

Abstract: Behavioral ecology theory is applied in relation to the marital gifts of bride price and dowry amongst an agrarian demographic. In a cross comparative study of women's focus groups and interviews in Southern Tamil Nadu and Southern Rajasthan, land and agricultural inputs played a great functional role in dowry investments. However, there is not a correlation of land prices, ownership, and access to irrigation to the inflation of bride price or dowry. Other theories such as marriage squeeze, hypergamy reduction, and economic compensation were also examined in relation to the inflation of prices yielding very little significance to the increase of dowry or bride price. Using Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques for the study, attitudes towards dowry were evaluated yielding mixed results according to one's socio-economic background and circumstance