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Acts that may drive women to suicide are cruelty: HC

New Delhi: The Delhi high court has held that any wilful conduct which is likely to drive a woman to suicide amounts to cruelty, and refused to quash dowry harassment proceedings against in-laws of a woman who hanged herself to death.

With such an observation, Justice S L Bhayana asked a man and his three family members to face trial for allegedly harassing his daughter-in-law, 28-year-old Sobha, for dowry and driving her to suicide after she gave birth to a girl. HC asked them to face trial on charges of abetment of suicide.

"Prima facie a case has been made out for the framing of charge...I find no justification in interfering with the impugned order," the court said. In January last year, the trial court judge had framed charges against the accused under 498-A (cruelty by the relatives of husband) for the offence committed under the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

It had relied upon the statement of the victim's father and other family members on her harassment for dowry. Sobha had died in her in-laws' house in March 2000, eight years after her marriage. According to a complaint lodged by her father, she was allegedly harassed for dowry by her husband's family members. TNN