

Hindustan Times | By Veenu Sandhu, New Delhi

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In a country where 20 women are killed for dowry every day, a group of over 5,700 prospective brides and grooms have gone online to declare, "I don't want dowry!" Veenu Sandhu tells more.

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In a country where 20 women are killed for dowry every day, a group of over 5,700 prospective brides and grooms have gone online to declare, "I don't want dowry."

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These eligible young men and women have posted their profiles on www.idontwantdowry.com – a matrimonial website aimed at targeting the dowry system.

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Many of these crusaders, who want to lead by example, are from professions that usually fetch high-prices in the dowry market: doctors, engineers, IT pros, corporate executives etc. “This is a meeting place for those who do not want to give or take dowry,” says Satya Naresh (34) the Hyderabad-based founder of the portal.

“Until now, our focus has been on the south, especially Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai. But starting this month, efforts are on to popularise the platform in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata,” he said.

Till now, more prospective grooms (3,653) than aspiring brides (2,053) have come forward to say no to dowry. “I hadn’t expected this,” says Sateesh Vattam (28), a software entrepreneur who has signed up against dowry. “My parents were unhappy when I registered. They said people will think something is wrong with me which is why I’m willing to marry without dowry,” adds Sameer Chakravarthi, an advertising professional. “People are paying crores of rupees as dowry. In some states, marriage bureaus ask for 3

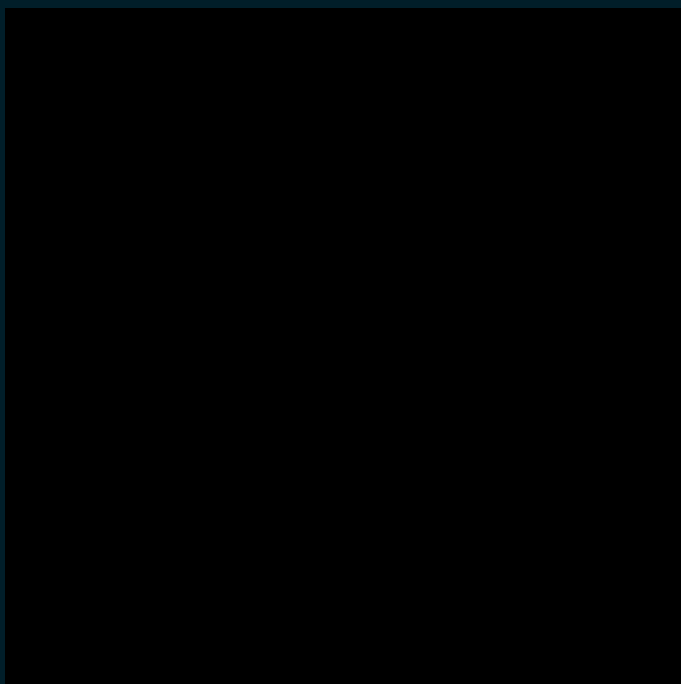
to 4 per cent of the amount,” he adds.

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Barkha Singh, chairperson, Delhi Women’s Commission, terms the website a positive initiative but cautions, “We’ve had cases where the groom’s family pledges against dowry but starts harassing the bride after marriage. The girls need to be sure that the family really is against dowry.”

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