

Angry Brides' Takes on India's Dowry Culture

By Diksha Sahni, [India Real Time](#), Monday, June 17, 2013



The game 'Angry Brides' is a free application on Facebook, which sees an angry bride attacking prospective grooms with household objects in response to their dowry demands.

Red stilettos, flip-flops and rolling pins seem to be the latest weapons in India's fight against dowry.

Indian matrimonial portal Shaadi.com has launched "Angry Brides," a new online game modeled on the hugely successful "Angry Birds." The aim is to raise awareness against dowry in India, a practice that is illegal but still alarmingly widespread.

The game, which was launched last week as a free application on Facebook, sees an angry bride attacking prospective grooms with household objects in response to their dowry demands.



The homepage of the game shows an eight-armed woman, what appears to be a reference to a Hindu goddess, wearing a red dress and holding weapons that include a pan. A caption below reads: "A woman will give you strength, care and all the love you need... NOT dowry!"

As the player proceeds through the various levels of the game, different options of weapons are available for the "angry bride" to target her three potential husbands: a doctor, an engineer and a pilot. Each hit gives the player a score, which adds up in the "anti-dowry fund."

"We wanted to raise awareness about the ills of dowry, a tradition that is still very closely related with marriage," said Ram Bhamidi, head of online marketing at Shaadi.com, a popular website that helps individuals and their families find a suitable partner. Mr. Bhamidi said that a recent survey taken by Shaadi.com revealed that 47% of men interviewed expected gifts from the bride's family and that 25% of women were okay with giving dowry if required.

Referring to dowry as a "menace" his company condemns, he explained that "the game is a way to throw spotlight on the issue and ask people to stand up against this."

"But we wanted to do it in an innovative, fun way that engages the users," he added.

Mr. Bhamidi said that the three professions featured in the game are in no way representative of dowry trends in India: "It's only symbolic and we used these professions only because they are easily identifiable by their attire."

Five decades since dowry was criminalized, it remains a common practice in India. Under the 1961 Dowry Prohibition Act, any person who demands a dowry faces up to two years in prison. However, in many cases, the size of the dowry is often negotiated before the two families agree on marriage. Many women in India are killed or take their own lives every year over their family's failure to pay a promised dowry. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, there were as many as 8,391 dowry deaths in the country in 2010, the latest year for which data is available. The figure is almost unchanged from the previous year.

Since its launch last week, around 300,000 people have "liked" the Angry Brides Facebook page, says Mr. Bhamidi. He adds that the game is only the "beginning of a journey" and that they are planning to introduce more initiatives against dowry.

Not everyone agrees that an online game is the right way of tackling the delicate issue of dowry. Facebook user Shubhangi Mittal, 24, said it is actually trivializing an important matter. "It's actually making fun of the whole issue and suggesting a few virtual attacks on the groom are enough to play your role in doing something about the issue."

"The game is nothing more than fun for people," she added. "Will that stop families from giving and asking for dowry? What about translating that into actions at ground level?"

A video about « Angry Brides » here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTaiYNZfK14>