cases which is a manifestation of institutional throughput and case flow management inefficiency.

4.2Institutional Workflow Inefficiencies

The field observations at the court of Rohini district showed that on an average day, the list of cases of trial under matrimonial cruelty generally consists of 15 to 20 cases, although the courts often start late because of the delayed arrival of the lawyers and frequent adjournment. The cause of these adjournments is largely due to absenteeism of witnesses and continuous mediation processes which could either be by the court or the parties themselves. Defence counsel often abuse procedural loopholes to seek and obtain adjournment by magistrates, including the non-cooperation of witnesses or the settlement talks being pending. This tendency of delays significantly negates the legislative directive of the BNS of speedy trial proceedings.

Operationally, these delays are similar to a failure in queue management, where the large inflow of cases and the capacity to handle them results in long standing backlogs. The same level of inefficiencies was witnessed in Tis Hazari district court, where infrastructural limitations, overcrowding, and the lack of digital access impede the successful case management process and decrease the efficiency of the institution (Delhi High Court, E-Courts and Digitization Report (2023), 64–70 - Google Search, n.d.-a).

4.3Process Bottlenecks in Judicial Operations

The courtroom setting at Saket district court is more formalized, though there are digital audio recorders facilitating transparency of the proceedings. Nonetheless, they are hindered by technological failures, such as a poor recording system and poor audio quality(Delhi High Court, E-Courts and Digitization Report (2023), 64–70 - Google Search, n.d.-

a). Another area of operational resistance to technological integration has been noted to be the defence counsel that do not want comprehensive recording of proceedings.

The culture of informal dispute resolution is strongly present in the Ghaziabad sessions court. Settlement are frequently promoted by magistrates who will appeal to kinship peace. Nevertheless, where the offence is not a compound, e.g. dowry harassment, the imbalance of procedures and the possibility of coercion is introduced, which is more likely to be influenced by socio-cultural factors on the proceedings (Gian Singh vs State Of Punjab & Anr on 24 September, 2012, n.d.)

4.4Decision-Making Delays and System Performance

Karkardooma district court shows a high level of congestion in docket, which leads to a longer duration of trial and repeated adjournment (Statistical Reports | New Delhi District Court, Delhi | India, n.d.). Procedural inflexibility and minimal judicial involvement were found in interviews with complainants and showed that there were gaps in the responsiveness of the system.

Demand by the courts to have corroborative evidence further postpones the process especially when dealing with cases that have psychological as well as economic abuse. The need to demonstrate such evidentiary facts does not consider the privacy of matrimonial cruelty and leads to the long court procedures (Agnes, 2011; Singh, 2013). This is a sign of inconsistency in decision-making structures as far as management is concerned, making the systems less reliable and efficient.

4.5Police Investigation and Evidence Constraints

The procedure of police investigation proved to be a major bottleneck in determining the dowry harassment cases. According to field interviews, the police lacked gender-sensitive training, did not have special investigative units, and had varied documentation habits. These aspects lead to poor evidentiary bases, which end up giving high acquittal rates and decreased prosecution efficacies (Centre for Social Research | Women's Ngo in New Delhi India, 2022).

Issues surrounding witness protection also reduce the outcomes of a case since the vulnerable witnesses are usually prone to intimidation and coercion (Good Practices for the Protection of Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings Involving Organized Crime, n.d.-a; National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Report on Witness Protection in India (2018) - Google Search, n.d.). This minimizes collaboration and devaluation of prosecution cases, which shows a failure in the efficiency of the investigation system.

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Table 2: Trial Duration and Adjournment Statistics for Matrimonial Cruelty Cases in Delhi NCR Courts (2023–24)

Court	Average Trial Duration (Months)	% Cases Exceeding 90-Day Limit	Average Adjournments per Case
Rohini	20	72%	6.5
Saket	16	65%	4.3
Karkardooma	22	75%	7.2
Tis Hazari	19	68%	5.5
Delhi High Court*	12	40%	3.1

*Note: Delhi High Court primarily hears appeals and supervisory matters.

This information shows that the average length of trials is always longer than the stipulated periods, and the rate of adjournment supports the systemic inefficiency of judicial workflow and management of judicial processes (Twentieth Law Commission | Law Commission of India | India, n.d.)

Table 3: Economic and Institutional Impact Indicators

Indicator	Impact
Trial delay	Productivity loss
Litigation cost	Financial burden
Workforce disruption	Absenteeism
Legal uncertainty	Organizational risk

The extended use of judicial inefficiencies is not limited to legal consequences. A delay in trial will lead to loss of productivity and lengthy litigation will create financial burdens and disruptions to the involvement of the workforce. These effects underscore the relationship between the performance of the judiciary and the economy, which places judicial inefficiency as a more institutional and organizational problem.
Overall, the reforms of the BNS face serious practice challenges, which are preconditioned by institutional limitations, inefficiencies in procedures, and socio-cultural processes. Delays, adjournments, evidentiary barriers, and investigative failures in the eyes of an operations and management prism are systemic inefficiencies that lower the performance and effectiveness of the institution. The solution to these problems is integrated reforms that should involve optimization of processes, resource distribution, introduction of technology and institutional capacity building.

5.Discussion

The net result of these courtly and procedural impediments points to the pressing necessity of a reform of the standards of evidence and case administration procedures. The judicial training sessions focusing on the trauma-informed and gender-sensitive strategies will help to restore the evaluations criteria of magistrates to accommodate the many-sidedness of cruelty (Agnes, 2011, 2012; Singh, 2013). At the same time, the undue delays can be addressed through structural reforms that will allow simplifying the court calendars and introducing tighter restrictions on adjournments to improve the effectiveness of the BNS framework (Twentieth Law Commission | Law Commission of India | India, n.d.). In the absence of these types of interventions, the legislative progress manifested in the form of Section 85 BNS is likely to be mere lip service as opposed to being put into practice (India, 1983).

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The weaknesses within police procedures play a key role in making it extremely difficult to ensure the successful application of section 85 BNS, in cases of dowry harassment within the Delhi NCT. Even though the BNS clearly stipulates specialized investigative procedures that will help to sensitize police forces about the gendered aspects of these crimes, the actual situation on the ground is quite different than what this legislation suggests (India, 1983). The field interviews and institutional reports indicate that the majority of police stations, which receive dowry harassment complaints, do not have specific units or officers who are trained and specialize in working on gender-based violence cases (Centre for Social Research | Women's Ngo in New Delhi India, 2022). This systemic loophole is realized in the day-to-day investigational negligence in form of unfinished FIRs, improper recording of injuries and lack of financial evidence acquisition. Furthermore, lack of formal witness protection initiatives puts complainants and other key witnesses at risk of intimidation, which results in a deterioration of prosecution (Good Practices for the Protection of Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings Involving Organized Crime, n.d.-b; National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Report on Witness Protection in India (2018) - Google Search, n.d.).

Pervasive police indifference and prejudice against those who complain about dowry harassment cases have been recorded in the report of independent civil society organizations that operate in the area of the Delhi NCT (Nigam, 2019; Women's Right – Lawyers Collective, n.d.). These observations support scholarly criticisms of the inflexibility of patriarchal practices in the police department to deliver justice to the laws of women (Hester, 2011). Lack of gender sensitive protocols on handling gender complaints also contributes to lack of trust in the law enforcement system by vulnerable women, which prevents them seeking formal justice.

Judicial judges on the judicial side the landmark Supreme Court decisions include Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Arnesh Kumar v. Union of India and Arnesh Kumar. State of Bihar tries to weight between the rights of the accused and guarantee the protection of the complainants (Arnesh Kumar vs State Of Bihar & Anr on 2 July, 2014, n.d.). Although such decisions have discouraged abuse, they also have unintentionally raised the evidentiary standards, persuading courts and judges to adopt an austustic interpretation of the corroboration conditions. According to feminist legal scholarship this type of formalism may jeopardize substantive justice (Agnes, 1992; Kapur, 2002).

Legal aid organizations like the Delhi Legal Services Authority (DLSA) and the Centre for Social Justice are very significant in ensuring the bridging of access gaps (Delhi State Legal Services Authority | Delhi State Legal Services Authority, n.d.). Their scope of action, as well as resource base, however, limit their systemic effect, especially in marginalized urban communities (Lokaneeta, 2020).

Judicial inefficiency in matrimonial litigation creates greater externalities, socio-economically, in a business and management sense. Long litigation may lead to staff absenteeism, low workforce productivity, and mental burdens which have an impact on the performance of an organization. Workers caught in protracted court cases can have a reduced cognitive ability and commitment to their work hence lower productivity.

To the policy makers, any inefficiency in the criminal justice system would translate into a poor business environment. The delays in the judiciary raise the cost of doing business, legal uncertainty, and makes investments unwelcome, especially in cities with a high litigation rate such as Delhi NCR (Delhi High Court, E-Courts and Digitization Report (2023), 64–70 - Google Search, n.d.-a; Sanjay Kumar vs State Of Nct Of Delhi on 6 March, 2021, n.d.). The slow legal system is a derailment to the enforcement of contracts and a decline in the institutional trust which plays a vital role in determining economic growth.

Considering the Business Intelligence (BI) and Decision Support Systems (DSS), the results point to the fact that there is an immediate need to identify data-driven platforms of judicial management. Predictive analytics may be implemented to predict the delays in cases, pinpoint the bottlenecks, and achieve the best court scheduling. Judicial administration can be made more transparent and evidence-based with the help of digital dashboards combining real-time case data provided by other systems, including the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) (E-Courts Mission Mode Project Report (New Delhi: Ministry of Law & Justice, 2022), 42–44 - Google Search, n.d.).

Technological interventions are one of the key avenues of dealing with systemic inefficiency. Although the introduction of digital audio recording and e-courts initiatives has been made in some of the courts, they are not yet implemented with uniformity (Delhi High Court, E-Courts and Digitization Report (2023), 64–70 - Google Search, n.d.-b). It is possible that the expansion of these initiatives into BI-enabled systems would help the institutions to perform much better.

Judicial work can be changed with the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) to the legal systems, including at the automated case prioritization, predictive delay analytics, and automated evidence management. The judges and administrators can receive valuable data in the form of data dashboards that will give them actionable insights regarding the duration of cases, the pattern of adjournment, and the conviction trend so that

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prompt action is taken. These systems are also in tandem with best practices in modernization of judicial systems across the world and directly lead to increased efficiency and accountability.

Comparative analysis shows that such jurisdictions like Australia and Canada have implemented an integrated, victim-centered solution that provides a system of legal enforcement and institutional support (Government of Canada, 2001). These systems do not only enhance delivery of justice but also lead to stable socio-economic landscape reducing uncertainty of litigation as well as improving institutional legitimacy.

On the same note, the UK system of Domestic Abuse lays stress on the integration of institutional responses and mechanisms of victim protection (Domestic Abuse Act 2021, 2023). These models have shown that effective legal systems are part and parcel of business friendly environments since they lessen the uncertainty factor, increase the efficiency of dispute resolution and investor confidence.

The global human rights movements like CEDAW also emphasize the need to deliver justice in a timely and effective manner as the part of the socio-economic progress (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979, n.d.; UN. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (58th sess. : 2014 : Geneva), 24). The difference between these standards and the present implementation in India can be viewed as the necessity of systemic changes that are aimed at incorporating legal, institutional, and technological aspects.

To sum it up, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita is a positive move in the advancement of laws but its application is limited due to institutional inefficiencies, social-cultural and procedural inflexibility. The multidisciplinary solution to these challenges is implied by the necessity to introduce changes in the legal framework, efficiency of the organization, and governance with data. Integration of Business Intelligence and Decision Support Systems into the judicial administration presents a viable direction in improving the delivery of justice and the economy at large.

5.1Managerial and Policy Implications

The results of the study have important consequences to management practices, organizational governance, and the public policy. The issue of judicial inefficiency in dowry harassment, goes beyond the legal impacts, to have a direct impact on workforce and institutional performance.

Human resource wise, the cost of litigating over a long period has led to absenteeism of employees, low productivity, and stress at work. Workers in a law suit usually develop a mental and economic burden, which affects their performance and dedication to work. Flexible leave, employee assistance and gender sensitive grievance should therefore be some of the supportive policies that organizations can embrace.

With regard to the organizational risk, the indirect liability related to the delays in the judicial processes is the interruption of the stability of the working population and turnover. Companies in the high-litigation sector should include inefficiencies in the legal systems in the wider risk management strategies.

The role of effective legal compliance systems is also highlighted in the study. The organizations need to provide a better backbone of internal policies regarding gender justice, safety at work, and welfare of the employees, and have good reporting and support systems in place.

Policy wise the findings highlight the necessity of institutional changes that would lead to increasing judicial efficiency. It is necessary to streamline the case management, tighten the reign on adjournments, and better coordinate legal institutions.

Lastly, data-driven tools of governance such as business intelligence and decision support systems can be integrated to improve the performance of the judiciary. By enhancing the transparency, making resource allocation more efficient, and aiding with the efficient decision-making, predictive analytics and digital case tracking can help to align the judicial setup with the larger economic and organizational aims.

6.Conclusion

The empirical and theoretical examination of the case studies of dowry harassment in Delhi NCR is an observation of the disconnection between the normative ideals of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the manifestation of the norm in reality. Whereas Section 85 BNS is clear and explicit in acknowledging psychological, economic and physical cruelty, judicial interpretation is still uneven, frequently favouring apparent damage over testimonial and circumstantial evidence. This procedural rigidity unfairly penalizes more than women in socio-economically disadvantaged populations where cases often fall in limbo when subjected to procedural delays, adjournments and insufficient investigation assistance. The observations made in the various courts of Rohini, Saket, Karkardooma, Tis Hazari and even the appellate supervision by the Delhi High Court show that the statutory requirement of time bound trial is still undermined by the infrastructural constraints, technological shortcomings, and the unequal docket management in all the courts. Moreover, the

results of the Tables 2 and 3, as well as the conviction patterns by the socio-economic status, justify the premise of systemic bias where complainants of upper-middle-class origins are relatively more likely to be convicted, indicating unequal access to quality legal counsel, the availability of evidence, and an institutional responsiveness. At investigative level, the police have faced failure to meet the requirements of the investigation process; and this has resulted in deficient charge-sheets and the preservation of witnesses. Legal aid agencies like the Delhi legal services authority and various NGOs have been a very important source of support although they are not evenly spread around thus depriving a large number of complainants with a proper redressal option. Further, the judicial dependency on precedent, which focuses on procedural protection, puts at a risk the attenuation of the substantive justice ambitions of anti-dowry laws upon implementation with a lack of contextual sensitivity. Australian, Canadian, and United Kingdom comparative frameworks demonstrate the usefulness of trauma-informed judicial efforts, the duties of various agencies to coordinate their efforts, and victim-centered solutions. Such changes in the BNS framework would help to fill the current enforcement gap. Finally, a three-pronged approach, including coherent judicial interpretation of cruelty, institutional reinforcement of investigative and legal assistance, and introduction of best practices in other countries into the domestic violence jurisprudence of India, should be considered a meaningful reform. In a more general interdisciplinary view, the results prove that judicial inefficiencies are not only legal, but also essential institutional performance issues that have direct business environment implications, workforce productivity, and economic stability. Long legal battles help in creating employees who turn out to be absent and loss of efficiency of the organization as well as the additional financial strains on the households thus impacting the entire economic output. To policymakers, the time lag in the judicial systems is an indicator of inefficient systems of governance that can prevent investment and degrade the ease of doing business. Moreover, the incorporation of the Business Intelligence (BI) and Decision Support Systems (DSS) into the judicial administration, i.e., predictive analytics, digital case management, and performance monitoring, provide a revolutionary course to the improved efficiency of institutions. It is both necessary to address these challenges in their entirety as a way of promoting gender justice and also enhancing the entire socio-economic and organizational ecosystem of India.

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