Initially, dowry was a voluntary gift from the bride's family limited to household items, like kitchen implements and linens. Now the groom's family demands a large dowry upon marriage and later demands additional gifts of money, electronics, or cars.

While the National Crimes Bureau of India reported 5,199 dowry deaths in 1994, unreported estimates run as high as 11,000 to 15,000 Indian women murdered annually. In many cases, the family will pour kerosene over the bride and then kick her over a stove in the floor, setting her sari on fire. These deaths are then reported as kitchen accidents, not murders.

In 1961, the Indian Government enacted the Dowry Prohibition Act, and in 1986 made dowry death a crime. However, this law is riddled with loopholes which allow the majority of the perpetrators to be acquitted, leaving them free to remarry and start the vicious cycle again.

I would like to insert into the RECORD an article from the Harvard Magazine that highlights this horrible practice. I urge the Indian Government to enforce its laws on dowry death and stop this abominable human rights violation.

INDIA'S BURNING BRIDES

(By Kathleen Koman)

In November 1993, Sangeeta Agarwal, a young scientist with a doctorate in solid-state physics, was married in an elaborate Hindu ceremony. Five months later she was found strangled in her in-laws' house in Kanpur, India. Her husband, an accountant, is awaiting trial for her death. What went wrong? ''I've been struggling with that question,'' said the victim's uncle, Sataya Agarwal, ''and the one word that comes to mind is greed.'' He said that although his niece's in-laws received a substantial dowry at the wedding, they wanted more. The husband and his family expected a share of Sangeeta's pre-marriage earnings, and also demanded a car. Then they figured that if she were to die, they could also collect money from her life insurance, said Agarwal, ''and I think that's what put them over the edge.''

In many parts of India, grooms' families demand dowry and, if it is absent or insufficient, they may beat the bride and even strangle, poison, or burn her to death. Typically, they douse the woman with kerosene and push her over a small stove on the floor, igniting her sari. Later, in their statement to the police, the in-laws claim that the bride's death was a kitchen accident. The National Crimes Bureau of India reported 5,817 dowry deaths in 1993 and 5,199 in 1994. In reality, 11,000 to 15,000 women die each year because of dowry disputes, according to Rani Jethmalani, an attorney at the Supreme Court of India.

Jethmalani and Agarwal spoke at the First International Conference on Dowry and Bride-Burning in India, held this fall at Harvard Law School and sponsored in part by Harvard's Committee on South Asian Studies. In his opening remarks, Michael Witzel, Wales professor of Sanskrit, emphasized the need to draw world attention to dowry-related violence, and to explore the legal, social, religious, and historical aspects of the problem.

Dowry existed in the Vedic period (beginning about 1500 B.C.), said Witzel, but then it was a voluntary gift limited to household goods such as linens, pots, and pans. Women had to obey their husbands and their fathers-in-law, but they were inviolable; bride-burning was unheard of.

Today, the groom's family demands dowry at the time of marriage and coerces the bride's family into giving additional money and items like jewelry and electronic goods long after the wedding. Recent studies suggest that this custom is spreading throughout Indian society. But it remains most prevalent in the well-educated, middle-class Hindu population. ''The self-respect of the groom's family depends on attracting as large a dowry as possible,'' explained Julia Leslie, senior lecturer in Hindu studies at the University of London. ''Even more disturbing is the balance of power implied by dowry. Both families seem to agree that it is necessary to pay the groom's family to take on the burden of the bride.''

Bride-burning is not a crime committed solely by men against women. In many cases, the mother-in-law, who may herself have suffered dowry abuse when she was young, is the perpetrator.

Himendra B. Thakur, who founded the International Society Against Dowry and Bride-Burning in India, argued that bride-burning will cease if the young women of India refuse to marry as soon as the groom's family ask for dowry, or if the women leave the marital home at the first sign of abuse. But members of the audience noted that the women's parents often refuse to take them back, and they lack alternatives such as jobs and shelter.

Conference participants listed practical steps aimed at eradicating dowry and bride-burning. They include constructing residential training centers and apartment complexes for young women, forming support groups for students and parents opposed to the dowry system, and creating loan funds for students to eliminate some of the financial pressures that underlie the practice. Thakur, who wrote the 1991 book *Don't Burn My Mother*!, a fictional account of dowry death, said that novels, newspaper advertisements, and movies must be used ''to convince the bride that instead of the option to marry with dowry and die, it is far better to remain unmarried and alive.''

THE (INEFFECTUAL) LAW

The Indian government enacted the Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961, and in 1986 amended the penal code to introduce a new offense, now known as dowry death. But this legislation contains glaring loopholes and, because of lax enforcement, the majority of those accused of bride-burning are acquitted. Many remarry and obtain a second dowry with no apparent difficulty. And their mothers are free to torment the new bride. ''What does it say about Indian society when families line up to offer their daughters to a man who has murdered his bride over a small refrigerator or television or scooter?'' asked attorney Rani Jethmalani at the conference on dowry and bride-burning.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KAREN McCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 1996

Ms. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to participate in rollcall vote No. 885 on December 22, 1995. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea".

UTAH'S CENTENNIAL

HON. ENID G. WALDHOLTZ

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 1996

Mrs. WALDHOLTZ. Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the 100-year anniversary of the day that Utah became the 45th State to join the Union. On January 4, 1896, President Grover Cleveland signed the document that granted Utah statehood, ending a nearly 50-year struggle and six failed attempts by Utahans to become one of the United States of America.

When the State of Deseret, as it was formerly know, achieved statehood, the Union gained some of the most beautiful, varied landscape and spectacular scenery in the United States. From the rugged mountains of the High Uintas, to the fantastic display of rock architecture in the high deserts, Utah has always attracted those who appreciate its unique beauty and splendor. But, its not only Utah's great beauty that distinguishes our State, it's the people—they are friendly and warm, and, as the State nickname as the Beehive State accurately describes, they are industrious, hard working, and enterprising.

In our 100 years, Utahans have made the State prosper and grow, creating a successful metropolitan area while, at the same time, retaining its warmhearted, hometown feel, making it one of the most liveable States in the Union. As a Utahan, I am proud to join with the people of Utah in celebrating our 100-year anniversary of statehood. We have truly made the desert bloom, and Utahans and the entire country can take pride in the beauty and accomplishments of our 45th State.

CLINTON'S BUDGET

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 1996

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this member commends to his colleagues an editorial which appeared in the Omaha World-Herald on January 5, 1996.

BUDGET BALL IS IN CLINTON'S COURT, AND PUBLIC KNOWS IT'S HIS PLAY

Finally the public seems to be beginning to see through President Clinton's rhetoric on the federal budget impasse.

For too long, public opinion polls indicated that Clinton was being rewarded for refusing to negotiate with congressional Republicans over a seven-year balanced budget agreement. In a Nov. 19 ABC News poll, for example, 49 percent of the respondents approved of the way Clinton was handling the budget dispute, while 42 percent disapproved.

In the most recent poll, however, the president's approval rating on the handling of the budget had dropped to 39 percent. His disapproval rating had risen to 56 percent. Fewer respondents blamed Congress—51 percent in November, 44 percent this week.

In November, 45 percent supported the statement that Clinton was ''honestly trying to resolve the budget issue,'' while 52 percent said he was ''just playing politics.'' This week, 33 percent still viewed him as a sincere budget negotiator, while 66 percent said he was playing politics.

Congressional Republicans have given significant ground in an effort to reach a budget compromise. Clinton has given them no